



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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Park Commission

David Sprowl
Michael Ledone
Chairman Michael
Reynolds

Hopedale Park Commission

January 19, 2023

Meeting Minutes

7:00 pm Remote Meeting via Zoom

Attendance

Park Commission: Mike Reynolds, David Sprowl, Mike Ledone

Clerk: Kristen Ledone

Guests:

Mike Reynolds called meeting to order at 7:03pm

Mike Ledone made a motion to approve minutes from Dec 7, 2022. David Sprowl seconded, all in favor.

Announcements, correspondences and requests

- The board discussed the Town Park Feasibility Study and Concepts drafted by Tighe and Bond. Jessica Bacon posted a question to the chat regarding the property at Lot A, if there was a quote for the Harmony space if it is not turfed. Mike Ledone gave a brief overview of the lot and how it pertains to the Park Commission. Mike Reynolds said that it would cost roughly \$100-\$150k to clear the land and an additional \$25k a year annually to maintain. Mike Reynolds shared the Town Park Concepts. Concept 1 outlined the Town Park, which showed relocation of tennis Courts along Freedom St & basketball court to Dutcher St. Start to finish timeline for turf would be 6-8 months, grass would be close to 2 years. The cost for concept 1 is 2 million dollars. Concept 2 similarly has the tennis courts along Freedom St and basketball court along Dutcher St. The Varsity Baseball diamond is moved back, allowing a full-size field hockey/lacrosse/soccer field in the outfield. This concept would have a similar time frame, cost is \$2.5-\$3 million. Concept 2A is essentially the same thing but would add synthetic turf to the baseball diamond and the outfield. This concept would create a multi-use field and would reduce construction time from 2 years to 6-8 months. Concept 3 removes the Varsity Baseball field and would include a little league field with the full-size athletic field in the outfield. The Varsity Baseball would then have to be moved to Lot A. The Lot A concept was displayed. Mike Reynolds explained that these are potential Capital Improvement expenditures. Mike Ledone spoke about how he favors Concept 2A, the town would gain a usable field and not only usable but would be turf which would be utilized by all teams. Reynolds spoke about possible grants both state and federal - the Open Space Committee needs to finalize an Open Space Plan which would allow the town to apply for grants but cannot apply for grants until the plan is finalized. Hopedale Community House is willing to invest/contribute. Anne Sullivan, spoke about how very impressed she is with the letter the high school varsity players sent in. She has a question about the potential work (band aid) at Draper Field, while also doing the complete renovation at Town Park? Mike Reynolds answered that it wouldn't be an either or - that both would have to be done. Monica Phillips had a question in regard to the tennis courts and was wondering if the Park Commission could

potentially put a bandaid on the tennis courts so they could at least use the courts this year for home matches. Mike Reynolds said that unfortunately there is no band aid approach for the tennis courts. Mike Reynolds did not think that the tennis courts should be used in the future because of the cracks and the danger that they pose. Monica confirmed that the tennis team will still have away matches for at least the next 2 years. Colleen Stone had a question and was curious if any of the designs had a track. Reynolds said they have a design with a concept that included a track down at Draper Field. Colleen asked about how much taxes would increase, Mike Reynolds said he couldn't speak intelligently to it. Kristen Ledone spoke of the pros of turf, commenting that any future scheduling conflicts such as Day in the Park, could potentially use the Community House Lawn and the cub scouts could use the entrance to the parklands for their overnights. Mike Ledone said that he had gone to the Town Hall and spoke to Jeff Nutting about the process of moving forward with a concept. The project/process cannot move forward without a grant in hand - which could potentially delay the start of the project/funding. Before going before the Selectmen, funding would have to be committed. All donations would have to be committed in writing. Lori Tobin was wondering how she could support whatever the next steps are. Reynolds said the board could take a motion as to what concept they wanted to move forward with. Mike Ledone made a motion to approve concept 2A, seconded by David Sprowl. All were in favor.

Mike Ledone wanted to make a motion and put something forward to address Draper Field. Reynolds said he would like to have a company come in and quote leveling, seeding & watering. Ledone committed to reaching out to companies to get quotes for Draper field.

Katie Federico questioned if they could reach out to the owner of the parking lot at Draper Field - Reynolds said that he had asked if the real estate company would ever be interested in selling. He has not heard back. Catherine Guido made a comment in the chat. Mike Ledone read it out loud - she would like her daughter, who plays field hockey, to be able to play on a safe/flat field. She fears that with not having home games, officials and opponents would be hesitant to return to Hopedale in the future.

