

Park and Recreation Commission	Meeting Minutes
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Date: January 12, 2021

Place: Zoom Webinar

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff: Erin Gallentine: Commissioner of Public Works, Leigh Jackson: Recreation Director, Jessica White: Parks and Open Space Assistant, Gerry Kelly: Business Manager

TOPIC	KEY POINTS/DISCUSSION	
<p>Chairman’s Welcome/Approval of the Minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J. Bain moved for approval of the December 8, 2020 Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes. Seconded by D. Lyons. All in favor. 	
<p>Cost Recovery Project Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L. Jackson stated that Recreation decided to do an assessment again of the cost recovery model. She stated that 12 years ago, Recreation adopted the policy of cost recovery; it allows for Recreation to plan for the future. L. Jackson stated about every 10 years, good organizations reassess their models; now is the time to do that. L. Jackson stated that she has sent the Commissioners information about the Smart Approach to Cost Recovery. E. Gallentine and L. Jackson have both committed to reassess their strategies again. L. Jackson stated that it’s a cohort assessment model. It is a cost effective way to reassess the cost recovery model again. She thinks the approaches will work out very well, it is reasonably priced and it’s with a company that Recreation originally worked with. She discussed the interviews with Jamie Sabbach regarding the cost recovery projects. There will be 4-6 agencies in our cohort; Recreation falls into the small operating budget category and both Parks and Open Space and Recreation will be assessed independently and some cross over with shared assets. She thinks this is a great opportunity to look at things like the cost recovery for the Town-owned courts and athletic fields and to get closer to that 100 percent cost recovery. She stated that it will allow time to reassess those fees and fees in all areas. L. Jackson discussed phase 4 (PandR Commission involvement) of the cost recovery 	

	<p>project. She is very excited about this; she believes it will provide opportunities to reassess service categories and plan for the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• E. Gallentine stated that this is an opportunity to look at how the community has changed, to make sure the priorities, percentages and subsidies are where we want them to be. She stated that we are not starting from scratch, it really is coming back to revisit. She stated that this is a point where Recreation has been so impacted by COVID and this is an opportunity to take a moment and look at fee structure and potential changes. She thinks it will be powerful. E. Gallentine stated that this is the first time that the costs associated with providing the assets are part of the cost recovery analysis; this has not happened in the past. E. Gallentine gave examples of this. She stated that the Parks and Open Space Department is grateful to be included. A. Cassie and M. Bartlett will be pulling all the data together for the Parks and Open Space Division and will work with the Recreation Team. L. Jackson stated that she has selected the team and the kick off meeting is January 19th for this project.• L. Jackson asked if any of the Commissioners are interested in joining this project. W. Sheridan and N. O'Connor would like to be involved.• C. Batchleor stated that she was hoping when the consultant was hired the last time that they gave the Town the tools to update the program in house. She would like to offer a word of caution/ concerns when hiring consultants, when perhaps we should look to do it in-house.• W. Sheridan asked if this went out to bid and asked how it will be funded. L. Jackson stated that it is being funded through operating budget and it does not need to go out to bid.• N. O'Connor agrees with C. Batchelor, but if the foundation is already laid and she sees it to be more as a tune-up.• W. Sheridan stated that she thinks it's important that this Cost recovery is not only discussed, looked at and analyzed but it is	
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	<p>equally important that it is ultimately followed with matrix points that can be evaluated. She doesn't remember any reports coming back to the Commission in the past 4 years that told the Commission what programs are or are not meeting the cost recovery goals. She would like to see a robust analysis and hopes we put into motion a system to evaluate if the cost recovery model is being followed and where it stands. L. Jackson stated that it makes sense to her and thanked W. Sheridan for her support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G. Kelly stated this will allow for the new staff who will be assisting/using the cost recovery to really understand how it works. It will be great for all the new staff be brought up to speed. • D. Lyons stated that when the Cost Recovery model was first presented by L. Paradis he doesn't recall a great deal of discussion after that. He sees the value of reevaluating every 10 years or so, but he doesn't recall a great deal of discussion other than coming up with fee increases. C. Batchelor remembers meetings outside of the Commission meetings. These meetings discussed the principles/ setting up of the cost recovery. • J. Carroll agrees with what a lot C. Batchelor said in the beginning. He thinks L. Jackson and staff have been doing a great job in terms of the cost recovery. He stated that at the end of the day it's about what people can afford to pay to participate. • N. O'Connor agrees with D. Lyons that every few years down the line we should be evaluating the tool. 	
<p>Recreation Update</p>	<p>Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budget FY22 ▪ RFP's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Golf Course Food and Bev – 1/21/21 – Open Bid Date. Interviews will be at the end of the month. N. O'Connor is hoping that there were changes in language and expectations for this RFP. ▪ Tennis Vendor – 2/9/2021– Open Bid Date. There will be interviews with potential vendors and rankings. N. O'Connor is curious about the RFP for the indoor tennis courts and the indoor 	

	<p>pavilion which is a premier place for multiple sports. L. Jackson cannot comment on this RFP at this time. N. O'Connor just hopes she is looking at the times both the outdoor courts and indoor pavilion are being used. She hopes she is paying attention to the needs lots of people have for these spaces. L. Jackson stated that they have been through every inch of the draft RFP and have heard comments on the times/needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N. O'Connor, W. Sheridan and L. Jackson discussed how these RFP's were written with Procurement in house. ▪ Programs Paused until 2/1/2021 – Due to COVID spike in local sports. The team internally is currently looking at new ideas for the spring. ▪ Cost Recovery Project – Starts 1/19/2020. G. Kelly is the lead, forming all teams and supplying the data, ▪ CAPRA – Accreditation Project underway. This will take 3-5 years. ▪ Recreation is Supporting and vetting new programming ideas. <p>Rink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth Sports at the rink have been paused until 2/1 ▪ Youth sports times have been converted to private rentals and public skate times. There is no problem filling these spots. ▪ All public skate reservations are full on nights and weekends through the end of the season – as of 1/11/2021 ▪ A. Bellalta and L. Jackson discussed how public skate has not been canceled and has been approved by Dr. Jett. There are protocols in place for the rink. ▪ W. Sheridan would like to suggest that when we are revisiting existing RFP's with either changes or amendments, she thinks it should come to the Commission before the RFP is written. L. Jackson will take this into consideration for the future. ▪ W. Sheridan discussed reconvening the Ice 	
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	<p>Rink Task Force for a status update and to discuss the feasibility study that was funded by the Advisory Committee. E. Gallentine stated that she has a draft feasibility study request for proposal; she is going to send it out to the Commissioners and L. Jackson to take a look at the scope. She stated that it can then be discussed at a task force meeting. E. Gallentine has reached out to the Edge group, the group that worked with Wellesley to come up with a public/private partnership to fund, construct and manage the two-rink/indoor pool/athletic field complex. They are interested in talking and E. Gallentine thinks it worth having a conversation before putting the proposal out to bid. She will look to set up a small group meeting with them at the facility in the next week or two, in order to see if this is something that will work for Brookline. E. Gallentine stated that this study will look at an outdoor/covered and indoor rink. She thinks that while sites being looked at, to look and see if those locations could accommodate an outdoor pool or some other outdoor use. She stated that there are separate ongoing costs with the temporary rink which are currently in the operating budget and if that is something the Commission/Recreation Department/Parks and Open Space Division would like to move forward with, in that it will need to make sure it has adequate funding. This was a reserve fund transfer and so it is something that will have to be incorporated into the budget.</p> <p>Winter Sports Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All winter athletics have been put on pause, with a target date of 2/1 to resume. ▪ Recreation will use this time to advertise more with the hopes of increasing registration. ▪ Program staff are starting to focus their attention on building up spring offerings, with a late January to early February start date for registration. <p>Aquatics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aqua Aerobics classes have started. • Socially Distance Group Lessons are starting in a couple of weeks • All COVID Protocols are running smoothly. 	
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	<p>After School Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two BLAST Babysitter courses are full for the next two months. N. O’Connor and G. Kelly discussed the vendor for this program ▪ Recreation will be launching February Vacation Week ▪ The Afterschool Program currently has 20 registered students. <p>Golf Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over the next month, L. Jackson and staff will be working with Town Arborist, Tom Brady and identifying trees to be removed as part of the selective tree removal program. ▪ The Golf Course is currently in an RFP process for its Food & Beverage concession. ▪ The Golf Course is in the process of hiring 2 additional FT Staff, Assistant Golf Professional and Golf Course Mechanic. <p>Parking Lot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Golf Course Master Plan- ▪ RFP – Food And Bev – Award of contract ▪ RFP – Tennis Contract – Award of Contract ▪ Cost Recovery Assessment Update – potential fee increase recommendations ▪ Public Schools of Brookline and Park and Recreation Commission MOA ▪ N. O’Connor and E. Gallentine discussed issues/arrangement with the Brookline Avenue/Lynch Center Parking lot. ▪ N. O’Connor and L. Jackson discussed summer camp. 	
<p>Tennis RFP-Amory Opening Time Change Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L. Jackson wanted to let the Commission know that this is her first RFP for the Town by herself. She has learned through the process that sometimes the changes to an RFP can cause concern from community. She was looking to change the opening time at Amory by an hour earlier and wanted to put this item on the agenda for public comment. She is seriously considering making an opening adjustment by one hour earlier to better serve the tennis community interest. The opening time will change from 8 am to 7 am Monday thru Friday and in the summer she would suggest a 6:30 am start. This allows for more 	

