

Recreation Commission Minutes

Date: 4/10/2018

Recreation Center, 50 Audubon Dr., Acton MA, 7:00 pm

Attendees: Edward Holcomb, Commissioner, Stephen Trimble, Commissioner, Joe Will, Commissioner, Melissa Rier, Recreation Coordinator, Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, and Manjunath Venkatram, Ledge Rock Way resident. Not Present: Barbara Willson, Commissioner, Katie Green, Selectman, Mary Lou Repucci, Office Manager.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Trimble at 7:00 pm.

2. Citizen's Concerns: NARA Improvements – Manjunath Venkatram

Mr. Manjunath emailed the Recreation Department and Commission on March 27, 2018 about concerns and recommendations he wanted to share about NARA Park. He lives on Ledge Rock Way, Acton MA. He was invited to attend and discuss these topics in more detail.

1. Trash management

– Open trash bins, loose trash along walkways, the pond and parking lots were concerns. Cathy explained that park staffing is funded by the Recreation Department's collection of fees and operates May-August, with extended daily trash maintenance into October. Open bins are used with drain holes so that they can be lifted by grounds personnel into vehicles. Trash lids are subject to loss by the wind. Loose trash is picked up by the groundskeeper.

ACTION ITEM: Trash collection is a challenge that we will continue to find better ways to manage.

2. Unleashed Dogs

- A leash policy approved by the Board of Selectmen is posted at NARA. Some dog walkers do not follow the rules and there are no enforcement means other than NARA staff verbally approaching patrons not following the rules. The Dog Officer can now impose fines without a Board of Selectmen hearing, but he serves the entire Town and does not patrol the Park.

ACTION ITEM: Tac Palmer, Dog Officer, will be contacted for advice.

3. Events/Private Parties - time of conclusion

-Manjunath proposed that events and private parties conclude by 9:00pm. Cathy explained that most weekday events end by 8:30 pm, large ticketed concert events end by 10:00 or 10:30pm, which is the curfew set for evening events by the Recreation Department. Park abutters are notified via postal mail in February about the concert schedule. Events are planned by Recreation and sponsored by local businesses to benefit the community and schedules cannot be changed.

ACTION ITEM: Private Parties at the Park will be reminded to discontinue all amplification of music by 9:00pm.

4. Cleanliness of Restrooms

– Restrooms at the Bathhouse are cleaned at 2:00 pm and at 7:00pm by NARA lifeguards during the operating season.

ACTION ITEM: Recreation will monitor conditions of restrooms and continue to find better ways to keep them clean.

5. Puddle outside Volleyball Court

- The Natural Resources Department is aware of this puddle that occurs on the walkway after heavy rains and has been considering ways to mitigate the collection of water in this area.

ACTION ITEM: This is planned to be addressed by channeling the water to a nearby rain garden that is to be constructed.

6. Restroom facilities near Baseball Court (Upper Field)

- The need for a restroom facility in the north region of the Park is being addressed by the construction of the Sports Pavilion, which will contain men's, women's and a family bathroom. It is anticipated that the design will be completed this spring and will go out to bid for construction this summer. A 2-unit restroom is also planned to be installed opposite the Picnic Pavilion.

7. Attracting more birds to the Park

- The Natural Resources Director, Tom Tidman, has indicated that there is a healthy bird population at NARA, and does not recommend the installation of bird houses that would attract predatory house sparrows that kill other bird species. There are bluebird houses that populate the Park to attract bluebirds and tree swallows. He also sets up bird feeders in several trees during the winter that he monitors.

8. More water to the Park and water conservation

- The movement of surface water within NARA was carefully engineered and a wetlands replication area captures rainwater runoff and cleanses it as it makes its way to the pond. Details about the Hydrology of NARA are found within the NARA Master Plan.

9. Main Entrance to the Park

- Mr. Venkatram proposed that Quarry Rd. become the main entrance to NARA rather than his street, Ledge Rock Way. He suggested directing traffic onto Ledge Rock Way by turning right from Quarry Rd. While Ledge Rock Way is a residential road, so is Quarry Rd. Quarry is the entrance to the north (upper) region of the Park, and Ledge Rock Way is the entrance to the south (lower) region of the Park. Since 25 Ledge Rock Way is the Park's address and operation center at the Bathhouse Pavilion, it would not benefit the Town to change the Park's main entrance.

We briefly discussed ways to try and change the public's undesirable behaviors. Mr. Venkatram accepted a copy of the NARA Master Plan to review more information about the operation of NARA Park.

3. Consent Agenda: February 6, 2018 Minutes.

Action Item: February 6, 2018 Minutes accepted as amended, 3:0.

4. Action Item Review from February 6, 2018 Minutes

None to report.

5. Online Registration Migration to MyRec

Cathy reported that the transition to a new online registration platform, MyRec, has been proceeding. It went live at the end of February and has been well received by the public.

6. NARA Operations – Summer Planning

Melissa has ordered NARA parking stickers and is planning our distribution of them to Acton residents and non-residents.

7. Reports:

a) Rail Trails: The date of May 11, 2018 has been proposed for the ribbon cutting event to officially open the Bruce Freemen Rail Trail.

b) NARA Sports Pavilion: Nothing to report.

c) T.J. O'Grady Skate Park: Melissa reported that Curtis Brigham has offered to organize a fundraising event with judges on the street course and bowl on August 23, 2018. She is also looking for help organizing a GoFundMe site to help raise the remaining \$14,000 goal. Steve Trimble volunteered to help.

d) Playgrounds: Melissa reported on fundraising plans for Jones Playground which includes a Fishing Derby at NARA, a lemonade stand at Jones Field, a Fun Run with obstacles for kids and a Corn Hole Tournament.

e) Community Preservation Committee: Recreation proposals for the Skate Park Completion and NARA Performance Improvements were approved at Town Meeting

f) Community Gardens: Nothing to report.

8. New Business:

Cathy has been analyzing field expenses that are paid from the Recreation revolving fund. She will be working on a proposal to bring to the Commission to allocate the costs to the Youth Sports Leagues, according to their field usage.

The Terms of Agreement that the Recreation Commission periodically signs with the Cemetery Commission to allow active sports use of Woodlawn Field (Concord Road Field) was read aloud by Cathy and signed by Commission Chair Steve Trimble, dated 2/6/18.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm.

Minutes submitted by Cathy Fochtman.