

Members present: Kevin McCormick Christopher A. Rucho
 Allen R. Phillips John O'Brien
 Steven Quist

Mr. McCormick convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Discussion with School Committee and Parks Commission

Tom Kane, Superintendent of Schools and School Committee members Lisa Bouchard, Rick Shaw, Jennifer Breen and Stephen Paige joined the Board with Parks Commissioners Patrick Inderwish, Robert Monk and Steven Blake.

1.School Parking Lot

Mr. Phillips requested this agenda item. He explained that when the school's use of the parking lot was reviewed this year, in a discussion with the Parks Commission, it appears there was no money turned over to the Parks for the use of the lot. In reviewing the breakdown, he found that \$9,000 is being paid to monitor the parking lot and questions why we need that position. Mr. Kane explained that we provide supervision for children arriving and leaving, about a half to three quarters of an hour before and after school. Mr. Phillips questioned what types of duties the monitor has. Mr. Kane advised that they keep an eye on the kids, an eye for anything suspicious and if anybody is driving recklessly they report the problem. Mr. Rucho asked if the parking lot fee ended tomorrow, would that money be taken out of your budget? Mr. Kane explained that they have always assigned somebody to watch people in the parking lot. Before it was in their budget, however, among the cuts that year were the funds for the monitor and part of the money was from the parking fee. They do not charge people who drop off their children. Mr. Blake asked if the school hires an outside person and the cost. Mr. Kane explained that the duties are assigned to a teacher or a para-professional. It is about \$12.50 an hour for 780 hours to cover a couple of different parking lots.

Mr. Shaw spoke to the need for the monitor as kids go out and start to goof off and they just do not disappear. Mr. Blake questioned if this is part time, and how it is covered. Mr. Kane explained that it is two hours a day \$24 per person for the two lots. The senior lot is the lot adjacent to the school, and there is one person for each lot. Mr. Monk questioned whether both of the back lots are parks property. Mr. McCormick advised that the round lot belongs to the school and the other belongs to the parks. Mr. Kane reported that the school owns 31 spaces and on the other side of the road the parks has 31 spaces.

Mr. Inderwish pointed out the fact that in 2005 the parking fee was \$25 and it is now \$150 even though the money had been level funded. In 2005, there was a budget shortfall and subsequent after that was the 2% made up? Mr. Kane explained that they have seen some increases in certain years and in some they have seen decreases, and replacing teachers and programs would have been a priority. In reading Town Counsel's opinion letter, Mr. Inderwish noted that the funds could be used for maintenance, line striping, snow plowing or anyone who would maintain and administer thereof. You increased from \$25 to \$150 but the funds were restricted to certain things. Mr. Kane noted that in addition to maintenance there is the maintenance of the parking lot. The School Committee could put all that money on costs to maintain the parking lot. Mr. Phillips is concerned we are looking at the expenditures going out, the efficiency of the operation and the \$9,000 is a lot of money that could go to something like the music program. Mr. Kane explained that the money will save something else from being cut. When we have to make decisions about funds it is all about programs related to the direct instruction of the kids and that gets priority.

To Mr. Phillips part of the other issue is our DPW plows the lot now and we do not put any of that money back into the DPW budget for plowing. Mr. Kane replied they have never charged the school for plowing. For Mr. Phillips that is part of his frustration as we are off setting the school budget by \$9,000 and not off setting the other department. Mr. Kane questioned why the school would institute a fee to give it to another department. He added that the school has turned over \$6,000 to the Parks and paid \$1,600 for the closing of the pool when it was still open.

Mr. Phillips feels if we are going to use a piece of property that belongs to the parks, the funds should be used to maintain the land. He does not think it is fair to offset the School budget and no others. Mr. Kane explained that when the fee was first instituted they came up with a way to have a fair sharing of revenue. The Parks owns 31 of the spots, and this year they did not have as many students using the parking lot. If the spots were not needed, Mr. Phillips suggested turning them back to the Parks. Mr. Kane stated that if the Parks does not want the school to use the property we do not have to. Mr. Phillips does not feel it is right to offset one department's budget and he asked the Parks if they would like their 31 spaces back. Mr. Inderwish, speaking as one member of the Parks Commission, suggested having the Parks take over use and administration of the lots and have the Police Department or the DPW make a check in the morning to ensure that only permitted vehicles were in the spots and have the Town Clerk issue the permits. This would reduce the costs of the operation. He also agrees that they have had a revenue sharing agreement for the last five years and the School Department has turned over money that helped the Parks. With his suggestion, it is a reasonable solution and option which he thinks would address Mr. Phillips' concerns and we could lower the costs. We would not incur the cost of the monitor and it could be rolled into the Town Clerk's duties. Mr. Inderwish also reported that the condition of the lot is fine.

Ms. Breen feels that the conversation is very much an 'us' and 'them.' The Parks want the lot back and she would like the 'us' and 'them' be more of 'we.' She added that the school is all for finding the best ways to use the money and find a better way to co-exist. We need to all work it out and make sure the money goes to the best possible use. Mr. Inderwish stated that in his tenure the Superintendent and he have dealt with a number of issues they do not view as 'us' and 'them.' They have tried to do everything they can to accommodate the needs of the schools. It is a unique situation as most schools have their own athletic field and in West Boylston we do not. The Parks Commission is charged with the oversight of the parks and we are down to one parks worker to cover 55.5 acres of parks land. We try to work with the School Department on everything. It is our kids, and we are all a part of the town.

Mr. Blake feels the problem is we had an agreement with the School Committee, we told them the kids could park there and there was a money figure and we are not getting paid. He has no problem with the kids parking there but he doesn't want the school collecting money for parking permits if they can park there. Ms. Bouchard noted that we still have to pay a monitor. Mr. Phillips feels the most sensible split is 50/50 and we do not have a monitor as he does not think it is needed. Mr. Kane replied, that is a school decision, and there are 112 spaces, 31 in the pool parking lot, how do we split the money? Mr. Phillips stated that he would not complain if the money were going to a teacher, but to pay a monitor he does not think it is necessary. Mr. Kane advised that they didn't hire somebody special to be a monitor. Mr. Phillips' response, we raised the fee a exorbitant amount to pay them.

Mr. Monk asked who monitors the parking lot at the little league field? Mr. Kane stated that the kids can park off campus and walk to school. The pool parking lot is not off campus and the Parks let the schools use that and supervise that. When Mr. Inderwish went to school the Vice Principal monitored the parking lots. He suggested having the public safety and DPW drive through in the morning, look for the stickers on the cars and come back in the afternoon. Mr. Kane feels that having cruisers drive through there is going to take two or three minutes and he does not think it would

provide the same type of situation and we have two separate locations. He also thinks Chief Minnich would have a tough time providing officers to deal with the Edwards school drop off in the morning and a parking lot.

Mr. McCormick feels that between the police, Town Clerk and the DPW we have a lot of questions to ask and it will not be answered tonight. Mr. Blake asked the school if they are you going to need the pool parking lot this year? Based on last year's numbers, Mr. Kane replied no. Mr. Blake feels the kids will be parking there anyways. McCormick suggested locking it off. When we first allowed the parking, he was on the Parks Commission and they came to us and we said sure. It never became an issue until we had a fee. Mr. Paige if the issue is you would rather have the jurisdiction over the school parking lot we can implement that. If you want us to only use the school spaces we could discuss if it would eliminate the problem. To Mr. Phillips part of the issue was no money came back to the parks program and the money was given to the monitor. Mr. Kane noted the reason was because they did not raise that much money and it was less money than the services costs. We have more parking capacity than customers.

As the Parks Commission can only use the money for maintenance of the lot, Mr. McCormick, questioned what maintenance they are going to do for the parking lot? Mr. Blake suggested giving the money to the DPW. Mr. Inderwish noted that the parking lots are open to the public for the weekends and people parking there for events there are multiple users who have the ability to use the lots. Shutting it off doesn't make sense.

Mr. Shaw noted that Mr. Phillips said we see no money this year because we brought in less than past years. The last three years we gave \$4,100 and there is supposed to be an agreement between the School and the Parks Commission on how that money is being spent. We have not had a sit down on that. That money has come into the parks budget and it was not used for the lot whatever they used the money for is what it is used for. We have sent money over there and it has gone down over the years. We are talking 31 spaces at \$150 each, \$4,600 versus 79 spaces at \$12,000. If we were looking at this right, all the spots were down, we paid the monitor, and the remainder should be split one third the Parks and two thirds the Schools. We gave it all to the Parks. Mr. Phillips does not understand because we are spending money on the monitor. Mr. Shaw stated the monitor is an expense and there has not been any use of the money to upgrade the parking lot. Mr. Monk pointed out that Tim cleans up the trash so money towards his salary. Mr. Rucho questioned if it is turned over to the DPW. Mr. Inderwish agrees with Mr. Shaw we had an agreement and unfortunately, did not generate enough revenue to reap the benefit because of the drop off in users. Because the money has not been spent, we had an ice storm in 2009, we had deteriorating conditions, and we are trying to address with the one person we have. Mr. Shaw stated it is not like we are not paying money to the Parks. Mr. Inderwish feels the lot does need to be restriped and more security on the pool will make the parking lot safer. We have some items that need immediate attention and the parking lot is in fair condition and on the list of things to do.

Mr. Kane negotiated the agreement with the Parks and he understands the money would be used and that both boards would decide how to use the money and the School Committee has waived their requirement to do that to the Parks. He thinks the money was probably used for repairs on the fields and from a practical perspective, what we wanted. Mr. Rucho stated it has to be used for that as when you charge a fee the money needs to go back. You cannot make money on the fee. Mr. Kane explained that the fee pays the costs of providing the monitor and the additional money could be used for striping and paving the lot. The understanding was trying to make something work for both sides. Mr. Rucho fees in general we charge to pay for the program. Mr. Kane feels it is a ligament expenditure of the money Mr. McCormick does not know the solution. Mr. Blake noted that Mr. Kane

said they are not going to use the parking lot this year. Mr. Kane will recommend to the School Committee to give the Parks Commission \$500 this year.

Mr. Kane noted that they do fill out a request form every year for use of the parking lot. Mr. McCormick suggested looking into Mr. Inderwish's recommendation. In the meantime, Mr. Inderwish feels that maybe we can come to some common ground and see if there is an agreement we can work out. Mr. Philips suggested just be a flat fee that gets turned over to the Parks Commission. Mr. Kane is open to looking at that. Mr. Rucho recommends letting the School Department use the parking lot and the money that is turned over should go to the DPW for plowing. The School Department and the Parks Commission will sit and discuss this to come up with a solution.

2. Use of fields by School Department

Mr. Kane his sense is at whatever time the town decided not to develop fields for the schools there must have been a decision for the schools to use the town fields and the schools should be given priority and free use of the facilities. In the last few years he sees the School Department being seen as another user of the fields and he thinks the school is different from the groups. Now they are charged for the kids fee to use the fields and it is a like a private group using the athletic fields. He asked what is the status of the school for the use of fields for physical education and education? He has issues with field maintenance. We have only one person taking care of the fields. It seems to him we should have loosened up for supervised volunteer work for playoff games and getting the fields lined requires bringing in a DPW worker and paying time and a half. Using a volunteer to get the work done it has been an issue for them.

McCormick explained that we have had a great deal of discussions around volunteers. If it is a union work we would have to bargain with the union. Mr. Philips how much is the fee? Mr. Kane \$20 per participate. Mr. Phillips agrees the schools should have had a field attached to them. Mr. Rucho feels the fee is a user fee for kids to play sports and it is a user fee for the organized group just like all the other groups. Mr. Inderwish noted that the school is our biggest user of the fields and gym classes are free. Mr. Kane we have never had to notify the Parks Commission when we are having gym class and physical education. Mr. Inderwish explained that they need to notify the DPW when people are using the field. Mr. Kane noted that the school has to get permit and it is not just a request or notification.

Mr. Inderwish reported that today we had a school group up at Woodland and the community service workers were up there doing the maintenance. We didn't want the kids up there when we had the workers there. As far as field conditions, the fields are used every day of the year except when covered in snow. We do not have enough fields to accommodate the requests we get. One person maintains 55 acres, they have deteriorated, we lost one parks employee because of the budget and we also had a water ban.

Mr. Kane understands we are all dealing with tight budgets, not enough money, however, we cannot go out and do it ourselves, we have to pay the DPW time and half to come in, it is frustrating, and it shouldn't be this difficult. Mr. Inderwish noted that the School Department has their rules and regulations and the Parks has their rules and regulations, and when people do not follow them is when things go bad and we end up with grievances. It is a matter of communications. Mr. Kane still seems philosophical differences between the schools being just another customer. Mr. Inderwish stated that the school gets preference and we try to accommodate requests. They have researched what is needed to open the parks, we get no money from the budget, and it is a user based with the exception of the Summer Recreation Coordinator. The volunteer issue has been an issue of Mr. Rucho's his since he was on the Parks Commission. He thinks it needs to be looked at. McCormick thinks it is not a dead issue. Mr. Rucho noted that when Little League lines the fields there is no question, when we lined

the fields at the school a grievance filed, and the community service group can line the fields.

Ms. Breen will try to institute a community service program for the student to work on the parks. Mr. Phillips thinks it is a very good suggestion but asked her to please check with the town because of the issues with the DPW. Ms. Breen noted that a lot of schools have seniors do community service. Mr. McCormick's understanding of the fields is when the school was built the only way to get it accredited was the town had to agreed to let them use the field. To him there should be a charge. There has to be a document somewhere in the town that spells that out. Mr. Inderwish reported that we recently did a survey on the town's website and we asked the question about user fees and only 17% of those who replied felt the fees were too high. Mr. Kane is not questioning that they are too high, he is questions that there is a fee. The issue becomes who is accountable for those who do not pay and the permit holder is responsible for collecting. Mr. Monk does not think kids should not be charged to pay sports. Mr. McCormick would like to find the paperwork on when the school was built and the issue of the fields.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. Phillips at 8:15 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: September 1, 2010

Nancy E. Lucier

Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

Allen R. Phillips, Vice Chairman

Steven J. Quist, Clerk

Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman

John J. O'Brien, Selectman