

**Town of Northborough
Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
November 5, 2013**

In attendance: Sean McCann, Sean Durkin, Dave Rawlings, Dave Putnam, Mark Awdycki, Dan Nason, David Robillard, Allison Lane and Michelle Lyseth; **Guests** Jim Clifford (NYBA), Ray DeSabato from (NSYF), Brian Lanceault (NYSA), Tim Kelleher (Blue Ribbon).

6:35pm—Meeting called to order.

6:36pm—October Minutes approved. Mark Awdycki (MA) made a motion to approve the minutes from the October meeting, Dave Rawlings (DR) seconded the motion, all in favor.

6:37pm—Recreation Report. Alison Lane (AL) had a few items to update the board with. First, she said she had been contacted by a sales rep from TCI Press out of Seekonk who wanted to quote on printing upcoming brochures. The quote ended up coming back roughly \$2000 less than the current company Recreation works with. The current company, Quality Graphics, was not able to match the TCI's quote. AL said she would consider using TCI for the Spring/Summer brochure and see how it goes. Next, AL said that the portable restrooms at the parks would be removed during the week of November 20. AL said that she bills the youth groups at the end of each fall for reimbursement of those units and that it should not be any surprise. AL said that next year she should order a handicap accessible unit for Memorial, in keeping with that facility's transition to becoming a handicap accessible facility. Lastly, AL said that Recreation is having a toy and sports equipment sale on November 30 and that the Rec Department is now accepting donations.

6:48pm—DPW Report. Dan Nason (DN) first updated the Board with respect to the CPC projects in place. To Jim Clifford (NBSA), DN said that he has the preliminary design for the Memorial field project and would like NBSA to look it over and comment, but asked to try to keep the project within its original scope so as to keep costs down. Jim said that Baseball had already reviewed the design. Next, DN discussed the shade pavilion project at Assabet Park. He said he has a very preliminary design, and needs to next make sure that it fits within zoning requirements. It is a simple structure with a lean-to roof, open on all sides, steel, virtually maintenance-free. No other news to report.

6:55pm—Guest Tim Kelleher, Blue Ribbon Lawn Care, to discuss field maintenance agreement at Melican Middle School (MMS). AL introduced Tim Kelleher to the Board and to the guests. Tim is already well-known to the representatives of the various youth groups at the meeting, having worked with them regarding field maintenance issues at town fields and parks. AL said that Tim has handled those fields in Town for about 11 years. Tim told all present that not only is he a Town businessman as well as a Town resident, he is also the parent of children in Town who play on the fields that he maintains. He next gave the Board an idea of the annual maintenance processes. He told the Board how closely he works with AL, the DPW, school principals, school maintenance staff, and various youth groups, to coordinate field maintenance plans. Dave Putnam (DP), asked 'Do you tell us what you recommend [for maintenance issues] or do we tell you what we want?' to which Tim replied, 'Both.' He added in this past that he worked with Craig Murphy (volunteer with Baseball program) extensively for years regarding the maintenance of Memorial Field. Brian Lanceault, treasurer for NYSA, vouched for Blue Ribbon's services saying that soccer themselves tried to handle the field maintenance at Ellsworth-McAfee but said it never went as well as it did later when they turned to Blue Ribbon and that ever since, the field has looked phenomenal. DP said that we shouldn't look to see 'how little we can spend...we need to do what needs to be done'. Ray (NSYF) wanted it noted that a significant of damage had been done to the MMS fields when they were lined, but after discussion with AL it was determined that the amount of damage had been done by the school's antiquated machinery used to line the fields for middle school field hockey and not by other users.

AL said to Tim that Brian from Soccer would take over making the [maintenance plan] payments relative to MMS, which Baseball had previously handled. Brian said that the main concern he is hearing from other youth groups involved is that they will be making payments without being compensated. Tim said that he has a prepayment plan that would save the groups money, if they prepaid by March 1. AL said that the total cost of maintenance at MMS last year was \$10,500, including irrigation provided by Wilde, and that in the past, the youth groups using MMS

