



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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Park Commission

David Sprowl
Michael Ledone
Chairman Michael
Reynolds

Hopedale Park Commission

May 18, 2023

Meeting Minutes

7:00 pm Remote Meeting via Zoom

Attendance

Park Commission: Mike Reynolds, Mike Ledone, Chris Larson

Clerk: Kristen Ledone

Guests:

Mike Reynolds called the meeting to order.

Mike Ledone made a motion to approve minutes from April 20, 2023. Chris Larson seconded. All were in favor.

Mike Reynolds was re-appointed as Chair and Mike Ledone remains as Vice-Chair. Chris Larson was newly elected to the Park Commission.

Announcements, correspondences and requests

- Correspondence from Jonathan Chase from the Historical Commission. The Little Red Shop was offering a bike repair and air pump for people in the Blackstone Valley. They presented a proposal to the Park Commission to place the bike repair/air pump close to the bathhouse. A concrete pad, if large enough, would be needed (or two 48" pads). Mike Reynolds was concerned if there were tools associated and not connected to the unit, they would be vandalized or stolen. Jonathan was confident that the tools were attached to the unit. Mike Reynolds said they would have to connect with the Highway Department to see if they could accommodate laying the concrete. The Historical Commission will have the unit as soon as the Park Commission is ready to receive it. Mike Reynolds said that the unit could be stored at the Bathhouse in the meantime. Chris Larson had a question in regards to the concrete pad, who would provide the concrete? Sue Ciramicoli asked if the Park Commission could use their budget to cover the concrete costs. Chris Larson estimated that it would cost close to \$100. Mike Reynolds said as long as there are no challenges with the override, he would have no problem with Parks picking up the cost of the concrete. Chris Larson made the motion to propose that the Park Commission partner with the Historical Commission to receive and install a bike stand/repair station that will be donated and the cost of concrete pads to install will be donated by Parks and installation is TBD. Mike Ledone seconded, all were in favor.
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Public Comment - Short Items (non-discussion)

- None

Review previous action items

- Summer Program update. The Commission is still in limbo as they wait for the Override vote. If the Override does not pass, there will be no summer program. If the Override passes, the Park Commission has someone lined up to run the program this summer. Mike Ledone suggested next summer to not have the program as it runs at a deficit. The program costs \$15,000 to run and the Park Commission brings in only a couple thousand dollars.
- Town Park Project update. The Park Commission presented a warrant to the Town, an ask for \$4 million. Mike R spoke at the Town Meeting, and the article was voted down. The Park Commission will have to get back in touch with Tighe and Bond, where the project will be delayed the potential increase in cost could be 25%. Mike Reynolds spoke of serious concerns, particularly at the Town Park. The Freedom St rock wall is a grave concern. The town did approve \$80,000 which will cover the engineering study which will tell the Commission what needs to be done to the rock wall. Mike Ledone was upset they did not count the votes in the cafeteria during the Town Meeting, did not agree with the FinCom decision to favor 38 articles and declare the Park Commission article unfavorable. Mike R received an email from Superintendent Karen Crebase, looking to work together over the next year to try to get the Parks project approved. Mike L explained that the excuses and comments regarding the safety hazards of turf cannot be worse than the kids playing on Draper Field. Mike R followed up on the Open Space Plan status, the Plan is pending the ADA Compliance Audit. The Audit will not pass because nothing the town has is ADA compliant. A hurdle the board will cross soon is grant writing, the members of the board are not grant writers.
- Mike R spoke with Stephanie Ridolfi regarding the challenges around the ability to improve Draper. Stephanie had been in touch with Milford regarding exchanging facilities, Milford is looking to use the Parklands for Cross Country in exchange for potential use of turf for the field hockey field in the fall. Chris Larson said that in his experience painting lines for soccer and field hockey on the same field over at Phillips Field would be nearly impossible, so sending field hockey to Phillips Field in the fall would not work. Chris Larson said in his experience top dressing or looking into North Turf would be beneficial – they specialize in athletic fields. He was wondering if the Highway Department was asked to maybe truck in loam to potentially lower costs. Mike L met with a vendor to get a number, \$13,000 to level the center of the two baseball fields and \$17,000 to do all the fields. Hydro seed would bump up the quote to close to \$30,000.

New Business

- The yearend budget will be discussed at the next meeting once the Override vote goes to the ballot vote. Hopedale Youth Baseball and Boosters said they would both be willing to contribute to improvements to current facilities once short-term goals and areas are considered.

Bills and Invoices

- Mike R had taken care of all bills.

Public Comment - lengthy items

- Janice Doyle had feedback for the members. She has suggestions for how to get more members of the community involved. She is convinced that if the Park Commission comes out with a statement pleading with the community to help it will bring citizens together. Mike R appreciates the comments but stated that the Parks have been ignored for 50+ years. The community is allowing the facilities to become dilapidated. There are Massachusetts regulations when it comes to field turf and natural grass, that the Park Commission will follow. The Park Commission does not have the resources to maintain natural grass. Mike R also reminded Janice that the Park Commission meets every 3rd Thursday of the month if members of the community want to become engaged/informed. Mike R said that the town invests heavily in all aspects of the town and ignore then Parks. Janice disagreed with Mike R's comments, Mike R reiterated that the town does not invest in Parks and Recreation and that the budgets for the other boards may be small, but their salaries are large. Janice said that meetings do not work, and people will not attend the meetings. Mike R reminded Janice that the Park Commission presented to the Select Board, FinCom, worked with leadership in town and have been extremely transparent with the

town. Mike R said that the town sees no problem in purchasing \$4 million in conservation land but will not invest in the Parks and Recreation facilities that are used every single day.

Report of board members

- Mike L would like to talk next meeting to try and coordinate getting a representative from all youth boards to join Parks meetings. They will be able to communicate specific needs from each facility or some sort of field update – what worked and did not work during the season.
- Chris Larson agrees that all parks are in disrepair and have lacked improvements. Chris was enthusiastic about the Town Park proposal. He does agree with Janice that a lot more people need to be involved and agrees with Mike L that the people that use the fields need to be more involved.

Other topics not anticipated in the last 48 hours

- Chris Larson said that Becca purchased 21 trees, that were planted and look fantastic. Adin Ballou had 4 trees planted. Chris wanted to make a motion to remove bushes in front of the Ballou statue and replace them with grass. Mike R said that they could put potential options together for work going forward. Mike L said that Ballou Park may not even be owned by the Park Commission, they are still waiting for the Historical Commission to confirm ownership.

Mike L made a motion to adjourn the May 18, 2023 meeting. Chris L seconded. All were in favor.