



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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**Park
Commission**
Don Howes, Chair
Michael Ledone
David Sprowl

Hopedale Park Commission April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes 7:00 pm Remote Meeting via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Attendance

Park Commission: Don Howes, David Sprowl, Michael Ledone

Park Clerk: Mary Arcudi

Administrative Assistant: Lindsay Mercier

Guests: Becca Solomon, Carol Mullen, Tracey Phillips, Tara Chambers

It was moved by David Sprowl, seconded by Michael Ledone to approve the minutes of March 18, 2021. Unanimously approved.

Announcements, correspondences and requests

- The HPC received an email from a resident regarding accessibility playground equipment at Town Park. The board overwhelmingly agreed that this was a great need and will search out grants along with proposing to the Finance Committee to allow for additional funding in the FY22 budget to include accessibility equipment. The sand is also an issue but in order to replace the sand with mulch, the drainage issue would need to be addressed first, which is costly.
- Hopedale Youth Baseball and Spring Babe Ruth League submitted a Park Usage form that was approved and the league will check with the High School sports schedule.
- Park Usage form was received from the Hopedale Scout Troop 1 asking to hold their Court of Honor presentation outside near the Bathhouse. They have already received approval from the Health Agent and the board approved this event as well.
- Greg Habel, member of Hopedale for Change, sent an email for consideration for more diversity at Hopedale Parks. At Phillips Field, mulch is the ground cover which allows wheelchair mobility and the accessibility play equipment. Town Park does have the handicap bathroom available. The board will look at grants moving forward and invite any suggestions from the residents and this particular group for guidance.

Public Comment - Short Items (non-discussion)

Tara Chambers inquired about the assistance with the Pickleball lining on one of the tennis courts. Don Howes was concerned about the tape suggested for lining the court and its ability to withstand the weather. Tara will investigate further and let the board know.

Review previous action items

- The Finance Committee sent all departments an email requesting updates to the budget proposals and potential grant information. After a review of the HPC's budget proposal, it was agreed to reduce the line items that were possible, and to reduce the repair and maintenance originally proposed but to advocate for some increase from last year's numbers for projects that are desperately needed. This would only increase the entire budget by \$4,250.

The summary would include the grants recently received of \$21,000 and the countless volunteer hours from Don Howes, and many residents in town who have contributed their time and supplies to repair benches and tables. The dog waste stations are donated by families and we have 14 in place. The employees of Ultiplay, who assisted in the installation of the new slide, volunteered to return and assist with the next playscape project. The clerk will submit the revised budget to the Finance Committee.

- Revisit proposal for FairyWalk from the Friends of Historic Hopedale - Tracey Phillips presented the board with two plans which she is waiting for approval from the Health Agent. Plan A entails having the event on June 12th with the vendors spread out throughout the Parklands. Plan B is the event would run from June 12- 30th and this would allow for visitors to be spread out over many days. No vendors would be present for Plan B and the creations would be made with natural supplies to withstand the weather. Mike Ledone made a motion to allow the use of the Parklands for the Fairy Walk depending on which plan the Health Agent approves. Seconded by David Sprowl and all were in favor.
- Update on Draper Field collaborative field project - This is a project between Parks, HYBA and Hopedale Public Schools to repair a portion of Draper Field at a shared cost. The loam has been delivered and the Highway Department is detailed with spreading and filling in the worst low points. Don Howes received a quote for hydroseeding for \$2400 and an estimate to just seed and fertilize at a cost of \$1000. It was agreed to just seed and fertilize at the reduced cost.
- Update on Town Park Playground renovations/repairs - The old slide has been removed and the new slide has been installed. Rave reviews from the families who have already had a chance to use it so far. All other components have been received and with a team of volunteers on April 24th, the playscape will be completed.
- Bench footings for Memorial benches - Don Howes met with the mason who will be pouring the bench footings for three benches, one for the approved bench for the Green family, one bench that needs to be replaced and a new third bench. The Green family has agreed to pay for one and the remaining two would cost no more than \$1400. David Sprowl made a motion to allocate up to \$1400 from the revolving account to cover the cost of two bench footings, seconded by Michael Ledone. All were in favor.
- Report on High School spring sports - Practices may begin on April 26th and the Athletic Director will send over the spring schedule once it is officially drafted. There is only girl's lacrosse this season so the field only needs to be lined for this one sport.
- Update, if any at time of meeting regarding Town Park basketball court - The Health Agent maintains the courts must stay closed until further notice based on the State guidelines, the fact that Hopedale is still considered a Red town, and unlike organized sports, there is no adult supervision to make sure all players abide by the COVID rules. The Board of Health agreed not to overturn the Health Agent's decision. Michael Ledone disagreed with this decision and believes the basketball courts should open. David Sprowl's opinion was that the Park Commission should abide by the Health Agent's decision. Michael made a motion to override the Hopedale's Health Agents decision and to open the basketball courts. Vote went as follows: David Sprowl - No, Michael Ledone - Yes, Don Howes - No. Motion did not pass and the courts will stay closed.
- Update, if any at time of meeting regarding the opening of bathrooms at Town Park - In order to open the bathrooms at Town Park, they must be cleaned every evening per state guidelines. The board received a quote of \$400 a week and would need at least 10 weeks from now until July 1 and an additional 12-14 weeks for the rest of the summer and fall. Lindsay Mercier stated that the cost was confirmed to be available through the CARES funding. Don Howes will contact a plumber to get the bathrooms ready for opening.
- The joint letter with the Conservation Commission to residents regarding disposing of debris in Parklands was officially agreed upon and Don Howes will check into mailing this to residents.

New Business

- A joint discussion was held with the Tree Warden regarding trees being considered for removal at Town Park. The large oak tree near the Little Red Shop has succumbed to old age and the crown is already dead. The cost to remove this is \$3500 and the Tree Warden's budget has been depleted. There are also trees that need to be removed in the Parklands near Driftway Street that are a hazard to residents and that cost is \$1400. David Sprowl made a motion to allocate \$3500 to remove the white oak tree and \$1400 to remove the trees near Driftway from the revolving account. Michael Ledone seconded the motion and all were in favor,
- A new initiative is being proposed - PATH - Plant a Tree in Hopedale program by Carol Mullen who shared the plan with the board. This would need to be acceptable by the Tree Warden as a viable program for the town. The HPC is supportive of this initiative and looks forward to seeing it implemented.
- Request from Diana Schindler to nominate one member of HPC to the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee - Don Howes recommended David Sprowl for this position and he graciously accepted.
- Don Howes informed the board and public that there is a hold on any new projects until current projects are complete.

Bills and Invoices

All bills are up to date.

Public Comment - lengthy items

None

Report of board members

Don Howes reported that the home plate at the Town Park ball field needs to be replaced and he will work with the coach since several options were available with the vendor.

Motion to adjourn was made by David at 8:58 pm, seconded by Michael and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Arcudi
HPC Clerk