

South Hadley Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes: February 11, 2020
Recreation Department Office – Town Hall

Presented by Recreation Director Andrew Rogers

1. **Roll Call:** Meeting called to order at 5:35pm by PD. Attendance: Patrick Dawson (PD), Mark Zraunig (MZ), Laura Friesner (LF), Ben Sabbs (BS), Byron Joy (BJ), Ray Carillon (RC). Staff: Andy Rogers (AR). Excused: Dave Mendoza (DM), Ryan Kennedy (RK), Brian Couture (BC)
2. **Minutes of January 14, 2020:** Approved as presented: RC/MZ. 6-0.
3. **Bills Payable:** Approved as presented. LF/BJ. 6-0.
4. **Correspondence:** AR reviewed the correspondence from the previous month. Of note was a response AR sent to a parent that complained grades 1 and 2 basketball are split by gender on the South Hadley Facebook Page per Recreation Commission policy and inclusion of Granby in our league. There was no response. Also, a letter from the Friends of Buttery Brook about closing the skate park.
5. **Schedule of Events:** AR reviewed the schedule of events from the past month. With DM guaranteeing over 30 veterans for the Red Sox at Yankees trip, we added that May 8 trip to the Bronx.
6. **Old Business:**
 - a. BS gave an update on the sub-committee's work on the coach complaint they have been working on. They will report back in March.
 - b. AR is waiting to hear back from PeoplesBank to see if they are be our major sponsor the fireworks once again this year. The sub-committee for special events/fundraising will have to help with this moving forward.
 - c. At this point, there has not been any other information about the proposed Flag Day parade/event.
 - d. Winter sports have been going very smoothly, for what is typically a season where there can be some issues. There was nothing of note mentioned from anyone from what they have heard.
 - e. MZ said that the soccer association will be meeting tomorrow to further discuss their structure and to attempt to get a board in place. They are hopefully going to be able to attend the March meeting to discuss with the commission.
 - f. AR gave an update on the budget which contains two capital items of netting at Plains School and Pickleball courts at Buttery Brook Park. The budget process is moving forward now to the various committees.
7. **New Business:**
 - a. Bill Simard, Parks Department Supervisor was in attendance to discuss the Parks Dept and their responsibilities. The important items of discussion:
 - i. They currently have Bill and three full-time workers. They had eight fulltime staff ten years ago. There are four trucks.
 - ii. They typically have four seasonal employees. Minimum wage is now \$12.75 per hour.

- iii. They are responsible for the athletic fields, Police Department, Town Hall, Canal Park, school grounds, park by Stoney's as you enter town, Village Commons, Old Firehouse Museum, Lecca Park and Buttery Brook Park.
 - iv. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, they have the seasonal employees working weekend/evening hours due to BBP.
 - v. Bill said that the town is investigating subbing some of their duties out to private contractors. His goal would be for the school grounds to be done. Those are often challenging with time of day issues and school activities. MZ asked how a contract like this would impact the current staff? BS didn't think it would have any impact moving forward. Ideally Plains and the high school could be subbed out.
 - vi. He noted that fields need irrigation. Those that have it are in much better shape and the town should commit to irrigating all the fields. MZ asked if there was irrigation at the Town Farm. BS said that is his "nemesis field" as the sub-surface as a riverbed like quality and water cannot get through it. The ultimate fix would be to blow it up and regrade in a way fields can go in any direction. It was asked if parents could help with watering when needed which is something that could be possible.
 - vii. RC asked if we can have organized clean up days? BS said yes, those can be helpful. AR noted someone asked if groups can help clean up the line painting, as during wet weeks, they sometimes cannot be done. BS was agreeable to that as well. RC noted the fields continue to look better each year.
 - viii. BS said the Parks Barn as been on the Capital Plan for several years and he is hopeful something can be done. AR has visions of a combined Parks/Restroom building for the turf; however, BS noted that head quarters at Buttery Brook might be better for them.
 - ix. PD asked about the turf maintenance. BS gave a rundown of what they do and costs associated with it. They actively are picking up trash and loose debris, running the groomer over it, and every few seasons hiring an outside firm to use their machines.
 - x. MZ asked about combining the Parks and Recreation Department, something that everyone seemed agreeable to but has no easy answer due to the current setup.
 - xi. RC asked about using the Bowl for practices. BS/AR agreed this is basically a parking lot and is not maintained; hence, is not a good place to sports to currently be played.
 - xii. BS said that dugouts are a concern, and they need help from the teams cleaning up after practices and games. AR will put something out to the teams with instructions this spring.
 - xiii. RC asked about fixing the baseball mounds, and what can be done. BS said that has been a challenge, and one he will investigate on improving. Perhaps a volunteer day and instruction on upkeep will be best.
- b. The Skate Park at BBP was discussed. The Friends of Buttery Brook were no longer going to financially support it and sent a recommendation letter to close it. The town's

insurance carrier has said it is a liability and should be removed. BS noted that it isn't used all that often and is more of a BMX park versus a skate park. There have been very little support over the past few years from volunteers to help with upkeep and/or fundraising. Based on those facts, it was recommended to remove the skate park. RC/MZ (6-0).

- c. The Easter Egg Hunt and Hat Parade will be Saturday, April 11 at BATTERY Brook Park. We will need volunteers to help with this free event.
 - d. AR gave an update on the Federal Census, and the count that is official on April 1. This is different than the local census we just did for the town. There will be people out in the community counting over the next few months.
 - e. AR said some spring sports are on schedule to start March 23. Lacrosse numbers appear to be very good and registrations for all others close in a few weeks.
 - f. RC asked a question about rental fees, especially on the baseball diamonds. Currently it is \$25 per game and is cheaper than other communities. AR has researched this, and in most cases like Chicopee or Easthampton for example, they have a dedicated field employee that is opening bathrooms, lining the field that day, etc... In this case, teams are given a key and are responsible for these items on their own. Most teams we are renting to have a tie to the community or have volunteered to help like the UMass Club teams with tryouts or cleanup days. We can continue to investigate this.
8. **Adjournment** at 7:35pm. BS/LF. 5-0.

