

Recreation Advisory Board  
Tuesday, August 27, 2019  
Senior Citizen Center  
7 PM  
Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Stephanie Papakonstantis, Chair; Courtney Marshall, Dan Provost, Mike Wissler, Jen Harrington, and Brinn Sullivan; Molly Cowan, Select Board rep; and Melissa Roy, David Tovey and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec. Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. December 14, 2018

**MOTION:** Ms. Harrington moved to approve the minutes of December 14, 2018. Mr. Provost seconded. All were in favor.

- b. March 28, 2019

**MOTION:** Mr. Provost moved to approve the minutes of March 28, 2019. Ms. Harrington seconded. All were in favor.

- c. July 23, 2019

**MOTION:** Mr. Wissler moved to approve the minutes of July 23, 2019. Mr. Provost seconded. All were in favor.

4. Recreation Park Project Review - Tighe and Bond

Gordon Leedy, a Landscape Architect and Planner with Tighe and Bond, spoke about the Rec Park planning process. They've done a complete survey of the property, and are now doing a boundary review. This is important because their working design is pushing the limits of the park property. There are existing constraints within the park, such as the active and well-used pool facility, the Healy Memorial (which may need to be relocated), the distance from parking to the fields, and the steep grade in the back part of the property.

They've tried a number of different plans for the layout, and Mr. Leedy presented one that he felt was the most successful. They will maintain the existing fields, since the clubs have made significant investments there. They've reimagined the parking, making it separate from the main circulation in the park; cars will drive around the west side of the pool to a more centrally located lot. The proposed new building would be sited next to the pool, playground, and parking lot, reducing pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. There is a separate drop off driveway where cars could loop around the front without impacting the through traffic. They're also proposing to add a parking lot on the east side, for a total of 150 spaces more than today. They would be adding two additional full size square fields, for soccer or lacrosse. They propose to

expand one of the existing fields and create a potential new playground location and a slope that surrounds a bandstand or community event space. There would be a ¼ mile loop trail for walking. All facilities would be ADA compliant, including the new playground and all pathways. Ms. Papakonstantis asked about lighting. Mr. Leedy said they would definitely include safety lighting for the pathways; they could also light any fields, but at an additional cost. The new LED lighting is much more efficient than older lighting, but has a higher initial cost. If installed, it would be virtually maintenance-free for 25 years.

Mr. Leedy said they would be phasing the project. Phase 1 would be to create the far parking and relocate the tennis courts, and complete a significant portion of the loop trail. In Phase 2, they would redo the parking area in front, create the access to the rear, and construct the building. After Phase 2 is complete, they would have 90% of the park's functionality. The creation of the two back fields would be in Phase 3. Mr. Leedy has been working with the architect on the program for the new Rec building. Building costs are unpredictable, and are getting up to \$250 to \$300 dollars per square foot. Mr. Wissler pointed out that that cost was without furnishings.

Mr. Wissler asked if they would need a variance to put a driveway on the west side since it was close to the property line. Mr. Leedy said he thinks that under the RSAs, governmental use is not subject to zoning laws. They would need to make a presentation to the Planning Board and take their comments, but the Board doesn't have the authority to deny the use.

Mr. Wissler said that moving Healy Memorial may be a touchy issue. Mr. Leedy said that they can find a better, more prominent place for it. Ms. Sullivan said that they could position it as an opportunity to re-memorialize. Mr. Wissler said it may be a fundraising opportunity.

Ms. Marshall left at this time.

Ms. Sullivan asked about bathrooms. Mr. Leedy said that the bathrooms in the new building would be accessible from outside and open 24/7. They could also be accessible from inside; the door to the inside could be locked after hours. Ms. Roy said that if they were able to do a maintenance shed, they could also do a unisex bathroom there; it's a budget question. Mr. Leedy said that as an interim solution, they could build a structure within which portapotties could sit. Ms. Sullivan suggested composting toilets. Mr. Leedy said they could also look at other efficient options, such as low flow urinals.

Mr. Bisson said that Softball plans to invest further in the park; they want to put a concession stand with bathrooms in. They need to coordinate that group with the plan.

Ms. Sullivan asked if everything on Parks and Rec's wish list was in this plan. Mr. Roy said their wish list initially included a full sized gym with a walking track above, office space, three multipurpose classrooms with sink and counter space, one large scale multipurpose room for a senior program or talk, storage, a stage for a band or presentation, bathrooms, a space for Exeter TV, and a teaching kitchen. They calculated how much square footage would be necessary to get everything and it was 37,000 square feet, which would cost \$10.5 million just for the building. For the plan under discussion, they considered only what is absolutely necessary.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked if Meals on Wheels would be moving to this new building. Ms. Roy said they are working with Mr. Dean on what's feasible. If the Senior Center and Rec Building were sold when the new Rec Park is complete, Meals on Wheels would be displaced. Meals on Wheels is not cooking from scratch, just preparing meals for delivery, and hosting no

more than 12 people for community lunches. They only need counter space, a fridge, and a freezer.

Ms. Sullivan asked about the revised square footage for the building. Mr. Leedy said it would be 24,000 square feet with a gym but no walking track. It's likely to be a two floor building, since the proposed footprint is only 16,000 square feet.

Mr. Wissler said that this should give Parks and Rec the multipurpose and office space that they need. Mr. Bisson said yes, and programming space. Ms. Roy said they would like to increase the programming offering and continue to host support meetings. They need a new, accessible building. Mr. Leedy said they can't shortchange storage; they need to put furniture somewhere to make it a multipurpose space. Mr. Provost asked if modular walls were an option. Mr. Bisson said they talked about opening up the three smaller rooms. Mr. Leedy agreed that the more flexible the better, but warned that they would also want acoustic privacy between rooms.

Mr. Bisson said that the Rec Advisory Board will have to support this project. Construction costs have skyrocketed since they last tried to build, and it didn't pass at that time. Mr. Wissler asked if they need the gym. Ms. Roy said they can't have programs in the summer without the gym. Ms. Sullivan said the community is growing, and they're going to need a gym. Once finished, they can't come back to this project. Parks and Rec should propose the big project and have it pared back by others.

Ms. Sullivan asked whether Tighe and Bond get a safety assessment from emergency personnel as part of their design process, for example in light of ALICE protocol. Mr. Leedy said they could run this design by the public safety people, but safety has more to do with building design, entry control, and a defensible landscape. If people are around, vandalism and crime are less likely. They need visibility into the park, and good lighting. They can incorporate this perspective into the process.

Ms. Harrington noted that the snack shack and pool are not included in the phases, and asked if there are no plans to modify or renovate them. Mr. Bisson said that portion is in the CIP in five years, so it's separate from this work. Ms. Roy suggested calling the CIP work Phase 4. Mr. Leedy said it makes sense to vote bonding for the whole thing, then they don't have to take another vote. The Select Board would have to vote to release the bond amount for each phase. Ms. Papakonstantis said that last year, everything got voted in, so this year the Rec project is vulnerable. Mr. Leedy said that the total cost is probably close to \$10 million. The warrant is set in January, so he's not sure if there's even enough time to put together a warrant article for the whole thing, but they may be able to get Phase 1 at around \$700,000.

Ms. Papakonstantis said that the town doesn't own the Planet Playground land, but if they could get a new lease, that area should be included in Phase 1. Currently the lease is renewed every 5 years, but they'd like to extend it to 20 to 30 years, so they can rebuild the playground where it is. If not, it doesn't make sense to leave it there. They had an offer in to buy it, but the land is worth so much more than what the town can pay.

Mr. Wissler asked about their strategy for the public comment meeting on September 18th. Mr. Leedy said they should make general comments and show existing conditions, not present the plan yet. Ms. Cowan said if they show this, people will be too specific in their comments, and she would prefer to hear more of what they want. Ms. Papakonstantis said that people are going to want a dog park here. Ms. Sullivan thought that a dog park should be created by a coalition of

residents, not by Parks and Rec. Ms. Roy said their message should be that a dog park at that facility is not right, but they're looking elsewhere.

Ms. Sullivan asked how they will address the criticism that this park is just for kids. Mr. Bisson said there will be an ADA accessible walking path, tennis/pickle ball, more accessible parking, and a facility for seniors there. Mr. Leedy added that there will be shade and rest spots. Ms. Roy said she wants it to be multigenerational. Ms. Sullivan suggested they call it the proposed Multigenerational Center. Ms. Papakonstantis said they should get seniors to come speak about senior programming as part of the deliberative session. Ms. Roy said she has a number of seniors ready to speak. She added that night meetings are tough for some; deliberative session is best, since it's a Saturday morning. Ms. Papakonstantis said they should do a brainstorming and feedback session at RiverWoods. Mr. Bisson cautioned that RiverWoods residents don't need the amenities, so they need to hear from other seniors who do need them.

Ms. Cowan said that the Rec summer camp is the most affordable option. It represents a savings for families and a benefit for the town. Mr. Provost said they could have after school programming. Ms. Papakonstantis thought this could help them recoup money, since aftercare is expensive. Ms. Sullivan suggested they could lease a space to Great Bay Kids Company or run it themselves with the proper licensing. She added that the older adult population is growing, and young and old currently have no space to come together. This is filling a need. Residents want more green space and outdoor space. She also suggested they pull the Master Plan into the discussion. Ms. Roy said this project meets the first four "support" goals of the Master Plan.

Mr. Bisson thanked Mr. Leedy for coming. The Department will be sending out notifications of the public meeting to get the word out. Ms. Papakonstantis said she wanted all age demographics to be there. She asked that the Board send any further ideas to Mr. Bisson and Ms. Roy prior to the next meeting.

#### 5. Other Business

- a. Ms. Papakonstantis suggested that Board members volunteer at the Powder Keg Festival on October 5th. It's fun and comes with a free ticket.
- b. Mr. Wissler said that NH DOT has a statewide bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan. He suggested they all go on the interactive website and report the Guinea Road Bridge over 101 as an area that needs attention, since they need this route to the CMS to be safe.

#### 6. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Ms. Sullivan moved to adjourn. Mr. Provost seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary