



AYER PARKS DEPARTMENT

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Minutes of January 18th, 2024 - Ayer Parks Commission

Location: Parks Office 35 Bligh Street Ayer, MA

Members Present: Chris Tavares, Chairman, Gerry Amenta, Jason Mayo

Absent: Sarah Gibbons & Kevin Malantic

Also Present: Jeff Thomas, Ayer Parks Director, Matt Minear, Sarah Ernst

At 7:15 PM Mr. Mayo made a motion to open the meeting. Mr. Amenta seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (3-0-0)

Public Input

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Amenta motioned to accept December's meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Mayo seconded. (3-0-0)

Projects

Playground

Mr. Thomas reported that for the nature play area of the playground there is now 3 platforms and an A-frame structure that was constructed in December. One concern that will be addressed when the weather gets nicer is the height of some boards between two of the platforms that will need to come down a little bit for liability reasons. The stumps that can be walked across will be closer together than originally planned for safety reasons. That part of the project will be worked on when the weather gets better as well. The nature playground still has space and we have been brainstorming more ideas to build up that area. There still is no update on the contractor or the arrival of the playground equipment, which is still scheduled for mid-March.

Holiday Decorations

Mr. Thomas reported that there were over 60 snowmen and trees displayed around the park and were all taken down before the first snowstorm of the season. It was a great turnout, and his team will be reorganizing and prepping some newer cutouts for next year.

Beach House

Mr. Thomas reported the options of the beach house study with the commission and recommended that they all take more time to look it over and decide at a future meeting on how to proceed with that project. Mr. Mayo also let the commission know that the project could get CPC funding if it is a renovation project over a brand-new build.

Girl Scout Project

Mr. Thomas was approached by a girl scout looking to do her silver project with the park. The proposal was for cigarette butt dispensers around the park, and Mr. Thomas gave her other places to reach out to do that project since smoking is not allowed on Parks Department/Town property.

Eagle Scout Project

Mr. Thomas reported that he was also approached by a boy scout looking to do his Eagle scout project at the park and was looking for an idea on what the park needs.

Finance**FY25 Budget**

Mr. Thomas let the commission know that the next steps for the FY25 budget will be a meeting with the Select Board and finance committee and all the department heads to be in attendance. The only other item that needs to be added to the Parks budget is potential COLA additions for seasonal workers and the line item for the Assistant Park Director, now it is still a proposal. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Tavares will have a meeting with Mr. Pontbriand to see what the next steps are to push that position forward. The job description has already been created and will have the commissioners look it over.

Capital Planning

Mr. Thomas reminded the commission that the only Parks Department item on the Town Meeting agenda for capital planning is a utility vehicle, which so far has had no opposition.

Incidents

Mr. Thomas reported that he had a meeting with the individual involved with the turf damage on Field 6 last spring and the restorative justice group that the Commission had authorized negotiations for remediation. Mr. Thomas said that the meeting was also attended by the APD detective and responding officer that oversaw the case. After about an hour of discussing the event and ramifications it caused, Mr. Thomas presented the offers for remediation by the Parks Commission: Either \$200 for cost of repairs to the field or 20 hours of community service (not with the Parks Department), and a letter of apology to the Parks Commission and the Town of Ayer. It was brought up that the individual would have difficulty raising the money due to moving to Connecticut and not having a job yet due to his desire to join the Marines within the next few months and having few resources to perform community service. The Detective suggested that his joining the Marines might be considered a substitute for community service, and Mr. Thomas said he would pass that proposal to the Parks Commission, contingent on his acceptance into the Marine Corps by March 2024. The Parks Commission discussed this and had no objection to this proposal. Mr. Thomas will follow up on the matter.

Mr. Tavares wanted the commission to be aware that on 1/6/24 during a boys' basketball game, level 7/8, a parent was ejected by the referees. Since then, the parent was suspended until the ASYB board met to discuss it. They had a conversation with that parent, who had no previous incidents and was apologetic for the offense. They lifted his suspension in time for the next scheduled set of games.

Facility Requests

None to report.

Gibson Award

The commission talked about the right time to give the award to the recipient. They decided on doing it at the year end celebration for basketball season.

Soccer

AYS

Mr. Amenta mentioned that they are looking to open registration soon and to have a conversation with the Shirley program about doing combined sessions at the U8 level.

ASYS

Mr. Thomas reported that registration is open and being overseen by the ASYS Committee.

Basketball

ASYB

Mr. Tavares reported to the commission that the HS gym is officially back open, meaning that the middle school gym has opened for teams to be able to practice after 6pm during the weekdays. They are hoping for games to move to the HS gym for the 27th. TAP will be hosting the championship games this year. For the championship amongst the ASYB teams, shirts need to be ordered.

AYB

Mr. Thomas reported that everything has been going well. Miniball and Unlimited basketball started this month, and it has been a good start to the season. The 3rd/4th grade levels will be moving back to the HS gym with its reopening.

Next Meeting

February 15th, 2024, at 7:30pm at the Town Hall.

Adjourn

At 8:12 PM Mr. Mayo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Amenta seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (3-0-0)

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