(Football, Soccer and Baseball) have each paid \$3500 toward those costs. This year, AL said that Baseball (NYBA) asked to withdraw from the plan and that they would not pay the \$3500 this year, but would contribute \$1000. AL said that she didn't want Football and Soccer to have to absorb the extra, unanticipated costs and volunteered to put revenue earned from field rentals towards that fee. AL said that going forward, she can do the same for next year, but that revenue rentals from groups such as BEST Soccer would be less next year due to limited field space availability for the coming year. Someone from the group asked Jim Clifford why Baseball cancelled the overseeding and aeration. Jim stated that Baseball did not decide to cancel it for good, and that they just wanted to wait until the season was over; Soccer was waiting for the same reason, according to Jim. He said that to the best of his knowledge, the treatment plan at MMS had been paid for up front, and that when Tim contacted him regarding a treatment plan scheduled for Columbus Day weekend, he gave the go ahead. The treatment plan ended up being cancelled by Baseball two days before it was to be scheduled, and now it may be too late in the season to reschedule. Jim said that he didn't realize earlier that he was authorizing something that hadn't been paid for yet, and noted that any expenses over \$200 have to be approved by Baseball's board. Jim said that Baseball switched to paying Blue Ribbon all at once in July to get a discount, and at that time, they opted out of paying for the full aeration and overseeding. The board and various members began questioning Jim and Jim repeatedly said 'I can't speak to that' in response, and Ray said, 'No offense...but why are you here and not Mike Hodge' (Mike Hodge is now the President of Baseball). Jim said that Baseball's first Board meeting was being held at the same time as the commission meeting. Jim said that there was not a treatment plan in place that he knew of, which Tim disagreed with, saying it has been a plan that has been in place for years, and that Ed Tache (former Baseball Treasurer) had signed off on it. Ray was upset that Baseball opted out of a plan that Soccer, Football and Baseball have cooperated on together for years. Jim said that Baseball never made a conscious effort to 'screw the other groups over' by cancelling the maintenance, and that it was just bad timing; AL said that Mike Hodge called her on October 23 and said 'we are not going to do that application', in response to her email asking why the application was cancelled. Ray said that if Mike is making those decisions, that he needs to attend these meetings.

Sean McCann (SM) asked, how can we avoid this from happening in the future? Sean Durkin (SD), spoke as a former volunteer with youth baseball, now volunteering with Babe Ruth. He said that the 'spirit of the agreement' has been violated. He said that the youth groups maintain the facilities for the Town's kids to enjoy, and that groups shouldn't have the choice to opt in or out at whim. When he was on Baseball's Board, Baseball paid those bills without issue. Discussion followed, with AL saying finally that the agreement previously decided upon will continue. AL asked Tim if he will communicate with Tom Maedler (head custodian of Northborough schools), Tim said yes, that he would communicate with all parties as he has in the past.

MA said that Baseball should be careful and that if they opt out of maintaining property now and would like to use it in the future..they will be benefiting from the maintenance that the other user groups are investing in now...and that isn't fair to them.

Brian said that Lacrosse is behind in payments for maintenance at Ellsworth-McAfee, owing \$1500. AL said that if it isn't promptly paid, then Lacrosse will not be able to take a permit out next year.

7:50pm—New Business. AL wanted to know if Baseball planned to charge other users for using space at Memorial. AL asked Jim if Baseball charged Legion or Tahanto for use? Jim said not, they chose to make a donation. AL asked why it was different for the Babe Ruth group. To Jim, she said that she needed copies of field-related expenses at Memorial for the past year. AL said that Babe Ruth collects money from kids to play so they should contribute to the maintenance of the field in the same way. SD asked why Northborough kids have to pay to play at a Northborough facility? SD said that he didn't think it was fair to come after them retroactively for payments when the season is already done and that those costs were not expected. AL wants to go to both NYBA and Babe Ruth Board meetings.

Next, AL asked what the procedure is for groups renting Memorial to use the scoreboard. Jim said that the sheds are locked, they would need keys and to be able to access the controller for the scoreboard. AL asked if the sheds had always been locked up? SD said no. AL said that the scoreboard was donated to that facility and should be accessible to all who want to use it. Jim agreed saying it was always available to anyone who asked. Discussion followed, with the decision being to create a generic policy for usage of facilities, which will be developed over the winter by the Board and AL.

DN said that if the two parties can't get along then the Town will have to take over the property and rent it out to the youth groups. Also, the Town controls the property and should have keys to all facilities on Town property. AL said that she spent so many hours dealing with Memorial Field this year and that it can't continue. She said 'there were less teams using the field this year but 500 times the work'. Jim said 'we are all adults here...I'm sure we can all work together next season.'

8:30pm—Old Business. SD told the Board that his Babe Ruth team played all of their games at Vernon Hill field in Worcester because of limited time available to him at Memorial Field.

8:40pm—Motion to Adjourn. Dave Rawlings (DR) made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by SD.