

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, November 26, 2019
Senior Citizen Center
7 PM
Draft Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Mike Wissler, Stephanie Papakonstantis, Jen Harrington, Brinn Sullivan, and Val Castonguay; Molly Cowan, Select Board rep; and Melissa Roy, David Tovey and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec.

Members Absent: Steve Geiger, Courtney Marshall, Dan Provost

Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7PM.

2. Public Comment

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

3. Minute Approval

- a. October 29, 2019

MOTION: Ms. Harrington moved to approve the minutes of October 29, 2019 as submitted. Ms. Sullivan seconded. All were in favor.

4. New Business

- a. Budget Recommendation Committee Update

Ms. Papakonstantis said step 1 has been accomplished: the Rec project passed the BRC 8-2. Mr. Bisson said the project has changed since the Rec Advisory Board last saw it. They decided that adding the fill to develop the park fully was too expensive. Ms. Papakonstantis said that in the new design, the tennis courts are no longer being moved to the back corner, and the building, which would have gone where the courts are, is now behind the pool area. This preserves the natural borders and barriers, which may get them more support. Mr. Bisson said the previous design had a big drainage system, but this one only has catch basins. Ms. Roy said that by not using the steep back corner of the site, they saved a significant amount of money and fill.

Ms. Papakonstantis said the attorneys that own the senior home will allow the town to purchase or do a long term lease on the Planet Playground land. Mr. Bisson said the owners must get approval from HUD and the tenants at the nursing home. Ms. Papakonstantis said if the town purchases the land, they can get a LWCF grant, but if they lease they can't. LWCF is a federal program, where offshore drilling money is put into a fund for outdoor recreation opportunities. There are strings attached: they need to find a land swap in town for the square footage the building is going to be built on. They can build a trailhead and some trails somewhere to replace the square footage.

Mr. Bisson said they're presenting the new plan to the Select Board December 2nd. Ms. Papakonstantis said the total cost is now \$12.7 million. The BRC recommended moving it forward on a 10 year bond, but the Select Board will decide what term to put before the voters.

The senior survey results were great to have during the presentation. Regarding the naming rights, the BRC wanted to ensure that the named organization didn't have precedence on the field. After the Select Board, the real work starts. They will have to lobby and get people to vote.

Mr. Bisson said they're hoping to save money in value engineering once they have a CM. He will be presenting the cost breakdown from Eckman to the Select Board.

Mr. Wissler asked about the lighting. Ms. Roy said the parking lots and the walking track will be lighted; the fields have conduits for future lighting. Mr. Bisson said he reached out to Revision Energy and they are interested in outfitting the building with solar panels. Unitil has a program that will help the project with efficiency projects.

Ms. Papakonstantis said that one member of the BRC proposed that Planet Playground be a separate warrant article, but if they do that, she's sure that Planet Playground will go through and this project will not. She's looking for a vote from the Rec Advisory Board on this issue to take to the Select Board meeting. Mr. Bisson said there's currently a \$500,000 line item in the project. If they make it an inclusive playground, it may be more.

Ms. Sullivan suggested that they include grandparents in the discussion about the inclusivity of Planet Playground. Mr. Bisson said grandparents raising grandchildren is an issue. Ms. Sullivan said this will be economically inclusive as well.

Mr. Bisson said that regarding naming rights, Planet Fitness Playground doesn't sound too bad. Rob Ficara knows the owner and will raise it.

Ms. Sullivan said that in residents' minds, the Rec Park is all one park. Taking the playground out would seem illogical.

MOTION: Ms. Sullivan moved that Planet Playground is an integral part of the Rec Park, and it's all one project. Mr. Wissler seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Bisson said that the Friends of Rec mission is to raise money for programming and facilities. They can't run a campaign. Ms. Cowan said that there are laws about advocacy with a 501C3, although there are no laws that govern how much money a non-501C3 group can raise and spend on a municipal election. Ms. Papakonstantis said they will need \$10,000 for a basic campaign.

Ms. Cowan said they need a social media presence, boots on the ground, and information that goes to voters. In a good campaign they need to touch voters different times in different ways. The Friends and Advocacy group can work together. A 501C3 can educate. Advocacy can point to that educational material, with the extra message that they should vote for it. They should concentrate on the voters most likely to vote. Ms. Papakonstantis said they hope to recoup the 43% of voters from last time plus seniors. 277 Water Street sent a letter of support to the Select Board. Ms. Roy said there's a group of four seniors at 277 Water Street who come and ask her questions, and then disseminate the information to the other residents.

Ms. Papakonstantis said they should involve Exeter Rises, and make them aware of the sustainability aspects of the Rec Park development. Ms. Cowan said she can facilitate that. The Republican and Democratic parties would be good places to start too.

Mr. Bisson said if the Rec Advisory Board controls money for campaigning, they will have to meet in the Nowak Room and be televised, but as long as a donor writes a check directly to the vendor, it's ok, just not collecting money. Ms. Cowan said there are no laws about

municipal election money, but she does suggest keeping meticulous records in case FOIA becomes an issue.

Ms. Papakonstantis said the BRC had lots of positive feedback on accessibility, especially the adult changing tables and shower. On Tuesday, they will sit down with Bob Glowacky and get the 3D flythrough onto Channel 22. Mr. Bisson said everything about the project is on the website.

Ms. Cowan said they will reassess post Select Board meeting. If they don't get a positive recommendation, would they consider doing a citizens petition? Mr. Bisson said he can't say that he would like to see one, as he doesn't think it would pass.

Ms. Papakonstantis said they didn't schedule any Rec activities for the day of the Deliberative Session this year. Last year it upset the seniors to have everyone leave after the Rec project was discussed. The Board talked further about Deliberative Session, transportation of seniors, and the option of putting flyers at the CMS and elementary schools or giving them to summer camp families. Ms. Cowan said flyers can't come from Greg and Melissa. They need to use the contact information they have ethically. Ms. Papakonstantis said 600 voters are camp parents.

Ms. Papakonstantis said once they get the approval, they'll need to get going. They don't have time to wait for the next Rec Advisory meeting. Ms. Cowan said they should set a meeting for December. The easiest way to get donations is to ask people who care about you. Go to your inner circles. Ms. Harrington said the idea of asking for money makes her uncomfortable. Ms. Cowan said that's what gets this passed, money and solid messaging.

Ms. Sullivan asked about the timeline. Ms. Cowan said they need to develop their core constituency and find voices to speak at Deliberative Session.

Mr. Wissler asked what the next step if the Select Board votes it down Monday. It may make sense to schedule a meeting for early December. Ms. Cowan said people are cautiously optimistic that the Select Board won't. The Rec Advisory agreed to have a December meeting on the 17th.

5. Friends of Exeter Parks and Recreation

- a. Mr. Bisson said the first Friends of Rec event is March 7th, when the Friends will take on the Boston Bruins Alumni.

6. New Business

- a. Mr. Bisson said the BRC approved a warrant article to add \$100,000 to the Rec Capital Reserve Fund. They supported having a functional tractor.
- b. Mr. Wissler said behind SST at Walsh field there is a mile of yellow fence topper they would like to put at Gilman Park. The Exeter Baseball league could do it in spring. If any member wants to pick up some and bring it to Gilman Park, feel free.

7. Old Business

- a. None

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to adjourn. Ms. Castonguay seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary