

**Recreation Commission
Special Meeting
Wednesday, February 16, 2022**

MINUTES

Present: Ed McCann, Arnie Helt, Jeremy Schaller, Linda Aquavia, Greg O'Brien, First Selectman Dan Jerram, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

Others Present: Pam Fitzgerald, Elaine Murphy (Members of the Board of Brodie Park Inc)

Acting Chairman Ed McCann called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM. He noted for the record, that Chairman Joe Petrarca was unable to be present at the meeting and had asked him to assume chairmanship for the evening.

Mr. McCann asked the members of the committee if they would agree to move "Correspondence – Brodie Park -to the beginning of the meeting seeing that there were individuals present from Brodie Park Inc who wished to address the Commission.

MOTION: by O'Brien to begin the meeting with the agenda item "Correspondence – Brodie Park Inc re financial assistance available"; seconded by Aquavia.

Unanimous.

Correspondence – BrodiePark Inc re financial assistance available:

Present at the meeting were Elaine Murphy and Pam Fitzgerald from Brodie Park Inc. They informed the commission that Brodie Park Inc. has had several successful fundraisers and they would like to make a donation toward the cost of the new signs that the Commission is interested in purchasing for Brodie Park. The signs measure 4 ft x 3 ft and are made of bonded plastic with lettering routed into the signs. The cost of the signs are \$5800 plus installation. Ms. Murphy and Ms. Fitzgerald commented that Brodie Park Inc. would like to be involved in some projects at the park. They want to be kept informed of what needs the Recreation Commission has so that they can partner with them and help them achieve some of their goals. Mr. McCann mentioned a community board; stating that there used to be one near the Tennis Courts. He thought it would be nice to have one of these up at the park again. Many people use the park and it would be an additional way to keep people informed of events and town business. A locking cabinet design would be best in order to be able to monitor the contents. The Commission agreed that the best place for such a board would be near the parking lot and under a light. Notices regarding town events/meetings/activities could be posted in the case. The Commission agreed that it must be kept updated. Details for responsibility of keeping the information current will need to be worked out. Member Schaller offered to look into the costs of these kinds of cabinets. Ms. Murphy and Ms. Fitzgerald informed the members of the Recreation Commission that they would like to renovate the lifeguard cabin and the snack shack. They will come up with a blueprint/plan for approval prior to doing anything.

Before moving on to the next topic of discussion, Member O'Brien asked Brodie Park Inc. representatives if they had decided how much of a donation they will be giving. They replied that they

will cover the cost of the signage.

It was noted that the former Friends of Brodie organization made a contribution in the amount of \$1400 to BrodiePark Inc. This was given with the intent of helping fund new signage at the park.

Operations Updates:

Acting Chairman McCann asked resident in attendance Mr. John Pierce if he would like to address the Commission at this time regarding anything specific. Mr. Pierce of Niles Road stated he is in full support of Frisbee Golf and Pickle ball courts. Mr. Pierce is an avid Pickle ball player and commented that the conversion of one of the clay tennis courts at Brodie to a pickle ball court does not work. He suggested that this court be turned back to a Tennis Court. He is aware of plans to construct a court at Browns Corner and he anticipates that if one is installed at Browns Corner, it will get used.

Ski Club

Ed would like to send something to thank Jane Allyn her for her efforts with Ski Club this year. A brief review of the Ski club program ensued. The Insurance Company relented at the “11th hour” and allowed the town to pursue sponsoring a ski club. There were other client towns who pushed the issue. Special waivers acknowledging the risk of COVID were created and participants and chaperones were required to sign off that they understood the risks of exposure when belonging to a group activity. No bus was available for the group for transportation to Ski Sundown and parents had to transport on their own. Ski club was a success. Thank you to Jane for her efforts. The Commission agreed to send flowers to her as a thank you.

Nurses Cabin:

The Commission revisited the topic of the Nurses cabin. Should funds be invested to renovate this cabin or should it be torn down? Ed has not been inside to check and see if it is still leaking. No engineering has been done. The Commission agreed that they will reassess this building in the spring to see what they feel should be done with it. The Board of Selectmen has put in a large ARPA request for funding for the parks. They have earmarked \$150,000 for Brodie and \$100,000 for Browns Corner. First Selectman Jerram commented that some of the funds should be used to rehab some of the cabins and make them into ‘rentable space.’

Recreation Commission member Linda Aquavia asked about the status of the free standing bathrooms. Mr. Jerram replied that there is a grant for the project and there will be bid specifications created soon so that the job can be put out for bids.

Beach Sticker Sales Shed:

The Beach Sticker shed has been delivered and set up; Ed stated that it needs to be turned so that sight lines are better. The sales people will still be outside as the main purpose for the shed is protection during sudden inclement weather.

Pickle Ball at Browns:

Ed has located the pickle ball equipment that was ordered a couple of years ago and it will be installed at Browns Corner. It will be installed on the basketball court. Pickle ball needs a firm surface and the intent is to use ARPA funds for resurfacing the current court. Mr. Pierce suggested that 2 pickle ball courts be considered. Mr. Helt supported retaining the basketball court and adding one pickle ball court.

Ms. Murphy asked about using Field House for pickle ball and Ed replied that it is not ready for permanent use as an activity space. There are no bathrooms and no potable water available, and it would need some interior “fixing up” if it were to be used for activity space. It currently functions well as storage. He mentioned that the Cheerleaders for youth football use it for some practices in the fall a few evenings, and they supply water and have a porta potty on site. This is limited use for a few hours a week.

AED for Beach:

Mr. McCann mentioned that there is still need for an AED (defibrillator) for the beach. There will be a need for both adult and children’s patches. AED should be available for large events such as concerts and New Hartford Night.

Disc Golf:

Jeremy updated the Commission regarding the Disc Golf course. He stated that the course is along the edge of the property so that there is still enough space for dogwalkers and disc golf players to “co-exist.” Jeremy commented that most disc golf players are respectful of walkers and there should not be any problems. Equipment is all in; but the ground is solid and it needs to thaw before posts can be installed. Volunteers will assist in putting the posts in. Pads also need to be installed- each pad will have a marker showing the hole number and the distance. Jeremy suggested having one sign at the beginning of the course that shows the course outline. John Pierce asked how this will work with others who want to use the park. Jeremy re-stated that the course is on the perimeter and players are respectful if they see people walking. Playing the course takes about 1 hour 15 minutes and the course will be a great place to learn how to play. It is family friendly with the elevation being flat. Some additional needs for the course will be markers, wood stone dust and some minor things left to purchase.

Recreation Director:

First Selectman Jerram mentioned to the Commission that the Board of Selectmen is discussing the funding to bring back a full time recreation director. They feel that there is the need to bring back this position. There are parks, trails, waterfront, youth sports, rentals that could be under the responsibility of a full time individual. Mr. Jerram stated that Ed has done a great job assisting with the operations of the summer programs/waterfront, but there is room to grow with offering some winter programming. Rick Berneike, a longtime volunteer for the soccer program and the person who has been responsible for coordinating the maintenance at Browns Corner, has indicated that he is ready to turn field maintenance oversight back to the town. He is looking to reduce his responsibilities and has stated that getting folks to volunteer for anything gets harder all the time. Linda commented that she feels that having a full time director would be beneficial to recreational programming and stated, “we need a director.” The First Selectman confirmed that he is working on the budget to get the position funded. He agreed that Youth Sports will need some additional assistance as time goes on.

Review of Costs of Beach Stickers/boat moorings for Brodie; Discussion and Action:

Discussion regarding pricing for the beach stickers, boat slips and canoe/kayak rack rentals ensued. The Commission recognized that minimum wage is increasing to \$14.00 per hour as of July 1, 2022 and then will increase again in 2023 on June 1 to \$15.00 per hour. These increases in wages will have a direct effect cost of operations and revenue is need to fund the costs. The Commission discussed the need to make adjustments and increase some of the costs.

MOTION: by O'Brien to increase the cost of a resident beach sticker by \$5.00; increasing the price to \$95.00 and to increase the cost of a non-resident beach sticker by \$15.00 resulting in a cost of \$350.00 (for all non-resident stickers; including senior and non-resident 2nd car); seconded by Helt. It was noted that Senior Resident sticker price remains at \$50.00 and Veterans (resident/non-resident) with proper ID remain at \$50.00

Unanimous.

MOTION: by O'Brien to keep the canoe/kayak rack storage rates the same as the 2021 season; seconded by Schaller.

It was noted that since beach sticker fees are increasing for a majority of the beach goers, that is enough of an increase for one year.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by O'Brien to establish one fee for all boat moorings, regardless of the size of the boat and to increase the fee to \$550.00; seconded by Aquavia.

Discussion ensued regarding the number of boat slips that the boat mooring can safely hold. The size of the boats is getting larger as more Pontoon boats are used. There needs to be an area where kayakers can safely launch their kayaks/canoes. First Selectman Jerram will have the area measured to see what works for the number of slips. It is believed that 10 might be the maximum.

Unanimous.

Capital Funding 2022/2023:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Commission that there is the opportunity for additional funding for the parks due to American Rescue Plan Funds. A recommendation has been made by the Selectmen to allocate funds for park improvements. There is also the grant funds that will be used to construct the bathrooms at Brodie Park.

Mr. Jerram would also like to purchase a large mower for Browns Corner. He would like to have a mower that is stored on site, rather than have to be transported to the Park.

Signage at Brodie Park- Discussion and Action:

This topic was discussed in conjunction with Correspondence and

Correspondence – BrodiePark Inc re financial assistance available:

This agenda item was moved to the beginning of the meeting

Discussion/Action of 2022 Meeting dates:

The Commission discussed their need for meetings and decided that meeting every other month would be sufficient, with the option of calling a special meeting if needed to attend to anything of a more urgent nature.

MOTION: by Schaller to schedule Recreation Commission meetings every other month beginning in April 2022 on the third Wednesday of the month (June, August, October, December and then February 2023 at 6:30 PM); seconded by O'Brien.

Unanimous.

Approval of Minutes of October 20, 2021 meeting:

MOTION: by O'Brien to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2021 Recreation Commission meeting as presented; seconded by Schaller.

Approve: O'Brien, McCann, Schaller, Aquavia
Minutes approved.

Abstained: Helt

MOTION: by Helt to adjourn at 8:02 PM; seconded by Aquavia.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

Attachments:

Letter to Recreation Commission dated January 2022 from BrodiePark Inc re project assistance