	<p>time for the elderly and for anyone who is a morning person. This is an effort to get more participation. People would like to get their workout in when the sun is up, and in the summer months the earlier start would allow people to play when it is cooler.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Bain was under the impression that nothing in Town can start till 7am. He wonders if this violates any bylaws. E. Gallentine stated that you want to make sure no one is operating any motorized equipment on the courts prior to 7 am. • C. Batchelor feels that L. Jackson should tread lightly before 7 am. She thinks it's the noise level that is the bylaw. • E. Gallentine thinks L. Jackson needs to be careful starting any play before 7 am. This is new noise that the surrounding abutters don't have right now. • G. Kelly stated that with this adjustment we should amend the Athletic Field use and allocation policy. • W. Sheridan would support an opening at 7am. W. Sheridan will say that she would like to be respectful to abutters, and knows that these are clay courts and there will be maintenance before the first players get on the courts. She stated that there will be some noise at the hut because of that. • J. Carroll would suggest inviting abutters and having a public hearing. • L. Jackson is hearing in general there is support for 7 am. 	
<p>Approval and Vote-Aquatic Individual Program Fee Increase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chart of all prices increases for the Aquatic Individual programs was shared with the Commission. • She stated that the class price increases are different because of the amount/length time of those classes. • The increases, fees and cost recovery for each class were shared with the Commission. • The 35 % fee increase for nonresidents was detailed. • A market analysis has been done. L. Jackson provided the Commission with swim class prices for Newton, Westwood Recreation, Dedham Health and Athletic, Concord Recreation, West Roxbury YMCA, Goldfish in Brookline and Oak Square YMCA in Brighton. 	<p>The Chair moves to except the Aquatic Individual program fee Increases as presented here tonight by L. Jackson. Seconded by J. Carroll. All in favor. A roll call vote was taken.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● L. Jackson feels that this is comparable and will help get to the target of 80-100 percent cost recovery. She feels it's an appropriate level increase. ● W. Sheridan thanked L. Jackson and G. Kelly for doing all this research. She likes when the price increases come before the Commission. She thinks it would nice to see a column where we currently are with the cost recovery model, where we end up with the price increase and what the target was. She thinks this is important information for the Commission to know. 	
<p>Approval and Vote-To Accept the Bid for Pool Balance Tank and System Repair Project at Evelyn Kirrane Aquatic Center - Enterprise Equipment CO, Inc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● L. Jackson wanted to remind the Commission that back in May of 2018 at annual town meeting the work on the pool filtration was approved. Phase one was completed 2018 and L. Jackson is prepared to move to phase two. She has sent the Commission the bid. There were two bids presented, one for a concrete tank and one for a fiberglass tank. She stated that after consultation with Charlie Simmons, Recreation has decided that fiberglass is the way they want to go. She stated that Enterprise has put forth a bid for \$118,000 for this project to take place. T. Radicioni has been working on this project very closely and knows a lot of the details. The company has done successful work for the Town in the past. She asked if the Commission had any questions or concerns excepting the bid. ● N. O'Connor thanked Tyler for his work. She stated that she has been hearing great things about Tyler from residents and wanted to pass that on. Tyler thanked N. O'Connor for the kind comments. 	<p>J. Bain moved to approve to Accept the Bid for Pool Balance Tank and System Repair Project at Evelyn Kirrane Aquatic Center -Enterprise Equipment CO, Inc. Seconded by D. Lyons. All in favor. A roll call vote was taken.</p>
<p>Parks and Open Space Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● E. Gallentine discussed the Pearl Street Pocket Park. The Town has renovated the road and added a separate bike lane; there are now meadow grasses planted as a bioswail between the roadway and the bike path. She stated that the area behind that has been looked at as a skate spot. The triangular-shaped property is largely owned by Wynn Development Outdoor; there is a small portion that Town owns and the MBTA has an easement over a portion of it. She stated that the Town has been 	

