

Athletic Field Task Force Meeting

July 17, 2014 7:30

DRAFT
TOWN OF STONINGTON
CYNTHIA LAMORE

14 JUL 23 PM 2:19

Attendees: Ed Haberek, Paul Sartor, Sandy Grimes, Paul DeCastro, Bill Sternberg, Mike Crowley, Joe Mendonca Jr.
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STONINGTON, CT

Paul Sartor call the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

Joe Mendonca discussed a report that he prepared outlining how 6-8 other local towns handle athletic field use their towns.

Sandy Grimes requested clarification on what the difference is between the different nonprofit athletic groups. He stated that all non-profits should be charged the same as if they were residents and that he would like additional information on past use. Sandy collected historical data from Joe Mendonca that he will share with the Board of Finance at a future meeting.

Joe Mendonca stated that most towns have full time maintenance staff dedicated to the athletic fields. Most don't charge fees for field use and many towns co-sponsor teams and budget funding to support each athletic organization.

Paul Sartor stated that the final decision pertaining to assessing a field fee will be made by the Board of Selectmen.

Sandy Grimes discussed field use priority as follows: 1. School sports, 2. Recreation Department Programs, 3. Stonington Residents (soccer, lacrosse, football, etc)

A representative from the athletic organizations stated that they objected to the fees for the following reasons:

1. Their organizations rallied together and reached out to the community to obtain support for the Bond to pass the vote.
2. This Bond initiative should have included raising the tax rate to ensure funding was added to the budget for continuous annual field maintenance.
3. There is already a line item in this year's budget for pay for maintenance. Therefore, it is unclear why such a small amount of additional funding is required.
4. These athletic groups are your next generation of school sport teams and should be supported by the Town not charged.
5. If fees are going to be set they requested that they be made per child.
6. They requested that the schools should also be included in paying fees.

Mike Crowley stated that many people pay taxes that don't use the fields therefore an additional fee of some kind should be assessed to help support them.

Ed Haberek wanted to work with the organizations on the fees.

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Bill Sternberg noted that there should be a flat rate if we were going to charge using hourly rates. That way it's based on the number of kids on the field.

Athletic Organizations stated that charging over \$25 per child would hurt their organizations. If there is a fee, it should be an annual fee and all field users should be charged.

The Task Force agreed that the rates noted at the bottom of Joe Mendonca's report were acceptable and made a recommendation for their approval.

The Task Force agreed that a cost per child should be determined to obtain an annual field use pass.

Sandy Grimes stated that the Board of Finance is interested in obtaining approximately \$20,000 in fees to support field maintenance. However, he will verify these amounts before a final rate is charged.

The meeting concluded with the athletic organizations stating that any fee over \$25 per child will hurt the future of the sporting activity.

Meeting adjourned : 9:30 PM

Barbara McKrell PE

Clerk, pro-tem