

Recreation Advisory Board
Monday, January 13, 2020
Recreation Building
7:30 PM
Draft Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Courtney Marshall, Dan Provost, Mike Wissler, Stephanie Papakonstantis, Jen Harrington, Brinn Sullivan, Steve Geiger, and Val Castonguay; Molly Cowan, Select Board rep; Russell Dean, Town Manager; and David Tovey and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec.

Members/Others Absent: Melissa Roy

Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

2. Public Comment

a. None

3. Recreation Park Update/Discussion

The members discussed the Rec Park abutters' meeting of the previous week. Mr. Bisson said that 22 people attended out of 160 abutters. Mr. Provost said that the residents of Acadia Lane were concerned about construction impacts, while Wayside Drive residents were worried about traffic. He felt they should focus on Wayside Drive's concerns, and educate residents or potentially tweak the plans. Ms. Papakonstantis said that about half of the attendees stayed afterwards and were open to discussion. Some people who did not speak at the meeting later voiced their opinions online. She loves the Wayside entrance plan, but felt it's not worth creating vocal opposition.

Ms. Papakonstantis said that Rec Advisory Board members should review the Select Board meeting video, to hear the pushback and concerns. She can't speak at the public hearing because of potential conflict of interest issues, but will speak at Deliberative Session. Mr. Bisson said the Facilities Committee is saying not to move forward with the project. The Committee does have some valid points, but are mostly concerned about costs.

Mr. Dean said he feels it's a well thought-out project. The Facilities Committee started their review being skeptical, but finished thinking it was a solid project. They're supposed to look at projects with their professional knowledge of process, and he did think it passed that. The Committee asked for an overall debt service report, and he can provide that. The Facilities Plan from 2015, which is a public document, talks about the town-wide improvements that are needed, but wasn't brought up at the meeting. The Rec Park is a tough site, but the town owns it. The cost would be \$200 yearly for a \$300,000 home for 10 years, which does not compound. Ms. Papakonstantis said it's actually \$192. Mr. Dean said that the cost is the cost, but the town gains a permanent asset and the Court Street parcel is freed up for Public Safety, Town Offices, or for sale.

The Board discussed the division of talking points for the Select Board hearing among the members, and how to recruit the public to speak in favor of the project. Points discussed were parking and safety; the project's relationship to the Master Plan; Healthy Town/Healthy

Communities and year-round activity; Substance Abuse Prevention and Substance Counseling; a potential Summer Camp expansion; employment for high school students; increased senior programming; the shelter this facility would provide to users of the park; the inability to sell the current property; the town-wide facilities document which is in place; the reasons for the increase in sitework and cost; the lack of ADA compliance for the Rec Building and Planet Playground; and the 30 year value from this project.

Ms. Cowan said they went through a long process of passing the article last year; they advocated, held a September 18th input meeting with 30 people, and made direct attempts to correspond with abutters. Mr. Provost observed that the public approved \$250,000 to create this plan, why would the public now not be in support? Ms. Papakonstantis said the cost has gone from \$7.1 to \$12 million; the scope has changed, but they're still wanting the \$7.1.

Mr. Dean said it used to be that the Select Board would pass these warrant articles to the public as a matter of course, but it's now a much more intense process. The pushback so far is really just from abutters and the Facilities Committee. They need this to go forward to a vote to inform facilities planning going forward. Ms. Papakonstantis said that everyone should ask the Select Board to let the voters decide.

Mr. Bisson said that at the abutter's meeting, they presented an alternative site on Continental Drive, which could potentially be purchased for \$1M. After adding a building, pool, soccer fields, and baseball fields, it's a \$22M project at minimum, with ideal building conditions. No other sites that are town-owned are big enough. Mr. Wissler said he was concerned about including this information and getting too far into the weeds in their presentation.

Mr. Provost asked about the most important points for the Select Board to hear and whether they should limit the comments to those points. Ms. Cowan said there's no point where Select Board members stop listening, but there will be no changing some peoples' minds. This is to give the rest of the Select Board members cover for voting in favor, and to counter the perception that the Rec Park didn't do its due diligence. They've thought about all of these things and the Board should let the voters decide.

Ms. Papakonstantis said they will never convince the residents of Wayside Drive, but if they make the street no parking, it would go some way to address concerns. Ms. Cowan said she could make a motion to that effect, contingent on the project passing. Ms. Papakonstantis said they should include a stipulation to allow resident & guest parking. Ms. Papakonstantis said when this was discussed at the meeting, abutters were still concerned about traffic, but felt heard. They could also close the parking gate or put a sensor on the entrance for the police. Mr. Dean said there would be money in the project's contingency to address this.

Mr. Dean discussed the process of the Deliberative Session, where town residents will get the article into its final form. The only voting done there is to make amendments to articles. An article can be closed out; once they're done, they can move to "restrict reconsideration" so that the article can't be brought up again at the same meeting. The Rec Park will be Article 4, and will come up first at Deliberative Session.

Ms. Papakonstantis said she will continue to work on the Select Board meeting plan and members should contact her directly if they have questions.

4. New Business
 - a. None

5. Old Business

a. None

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to adjourn. Mr. Provost seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary