



## RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

February 6, 2024

7:00 PM

Remote Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Hema Santhanakrishnan (HS), Commissioner; Joe Will (JW), Chair; Steve Trimble (ST), Clerk; Melissa Settipani-Rufo (MSR), Recreation Director; David Martin (DM) Select Board (SB) Liaison.

**Absent:**

Public Attendees: Jeff Bergart, Rich Doherty

JW opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

### I. Regular Business

1. Review of meeting minutes from January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. No comments raised. Minutes accepted as presented.
2. Residents' Concerns.
  - a. Dog Concerns at public parks
    - i. MSR received an email unhappy with dogs unleashed at parks approaching quickly. MSR explained there is no leash law, but voice control is expected from the dog owners. The only exception in Town is at NARA where dogs need to be leashed. JW mentioned there was some discussion about tightening the dog rules in parts of the Acton Arboretum.
    - ii. DM stated that if the Rec Commission wants to take action about this issue, it could be a formal topic on a future agenda. DM can bring any recommendation from the Rec Commission to the SB.
3. Reports:
  - a) *Events, Programs, & Facilities*
    - a. All NARA Summer Concerts are booked.
    - b. *The newly minted regional LGBTQ+ Pride Festival represents an expanded pride event with surrounding towns, like Westford. Discussions are underway with Concord; Maynard and Carlisle have also expressed interest. JW thought "Middlesex" was too broad and suggested that any name alternatives be sent to MSR. MSR was fine looking at other names. ST asked about other abutting towns. MSR noted she reached out to Littleton and Boxborough who have not responded. Event Dates: June 14<sup>th</sup> Drag Show (Acton only), Regional Pride Festival: June 15<sup>th</sup>.*
    - c. *MSR noted rentals are off to a strong start for the summer along with sport field permits. Programming has been slow, which is normal this time of year.*
    - d. *MSR noted a marionette show takes place this weekend (1<sup>st</sup> of three shows), funded by the State's Municipal Festivals Grant.*
    - e. *MSR needed to work with the School Street field permit holders due to the Lion's Town Fair needing a different week than the one that was scheduled for them. MSR noted all parties agreed to the switch.*

- f. *July 4<sup>th</sup>: If the override doesn't pass, there will not be a celebration.*
- b) *Main Street Campus*
  - a. *Dennis Dale's landscape architect company has been paid and the general plans are now in place for the Main Street Campus.*
  - b. *ST has an action item to talk to Dean (SB) about the status of the Senior Park. It was not added to the Capital Plan and it will be up to the Recreation Department to build the park in the future (if still wanted by the community), once the dog park and McManus Manor efforts are completed.*
- c) *Community Preservation Act*
  - a) *Current Projects*
    - o *Gardner Playground Renovation*
      - *MSR notes updates are in discussion between Corey York and HDC (removing a wall and other adjustments for safety and in line with HDC guidance).*
    - o *NARA Bridge Boardwalk*.
      - *MSR stated the work is in process; the old bridge has been demolished, and the new bridge should be ready this spring.*
  - b) *2024 Projects – presented in December*
    - o *Jones Shade Structure – noted as priority two.*
    - o *Sports Plaza Shade Structure – noted as priority one.*
    - o *Dog Park – ST noted that Tom Gillispie stated it must receive some funding or the park is in jeopardy of not completing.*

## **II. New/Special Business**

- 4. Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)
  - a. MSR noted the first draft is close to completion. The deadline is April when it must be ready for an SB agenda. The OSRP is in digital book format. It contains new photos from a public photo contest, and the comments gathered in a few public meetings are all in one section.
  - b. MSR feels the OSRP will be complete by summer.
- 5. Disc Golf Update
 

Mike Gendon checked with state to see if there are any restrictions on adding a course at Camp Acton. He felt the language suggests there are restrictions, but it's ultimately the Conservation Commission's decision. Rich Doherty noted it cannot accommodate more than a nine-hole course.
- 6. Annual Town Report
 

Town management asked that Committee/Commission reports be submitted for the 2023 Town Report by 2/26/24. JW suggested MSR send out a draft of the Recreation Commission Report and ask for comment by Monday 2/12/24. JW reminded the Commission to send all comments directly back to Melissa.
- 7. Painted Snake Face Rock at NARA:
  - a. MSR painted a snake face on a rock for the Haunted Trail walk in the fall.
  - b. A resident voiced displeasure with the alteration.
  - c. The contract with Pumpkin Guts Productions stated to have all elements of the park back to its original state. At last month's meeting, MSR presented the options of returning the rock to its original state. This topic was tabled from the last meeting, as JW and HS wanted to see the rock in person before making any decisions.
  - d. ST suggested to make it a "welcome rock" with painting "Welcome to NARA" over it, or build it out to support the camp legend of the "NARAcuda."
  - e. After discussion, JW moved to leave the rock as is (painted), with HS seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Recreation and Conservation Restrictions

- a. There are several Conservation Restrictions and new ones planned for the recent Conant land acquisition and Morrison Farm. JW noted two SB members strongly supported the restrictions; one SB member was undecided, and one member strongly opposed. Jim Snyder-Grant wanted more time for public input and did not voice an opinion.
- b. ST voiced concern that Conservation Restrictions may reduce potential future active recreation opportunities especially at Morrison Farm. He noted that there is a desire (voiced in CPC meetings) to move a portion of Concord Road to a Historical Corridor.
- c. Prison land is under a State Conservation Restriction; JW noted that one parcel not visibly protected was directly west of the horse farm. MSR noted the School Street Field lease was signed in September for five years.
- d. Conservation Restrictions are full of “dos” and “don’ts” and are specific to each parcel. JW noted that although no motorized vehicles are permitted, electric bikes are not classified as motorized vehicles.

9. Additional Business

- a. ST noted a July 4<sup>th</sup> opportunity for 250<sup>th</sup> Committee to introduce merchandising and other publicity.

8:15: ST motions to adjourn, HS seconded, all approved and the meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

**Upcoming Recreation Commission Meetings**

Date	Time	Location
March 6, 2024	7:00 PM	Virtual
April 3, 2024	7:00 PM	Virtual
May 1, 2024	7:00 PM	Virtual