

Date: January 8, 2019, 6:00-9:30 PM

Place: Brookline Town Hall, Room 111

Commissioners Attending: John Bain, Clara Batchelor, Daniel Lyons, Wendy Sheridan and Nancy O'Connor, Jim Carroll and Antonia Bellalta

Commissioners Absent:

Staff: Erin Gallentine, Parks and Open Space Director, Leigh Jackson, Acting Recreation Director, Jessica White, Parks and Open Space Assistant.

TOPIC	KEY POINTS/DISCUSSION	
Chairman's Welcome Approval of Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J. Bain opened the meeting. N. O'Connor moved to approve the November 13, 2018 Park and Recreation Minutes. Seconded by A. Bellalta. All in favor. 	
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Public Comment 	
Appoint Cypress Playground Design Review Committee Discuss Cypress Playground Consultant Design Team Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J. Bain stated that each commissioner received the entries of all 7 applicants. Each Commissioner was asked to submit three names to J. Bain and all the Commissioners did so. Helen Charlupski, Deborah Rivers and Matthew Cooney were the three chosen. He stated to the others that applied that he encourages their continued participation in the process, to stay involved and emphasized that they will have a voice. N. O'Connor moved to approve Helen Charlupski, Deborah Rivers and Matthew Cooney to the Cypress Design Review Committee. Seconded by W. Sheridan. All in favor. Deborah Rivers wanted to thank the Commission; she is looking forward to participating. She would really like to get the High School students involved. E. Gallentine added that the committee will interview two design teams for consultant services on Tuesday the 15th in Room 103 from 6-9 pm. She discussed the schedule. The consultant will be chosen that night. 	
Soule Early Childhood Center Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gina Tzizik and Karen Mikita addressed the Commission. A Facts sheet for Soule and a current brochure were distributed G. Tzizik discussed the program, unique activities and offerings provided by the Soule Early Childhood Center. She stated that they have fully integrated Montessori and have received full accreditation. 	

- Gina Tzizik stated that there has been a focus on traditional life skills outside the academics. She discussed the sewing curriculum and samples of the children's work. She added that it is great for hand eye coordination. She stated it is a fun part of what they are doing and prepares them to enter into kindergarten. They work closely with the Brookline Public Schools.
- The youngest children at Soule are from 1 year-2.8. Preschool starts at 2.9. The sewing is for ages 2.9-5. She stated that the kids love doing it and helps to develop their concentration.
- She stated that they go to the Museum of Fine Arts every month. She stated that last year they studied Edna Goals Hopkins, and G. Tzizik introduced the kids to mono printing. Examples of this art work were shown. The kids paint right on the gel plates.
- She stated that they do lots of cool art and last year they became a music together center. They have 2 teachers that went to music together training. This year the teacher is Tyler and he will be introducing keyboards. The kids love him. The kids at Soule go skating every Friday in the winter. In the spring they go to the pool and the kids learn to swim. They want the kids to be active and utilize the resources within Brookline.
- The field trip age groups were discussed. The types of field trips were discussed.
- The Center is fully enrolled and she has started a rolling admission for the 2019-2020 year admission. There are 72 children total in the program.
- Gina Tzizik stated that next thing on the horizon for Soule is the opening of another toddler classroom in the BEEP building. Once approved by Licensure, this classroom will have 9 toddlers.
- Gina Tzizik discussed the outside play. If the weather is 13 degrees or below they go to the gym or above 13 they go outside.
- She stated that 45% of the kids are bilingual or trilingual.
- 99% of the kids are Brookline residents. She stated that it's a community program. She stated that most go to Brookline Public Schools.
- The tuition and hours of the average school day

	<p>were discussed. Cost Recovery was discussed. They are on the lower end of market rate. She stated that financial aid is offered, they try to be as family friendly as possible while being fiscally responsible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She discussed the portfolio that they do with the artwork for the kids at Soule. • Karen Mikita discussed her background. • N. O'Connor stated that it's a wonderful program. • E. Gallentine stated that the transformation that has occurred under Gina's leadership is remarkable. She stated that Brookline is very fortunate to have this type of program and Ms. Tzizik leading it. • The Commission and Gina Tzizik discussed the transformation of the program through the years. • Gina Tzizik discussed the visitors that have come from other countries to observe their program. • The Commission thanked Gina Tzizik and Karen Mikita for coming in and for a wonderful presentation. 	
<p>Brookline Youth Baseball</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven McCarthy addressed the Commission. He is president of Brookline Youth Baseball. He has been the president for 4 weeks. He stated that he and others from the organization are attending the meeting to listen to what Babe Ruth presents in terms of being recognized as a youth group. He stated that BYB has been around since the 1950's and recognized through various forms, offering baseball on the small and large diamonds in Town. He stated that they are an organization that offers an opportunity for children to come and play. He stated that as the children move from the small diamond to the big diamond it's a big jump and it is very difficult. He stated that the transition rate is 70 percent for 13 years olds. Over the years the organization has seen increases and decreases in terms of how many children want to access the program in this age group. He stated that this year they opened up registration earlier than they normally do. He stated that they have a stronger interest on the larger diamond this year. He stated that currently there are 59 kids signed up to play for BYB on the big diamond. He stated that there is a large group of 13 year olds that have won championships. He stated that 	

	<p>they have 33 signed up as of 6 o'clock pm that evening. It is a great showing. He stated that in terms of what Babe Ruth brings, his concern is that BYB has a lot of kids and if Babe Ruth gets kids he hopes the program is good for them. He wants to make sure they have enough kids/teams to play good games in town. He stated that if they don't we will find a roster spot for them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C. Batchelor and Steven McCarthy discussed how BYB is an all-volunteer program youth sport program. They pay a usage fee for the athletic fields like all other partner user groups. If one wants to play baseball in Brookline they go to BYB. BYB and Babe Ruth wanted to do something jointly and they were trying to get there, but couldn't. It would be a competing league, Babe Ruth only provide services to the older children (13-15yrs) 	
<p>Babe Ruth Baseball- Proposal for New Baseball program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Soltani addressed the Commission. She is a Brookline Babe Ruth Board Member, BYB parent and a teacher and resident in Brookline. • She stated that the intent of the presentation is to discuss what they would like to do and why. • Brookline Babe Ruth is proposing recreational baseball for 13-15 year olds. She stated they want to focus on organizing community baseball programs for Brookline teenagers and families. The goal is to support the program. She knows that they are new and unfamiliar. She stated that they hoped to work with BYB and couldn't make that work, but they still want to bring value to the community. She stated they will work with Brookline and build a familiar brand. Babe Ruth is a familiar brand and brings a lot to the table. She stated that they are hoping to follow a standard Babe Ruth season, the season schedule was discussed. They would like to build the organization to 6-8 teams and she thinks there is a demand for that. She thinks there is interest that can be stimulated. She stated than in some years there is more interest than others. She stated that we need to pull kids in and get the kids excited. She stated at some point they would like to expand into the summer and also include community service. • L. Soltani stated that Babe Ruth is all over the Boston Metro area. Brookline is one of the few 	

communities that doesn't have a Babe Ruth team. J. Wyner described the teams they would play against/with.

- She stated that until recently recreation baseball offerings for 13 to 15 year olds has been very limited. Typical recreational baseball offerings and Brookline recreational baseball offerings as of 2018 was detailed. She thinks that with the right marketing and enthusiasm they can put together a great league. They would like to do a Babe Ruth offering in addition to the BYB offering to families and children, to give them a choice/option. J. Wyner detailed the research that they have done pertaining to Babe Ruth. He stated that what came back is the message that 70 percent of kids in those programs are retained and make transition to the big diamond. He stated that they positioned it as something attractive for players who don't make a select team. He stated that they have been working on this project since August. J. Wyner stated that they have created something with a lot of value. The kids who don't make a team are being shut out. He discussed their fees, the scholarship and sponsors.
- J. Wyner stated that one of the concerns is field availability. Examples of field schedules for BYB, Bandits and 6 big diamond teams combined chart was shown. L. Soltani stated that Brookline has ample field space to accommodate a full big diamond program at Warren and Amory. Practice time was discussed.
- She stated that they plan to cast a wide net for marketing. She discussed the potential enrollment pool. She discussed the target enrollment for them this spring, but she is unsure what those numbers will look like. She stated that it will take time for people to figure out what this is. She detailed those that could potentially want to play.
- She stated that kids are afraid to try new things when they are 12 years old and they are hoping to draw kids to this terrific game.
- She stated that they also want to offer something different and they have partnered with Matt Antonelli. He has agreed to offer clinics, to create a unique approach to recreational baseball. He is functioning as an advisor to an instructional

approach to baseball. J. Wyner provided background information on Matt Antonelli. He stated that bringing him to Brookline and offering that experience to kids is a great resource.

- She stated that they want to build the history of Brookline and focus on embracing the localness of the team; she stated one idea they have was giving the team names local landmarks. She stated that they want to make the World Series all-star games organized as community gatherings; she wants this to be a supporting and welcoming culture.
- The Brookline Babe Ruth current organization status was detailed.
- The Board Members were listed for the Commission.
- The liability insurance was discussed.
- N. O'Connor and J. Wyner discussed the charter requirements. This would preclude BYB from becoming Babe Ruth.
- A supporter/Board Member of Babe Ruth addressed the Commission. He stated that he has have been involved in BYB for many years, he has had two sons that play. He stated that he has respect for all the coaches in the room. He has a great respect for BYB. He gave some background into his experience with BYB. He stated that there are a number of players where it just stopped working when they get to a certain age. He thinks Babe Ruth is a great opportunity. He believes in choice, and families should choose. He stated it looks like the numbers are there. He would like to say something about J. Wyner who has spearheaded this, he stated that he is a great leader and CEO and it parallels very well to working with children. He hopes the 13-16 year olds will have a choice.
- Greg Walsh addressed the Commission. He gave some background into his experience with BYB and his coaching experience. He had two very different experiences with BYB with each son regarding the senior league. The first time was vibrant and great. The second time he felt like something was lost. He thinks Babe Ruth creates a real opportunity/option for this town. He has the greatest admiration for BYB. He discussed the amazing resource that having Antonelli clinics

would bring to the youth in this Town.

- N. O'Connor had a question about the Antonelli clinics in January and wondering if they plan on doing more clinics in the winter. He responded that they will all be free and will continue to do them. N. O'Connor and J. Wyner discussed the advisory role he would have. Background into the Bandits team was detailed. The Knights Program was discussed.
- C. Batchelor stated that Babe Ruth is a nonprofit organization that will provide you with a certain number of resources, some given at little or no cost. J. Wyner stated that is correct, he stated that they raised funds and have a plan for the next 5 years to support this idea. They can create the best of both worlds.
- D. Lyons and J. Wyner discussed the relationship J. Wyner has with Antonelli and the fact that he is not being paid.
- W. Sheridan asked if BYB has the same high level quality of coaching. S. McCarthy stated that he has been VP of coaching. He doesn't have a national profile but gave background into his baseball career. He thinks that most kids in Brookline enjoy playing for him; he volunteers and lives in Brookline. He stated that he works with as many coaches as he can. He stated that M. Antonelli is an amazing baseball player. He gave background into all the coaches for BYB. He has vast number of resources he taps into as well.
- James Carroll stated that this is brand new to him, he asked if there is any scenario where there is a co-existence or are we looking at an either or. J. Wyner thinks they can both coexist. He stated that we can run something smaller at first, more traditional. He thinks it will be different. J. Carroll and J. Wyner discussed national program regulations for playing fields.
- J. Wyner and D. Lyons discussed the fees.
- N. O'Connor discussed the meetings that have taken place between Babe Ruth and BYB.
- S. McCarthy stated that they can coexist, but does he think it's the best thing for the town his answer is no. He knows most kids who are 10-14 play baseball and another 8 kids that signed up were names he did not know. He was really excited

	<p>about that. He stated that they are recruiting kids to play who are generally 7-8 graders and this is the sweet spot of the beginning of the big diamond. He stated that these kids have more obligations. They are trying to get kids to come and play and enjoy baseball. They are not trying to create travel options (they have done this as a last resource). He stated that there are a lot of kids who want to play BYB. He discussed experiences of kids that came out of BYB. He discussed Friday practices. He stated that when 13 year olds go to the big diamond it is very humbling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Tracey addressed the Commission. He ran all the seniors programs for the last 3 years. He gave background into the teams over the past few years. They have been thinking about ways to get more kids to stay with them in BYB as they get older. He stated we are baseball for all; we are an all takers league. • W. Sheridan stated that personally she is not exactly sure what her role is as commissioner here, but she hears community mentioned a lot on both sides and for her community is coming together as a group. What she sees in front of her right now is a division of one group. She thinks personally it's not just about having choices/options; she wants to know what is really best for these kids. She sees kids having to decide or having parents decide for them which program to go to. She thinks that this is dividing kids and dividing the community. She finds this disappointing. There were 2 clear strong presentations tonight. She finds it unfortunate we can't come together. • J. Bain stated that if the two organizations can't get on the same page, he commends them for looking after the youth of Brookline and hopes they will share resources. He does applaud both sides and their interest in the community • J. Wyner stated that the current model in surrounding Towns are two separate organizations, we are not doing something unusual. 	
<p>Athletic Field Needs Assessment and Master Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E. Gallentine referred to the draft scope of work that had been provided in the commissioners packets. She acknowledged that they have been 	

<p>Discussion</p>	<p>talking about updating the field needs assessment and master plan for a significant amount of time. The scope of work will include an update of the full inventory, use/demand analysis, conditions assessment, hours of permitted use etc... The plan will identify the shortfalls and quantify the need for additional fields to meet the desired level of service. We will review our partnerships, look at current assets, look at ways to maximize the use of existing facilities and look at the large parcel study. She stated that we need to look at surrounding locations as well, examples of these were detailed. She stated that the plan will also include a maintenance and management plan. She stated that we will look at permitted hours, overall policy, our maintenance protocol (see if we could do things better) and we will also look at coming up with a resting schedule for the fields as part of the maintenance protocol. The question is how do we do that and how does that impact the permit users. The intent is for it to be very comprehensive. She discussed what a decision matrix for synthetic turf would look like. She is hoping to award and execute a contract in February/March and commence work with them in April. She estimates October-November 2019 for final presentations of the plan. E. Gallentine stated that they will want to update the Select Board at key intervals through this process. This RFP will go out for public bid. She says that the Town will need to look broadly for this expertise. She recommends a Park and Recreation Task Force. E. Gallentine listed examples of such representation. She stated that if anyone has comments on the scope to email her. At the next meeting they will discuss the task force.</p>	
<p>Recreation Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She handed out update notes for everyone. • She stated that they continue to vet prospective software companies. My Rec and Amilia Software Company are coming in as the highest contenders. She is hoping to finalize their choice in January 2019. <p>The building of the FY20 Budget is in the final stages and should be finished within the next two weeks. Once completed they will meet with Melissa Goff and Justin Casanova-Davis and prepare for the annual meeting with the Sub-</p>	

Advisory Committee. During the process of building the budget all activities and facilities will be put through Recreation's Cost Recovery model and any fee increases will be sent to the Commission (and to Select Board if needed) for approval.

- Items for FY2020 budget consist of the Addition of a new toddler program at the BEEC, requiring 2 new FT teachers, Addition of Full Time teacher at Soule, New Recreation Software and an Addition of a Part time Engagement Coordinator
- Select Board voted and approved our Authorization to Hire Full – Time Senior Clerk at the Pool. This is a replacement position as Carolyn Fusco has retired her full time position, and will be staying on with us Part – Time, effective 1/21/19. Interviews are under way for Carolyn's replacement.
- January will be busy with interviews, hiring, and training of new Full Time Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and Aquatic Center Supervisor.
- L. Jackson updated the Commission on the ski trips. They are extremely popular and remain full.
- Rink onsite daily revenue is up dramatically (908% for the month) from last December due to good ice. L. Jackson is hearing that customers and staff are pleased by new renovations and interior updates. She wanted to let the Commission know that they have added 2 security cameras at Larz Anderson ice rink to monitor doors for security purposes. They have trained staff members regarding questions relating to the security cameras. E. Gallentine stated that there were already cameras up at the rink, these were added to monitor the doors and those exiting and entering those doors. Recreation is currently assessing the use of the public facility as a changing area in order to assess the need for rules regarding changing/disrobing in this public facility. New Year's Day was busy by an estimated consistent 150 people skating at any given time of the public skate period, 12-5pm. N. O'Connor and W. Sheridan discussed labeling the rooms at the rink. E. Gallentine stated that having the pavilion painted has made such a difference, it looks fresh clean and inviting. She stated that W. Sheridan and N. O'Connor spent a

	<p>lot of time helping out on the design of the rink and wanted to point out it's been a nice collaborative effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leigh celebrated the collaborative effort at as well and thanked Commission. • She stated hiring for After School at Eliot and stated that they are finally fully staffed. • She discussed themed open gym nights. • Dances were discussed. • RAFT will be partnering up with the Brookline Fire Department Station 6, to hold a recruit academy for new fire fighters, offering a sample experience for RAFT members who might be interested in learning about what the Firefighter recruits go through. The academy was a huge success last year. She detailed what the afternoon academy will include. 	
<p>Green Dog Program Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Bain stated that the Green Dog subcommittee had its' meeting. It was well attended and came with a lot of new ideas. He stated that what it boiled down to is that we know the problems and we need to find a way to fix them. He stated that we need some enforcement, cooperation from the police and we also need a larger staff to manage all the parks/playgrounds/picnic areas. He stated that it's a lot more than people realize. Alex Cassie, Park Ranger needs help and we need to start speaking up about another full time position and seasonal staff. He stated there are a lot of responsible dog owners and then there are some that are not. People who think the rules are not for them. He stated that we do have a vast amount of property to oversee and we don't have the staff to do the job well. • Hugh Mattison asked if we have a sense of what percentage of people are using the facility that are not in the program. E. Gallentine stated that they do not have a handle on those numbers, but anecdotally hear from some members that they feel that there are some who are not participating and should. • A. Bellalta discussed the possibility of shutting down the program for a short time when there are x number of violations. She stated that it's not necessarily the green dog members, it is those that are not members. N. O'Connor stated that 	

	<p>people were upset non green dog users were using the parks as if they were part of the program. E. Gallentine stated that the Committee determined the problem to be compliance with the leash laws overall and town wide not the program itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission discussed how having the ability to ticket/code enforcement would be helpful. • E. Gallentine stated that one thing we will look at as part of this subcommittee process is the bylaw, and enabling staff to do code enforcement for the leash law. There is some precedence for it, but we don't want to take always the police departments responsibility in any way, but to have this other layer that could assist with code enforcement in the park and change behaviors • J. Bain stated that education needs to be better. He stated there is a new dog park over by Castle Island that is brand new and very impressive; he plans on doing a field trip to check out the facilities. • E. Gallentine stated that the Commission will be getting more updates from the subcommittee. She stated that what she is hoping this committee will recommend a change in fees and 5 implementable changes in 2019 and then 5 changes/ improvements in 2020. One thing they will evaluate is setting criteria for evening hours, revisiting criteria for dog runs, talk about pop-up dog runs and increasing enforcement and fines. 	
<p>Parks and Open Space Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update and schedule for the Harry Downes Playground renovation project was discussed. • The Brookline Avenue Riverway Park planting was discussed. • A Brookline Reservoir Park update was provided along with the budget, schedule and phasing. • A Larz Anderson Park update was given. KMDG is working on the construction bid documents for the Tempietto, Causeway and pedestrian bridge. The roadway, parking, pedestrian safety improvements funding/construction schedule was discussed. • A Cypress Playground design Review Committee schedule was discussed. • An update was given on the following projects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Green Dog Program Review 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Athletic fields needs assessment and master plan 3. Emerald necklace phase II 4. Carlton Street Footbridge 5. Pearl Street Streetscape Roadway and Drainage 7. Gateway East 8. Old Burying Ground historic doors and hardware project 9. Murphy Playground Design Review- Spring 2019 10. Boylston Street playground abutting development 11. Linden Square Upgrade 12. St. Mark's Square Upgrade 	
<p>Newbury College</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W. Sheridan stated that Newbury College is closing and she spent time walking the campus and Fisher Hill Reservoir Park. She feels strongly to voice her support for potential acquisition of that land. She thinks it's a once in a lifetime opportunity that this amount of land comes up for sale in town, and its great opportunity for the Park and Recreation Departments. She feels it's our duty and obligation as active members of this Commission to actively pursue available land to meet the needs of these departments and the community at large. She stated that acquisition of even a part of this land could help achieve some of the Commissions' goal of adequate spaces for active and passive recreation. She stated that she looked back and according to the parks and open space recreation strategic master plan the finding was that we need 35-55 additionally acres that would be required to meet our needs (the plan is 13 years old as well), so she would like to ask that we all write a letter together (she has drafted a letter). She would like to send that letter to the Select Board to express this desire to buy land. She knows it's a huge financial obligation. She has a draft letter and she welcomes all edits/changes comments/. • W. Sheridan discussed what she saw on her tour of the land in terms of buildings/open space. • C. Batchelor would like to raise a concern that they came across when renovating Fisher Hill Park. The neighborhood was opposed to recreation in this area. She is concerned about the Town spending a great deal of money on this acquisition of land and the surrounding neighbors fighting tooth and nail against town wide 	

	<p>activities in this area. She is a little concerned about the letter and thinks that we need to lay more ground work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Carroll stated that something is going to go there. Something has been there and something has to go in there. • C. Batchelor is all about exploring it. • D. Lyons agrees that we should explore it. • A. Bellalta discussed expanding the parking area by acquisition of land next to the current parking lot. • There was a discussion on maybe Fisher Hill needs to be converted to synthetic turf and raised. A. Bellata and E. Gallentine discussed what it would entail raising the current athletic field there. • Hugh Mattison wanted to mention there is a petition going around to have a special town meeting regarding this, there will be a full vetting of all this discussion. • A resident stated that EDAB (Economic Development Advisory Board) really wants to buy this. Some in the community have talked about an outdoor swimming pool. • E. Gallentine stated that there could be an opportunity for a Recreation Center, an outdoor pool, possibly an indoor rink, office space and other outdoor recreational amenities. • N. O'Connor thinks the time is now, but if we don't step up we will never know and it is the time to do it. • An aerial shot of Newbury College was shown. • N. O'Connor thinks the Commission should weigh in on it. • The Commission is going to take a look at the draft and make edits accordingly. 	
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new business 	
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Bain moved to adjourn. Seconded by D. Lyons. All in favor. 	

Next Meeting: February 12, 2019 Location: Town Hall, Room 111

A true record

Attest Jessica White

Date: 1/8/2019