Katie Federico was wondering if "crowdfunding" could be done. Reynolds said they would look at all angles, from town/organizations. He wouldn't crowdfund yet but would have to figure out how to accept donations.

- Tracey Phillips request for the Fairy Walk. Is an annual event. Dave made a motion to approve, Ledone seconded, all were in favor.
- Kelli Mylette requested for the 4th grade field day June 9th with a rain date June 12th.. Sprowl made a motion to approve, Ledone seconded, all were in favor.
- Mike Reynolds created an initial budget plan. Did not see a need to ask for any additional funding to their annual run rate. He will update the Town Park line item to include concept 2A. David Sprowl made a motion to accept the budget plan, Ledone seconded. All were in favor.
- Bird Nature walks through the Parklands. Ledone made a motion to approve, Sprowl seconded. All were in favor. Weather permitting.
- The board discussed their 2023 meeting Calendar. Meetings will begin at the town hall again in March unless the governor extends the remote option. Mike Ledone made a motion to accept the 2023 Meeting Calendar, Sprowl seconded. All were in favor.
- The Annual Report Draft was written up. The section about Town Park Phillips and Draper needed adjustments. Reynolds suggested the conversation that the board had and plans that they have in place around 2A. Continuous improvements and capital planning for Phillips and the approach for Draper as far as what it would take to get it somewhat level, topsoil and grass seed and get it usable for the Spring for youth baseball and for our field hockey team.

Mike Ledone made a motion to accept the annual report with the amendments discussed, Sprowl seconded. All were in favor.

Public Comment - Short Items (non-discussion)

None

Review previous action items

- The mats for the ADA Swing are currently in the Boat House. Chris and Steve said that they will install the ADA mats in the spring when the bathrooms are de-winterized. Reynolds committed to speaking with Chris about laying out the mats.
 - Updates on Draper Field were discussed. Bryan Stone of the baseball board said they had met as a board previously and said that Draper has always been an issue. There have been issues with field placement, there is no water/electricity. Dirt and loam have been trucked in and leveled but there is no way to maintain. He is looking for options. Mike Reynolds responded that they are aware of the conditions of Draper and there are significant improvements needed. When the town accepted the land from CDM there were certain conditions that limited the ability of the Park Commission as far as what they can do at the field. They can truck in loam, level and seed and then just must rely on Mother Nature to water and cooperate - nothing is ideal. Spoke about the research years ago done to potentially put turf in at Draper. Spoke with Tighe and Bond about capping Draper - Tighe and Bond explained it would cost close to 2 million dollars to just cap Draper. Mike Ledone agreed with Mike Reynolds regarding Draper. Mike Ledone stated that they do not own the parking lot at Draper and cannot control or repair the parking lot. Cannot dig down 2 feet below the surface for irrigation. Mike Reynolds stated that the location of Draper is optimal. The Park Commission prior to Reynolds had done a great job of maintaining the “low hanging fruit” and some of the larger items have been neglected. Dave Sprowl discussed the poor conditions at Draper and how they have always been that way mainly because of the lack of water. Though it is town owned land, anything voted on as far as improvements and/or changes has to then be approved by CDM Smith. The Park Commission will have to decide on a plan going forward and include it in the budget. Suzanne MacNeil thanked the board for their work regarding the parks and asked that the correspondence from the field hockey captains and Stephanie Ridolfi be read. Mike Reynolds shared his screen and read the letter from Stephanie Ridolfi, AD of HJSH. Monica Phillips questioned the feasibility study done at the Town Park. Reynolds responded that the board will discuss later in the meeting.
- The Park Commission also received a letter from the field hockey captains, Emma Gosselin, Alyssa MacNeil & Lizzie Brytowski. Reynolds shared the screen and read the letter aloud. Shared their sentiment and mentioned that the tennis teams can also not use home courts. Kristen Ledone mentioned that MHYFH may be willing to contribute financially to get Draper back up and running for the short term. Lori Tobin asked about the possibility of Lot A and Reynolds said that a turf complex is not feasible there.
- As the Bathhouse is being cleaned out, Forest Friends are able to use the Bathhouse. The end goal is to be able to open up the doors and let people use it. The back of the bathhouse on the pond side needs a deck/ramp/railing so that the doors can be opened in the future. Mike Ledone suggested a ramp that can be removed in the winter and put in place in the warmer months. The board will be looking for an Eagle Scout to possibly build some sort of deck or ramp.

New Business

Bills and Invoices

Public Comment - lengthy items

None

Report of board members

Mike Reynolds said he values the public's feedback and opinions.

Other topics not anticipated in the last 48 hours

David Sprowl made a motion to adjourn, Mike Ledone seconded. All were in favor.