

RECREATION & PARKS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 5, 2019
Avon Town Hall, Building Department Conference Room

I. Call to Order - 7:30 a.m. – By Peter Ponziani, Chairman

A. Attendance

1. Members & Staff Present

Ruth Checko, Director, Peter Ponziani, Barbara Ausiello, David Jadovich, Joe Weist

2. Members & Staff Absent

Donald Droppo, Jr., Kelly Jackson, Kimberley Pereira

II. Minutes – January 8, 2019

Minutes from the January 8, 2019 meeting were presented.

Mr. Jadovich motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Ms. Ausiello seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Mr. Daniel Carvalho of Carvalho & McDowell Construction, Inc. attended today's meeting. Mr. Carvalho said he spoke with the Avon Soccer Club regarding the proposal of installing an item on the new fields that would be dedicated to Pat and Art Hennig for all their dedication and hard work they have put in for the soccer club. After some discussion with the soccer club, it was decided to put in a scoreboard instead of a sign. Mr. Carvalho's proposal was provided to committee members. Daniel explained that the Hennigs have been a leading force and have had an incredible impact on children's soccer in Avon and said he felt it was something that needed to be done in honor of the Hennigs.

Ms. Checko explained to Mr. Carvalho that the soccer club would have to understand that the new fields would also be used by other sports organizations and not just the soccer club. She said a policy would be created for the field use so that all organizations would know what to expect. Mr. Carvalho understood and said he would reach out to Lauren Yarnell of the Avon Soccer Club. Mr. Carvalho said he reached out to City Sign, which is the company that installed the other scoreboard at Fisher Meadows. Mr. Carvalho said he would provide the concrete, rebar, labor and other miscellaneous materials at no cost to the Town. Ms. Checko recommended to Mr. Carvalho to raise the funds first and then we could proceed with this project. Mr. Carvalho said he would like to unveil the dedicated scoreboard at the 2019 Memorial Day Soccer Tournament. Ms. Check said this would not be possible for this spring because the fields would not be done by then and she wants to see what the fields lay out will be and this will not be done until the fall. Mr. Carvalho asked if the sign could be put in a common area so that it could be seen from all areas. Ms. Checko said she would work with Engineering for placement of the scoreboard. Mr. Weist asked if this was the first time that an item was being donated in Town in honor of someone. Ms. Checko said no, other items have been donated at Fisher Meadows. Mr. Weist asked who maintains the donated items and Ms. Checko said the Town does. Mr. Ponziani asked if approval would be needed from any other Town departments and Ms. Checko said she did not think so. Mr. Carvalho said he will still submit the drawings to the Town. Ruth explained to Mr. Carvalho that there is not conduit installed on the new fields so if he could do a solar sign, that would work best. Mr. Carvalho said he would look into a solar sign. Mr. Carvalho thanked committee members for their time and asked if Ms. Checko would try to make this project work for the May 2019 date. Ms. Checko said she would see what she could do but it was not likely to be completed in that time frame.

IV. Director's Report

Ms. Checko stated that a Director's report was not prepared and everything is covered on the agenda.

V. Correspondence

A. Letter to Chairman, Peter Ponziani from Matthew Woods, Avon Youth Lacrosse President

Ms. Checko told committee members that the department had hit a bit of a rough spot with Avon Youth Lacrosse but believes we are working things out. Ms. Checko met with Matt Woods from that group and they worked together to come up with a plan for spring. During their meeting Ms. Checko said Mr. Woods provided some short term and long term goals for their organizations field use in Town. Mr. Woods proposed implementing seasonal priorities for field use. Ms. Checko explained to committee members that she feels that we should stick with the Town's policies regarding field use and we now have the Athletic Field Use Manual that will be provided to each sports organization in Town. Mr. Weist asked if Ms. Checko has come to an agreement with Mr. Woods and she said not yet, but they are continuing to work together to resolve the situation both in the short term and the long term. Mr. Woods ideally would like to use the Thompson Road property for Lacrosse, but not in the condition that the fields are in. He would like to see the Town do field improvements at that site. Ms. Checko said that would be done, but it is going to take time. Mr. Woods's concern at Fisher Meadows is if they are assigned the north fields, and they fear those are the first to flood and then Lacrosse wouldn't have any field space. Mr. Jadovich said yes, the north fields do flood first but if the north fields flood all of the other fields will flood as well. Ms. Ausiello asked if Lacrosse gets bumped a lot and Ms. Checko said yes they do but not more than anyone else. Mr. Woods wants priority field use in the spring. Ms. Checko said other towns don't give priority field use by the season. One of Mr. Woods's long term goals is to re-do the fields at Avon Middle School. Mr. Weist asked if the Board of Education is interested in investing money to re-do the fields at some of the schools. Ms. Checko said she didn't think so but she would reach out to Mr. Woods and ask him to contact the Board of Education as well.

B. Volunteer Background Screening Program

Ms. Checko gave committee members a brief over view of how the department's background screening process works. She said she has drafted a document on the background screening process and she wanted to review it with the committee members and make them aware of it. Ms. Ausiello asked if there are situations where a person starts volunteering prior to the background check being processed and Ms. Checko said yes, this has happened in the past. Ms. Ausiello asked if there was a way to streamline this so they are done before the person begins volunteering and Ms. Checko said it has not been an issue in the past and typically if a person knows something will show up on their background check, they don't usually volunteer. Mr. Ponziani asked who processes the background checks and Ms. Checko said Mrs. Henry is the only one that processes them and it is only brought to her attention if there is an issue.

C. Letter to Ruth Checko, Director of Recreation and Parks from Daniel Carvalho

This item was covered in section III, Public Comment.

VI. Committee Communication

This item was covered in section V, Correspondence, item A.

VII. Old Business

A. Fisher Meadows Expansion Project

Ms. Checko reported that the irrigation is installed in the new section and irrigation will be installed in the old section this spring. The new fields will be re-seeded and fertilized. The plan is to open the new fields in the fall.

Mr. Weist asked if there were any other items like the conduit that may be needed but not on a list of needed

items. He asked if there was some kind of checklist for items that may have been forgotten or overlooked. Mr. Jadovich asked if the conduit had been considered being installed earlier in the project and Ms. Checko said no it had not. Mr. Jadovich asked if it was go late to put the conduit in at this point. Ms. Check said she will check with Bruce Williams, Public Works Director. Mr. Weist suggested having a checklist template that could be used on future field projects and Ms. Checko will also discuss this with Mr. Williams.

B Synthetic Turf Field Project – Avon High School

Ruth Checko informed committee members that the next meeting of the sub-committee will be March 20, 2019. She said bids will be opened on Friday, March 8, 2019 and they will be reviewed by herself, Ms. Tiezzi, Assistant to the Town Manager and Engineering and BSC Group and then a recommendation will be made to the Building Committee. Ms. Checko said the information will be presented to the Building Committee and then the Building Committee will make a recommendation to the Town Council to award a contract. When asked, Ms. Checko said she has not heard any pushback on the athletic lighting project. Ms. Checko said the lights are a separate project and the funds would have to be raised before anything can be done with the lights. Ms. Checko said once everything is approved, the Synthetic Turf Field project can move forward.

Ms. Ausiello asked if Ms. Checko has heard anything on artificial turf fields being banned. Ms. Checko said yes, but if it is passed, we do not believe it will affect our project. Mr. Ponziani concurred.

C Operating Budget

Ms. Checko said the operating budget is in the approval process and then it will now go to Board of Finance and then the Town Council for approval. Mr. Robertson asked department heads to come in with a zero percent increase. The Recreation department came in with a 0.7 % increase.

Mr. Weist asked how a minimum wage increase to \$15.00 would affect the Recreation Departments budget. Ms. Checko said for our FY2020 Budget we provided two salary wage scales; one at \$10.20 per hour and the other at \$11.10 per hour, but she did not provide one for the minimum wage to go to \$15.00 per hour. If the minimum wage goes to \$15 per hour, it would cost the department \$21,000 more annually. She said initially an increase would only affect the department for the month of June and then we would work the increase into the new budget in the fall but there might end up being staff cuts. Mr. Jadovich said the increase would be phased in and not affective all at once.

VIII. New Business

A. Softball and Baseball Fields

Ruth Checko said the Fisher Meadows softball field is in need of renovations. She said the town will do what it can for the spring season and she will put together a renovation project for this summer for that field. She is looking at replacing the clay, the bases and doing some fence repairs, covered dugouts and some other amenities.

Ms. Checko said at Sperry Park there are some concerns about Sperry field #2 and these will be addressed this spring. The Town is doing a maintenance training with the Little League volunteer coaches in conjunction with the Public Works Department and Little Leagues cleanup day.

Ms. Checko reported that the Avon High School baseball field renovations have been completed and will be ready for use this spring.

B. Scoreboard Proposal from Daniel Carvalho

This item was covered in section V, Correspondence, item C.

C. Volunteer Background Screening Program

This item was covered in section V, Correspondence, item B.

D. Field Allocation

This items was covered in section V, Correspondence, item A

E. Unassigned Fund Balance

Nothing to report.

F. Discussion of Late Fee Policy

Ms. Checko told committee members the department's Late Fee Policy, explaining that registration for programs closes one week prior to the start of the program. Once registration closes, a \$25 late fee is applied to any late registrations if there is room available in the program. The reason for the late fee is due to administrative costs involved in having to re-process instructor contracts as well as class rosters and any other necessary adjustments for adding more people to a class. Ms. Checko said we have only had a couple of people give pushback on the late fee and they are people that have been taking the same class for 20+ years. One person listened to Ruth's explanation and the person then proceeded to contact Brandon Robertson, the Town Manager and he gave this person the same explanation of the policy. The person then proceeded to contact the Town Council and attended the Council meeting to address the issue with the Town Council.

Ms. Checko asked committee members if the department had their support for the late fee. Joe Weist asked if the department ever waives the late fee. Ms. Checko, said yes we have in that past on a case by case basis. Ms. Checko said she actually waived the fee of the person that was upset with the policy that went to Brandon and the Town Council. Committee members said they are in full support of the late fee policy.

IX. Adjournment

Mr. Jadovich motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 AM. Ms. Ausiello seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by Sharon Henry

Sharon Henry
Sharon Henry