	<p>working with Wynn on a pocket park to install an outdoor exercise area, something more substantial than at the top of Corey Hill Playground. It would be privately-funded but publicly available. A memorandum of agreement is currently being worked on with Wynn Development. The design itself has been created by J. Waisnor. The idea is to beautify the area. She stated that we will reach out to neighbors and bring it before the Commission to thank Wynn Development and support the creation of this pocket park. J. Bain and E. Gallentine discussed the plantings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Hilton Hotel has been staging on River Road. This is the connection to Riverway and Olmsted Park on River Road. E. Gallentine stated that once the construction is completed they have some maintenance responsibilities of that green space.● Brookline Avenue had to resurface the parking lot, do some drainage improvements, make the entrance into the school accessible and also add a pathway within park that had pod seating. She stated that this piece will be put out independently and it could possibly be completed in the summer of 2021.● Murphy Design Review Committee- January 20th● Robinson Design Review Committee Meeting- January 27th● E. Gallentine wanted to thank J. Waisnor for all the work she has done reviewing the construction bid set for the Driscoll School. It has been a lot of work and she has done a great job.● E. Gallentine discussed having connectivity in Town with bike programs and green spaces.● E. Gallentine stated that she has sent out to the Commission a notice from a resident who wanted to propose a Green Dog Program site at Winthrop Square. E. Gallentine discussed the history of how Winthrop Square was once part of the Green Dog Program. This resident would like the Commission to reconsider Winthrop Square. J. Bain doesn't see any harm in revisiting it as a courtesy to the resident. J. Carroll, N. O'Connor D. Lyons discussed the	
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	<p>past issues involving bulldogs at Winthrop Square. N. O'Connor gave background into the original request for making Winthrop Square part of the Green Dog Program. E. Gallentine is hearing that there is no desire right now to add another location for Green Dog. She stated that the Green Dog Advisory Committee should meet in spring, review locations, get an update from Alex Cassie and talk about additional locations. C. Batchelor would comment that we not consider this because we were very clear why it was closed last time, and thinks nothing has changed. N. O'Connor does not think anything is going to change. J. Bain agrees and stated that following this if they would like time on the agenda than that can be accommodated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● E. Gallentine discussed the seasonal lighting around Town. The Emerson Garden fence lighting was discussed. She could see other neighborhood association/ friend groups wanting to add onto this lighting trend like Emerson.● A Cypress Playground update was given. The schedule and funding was discussed.● A Harry Downes update was given to the Commission. The High School storage space was discussed.● Roach Bros was the contractor who worked with the Town on the full renovation of the Brookline Reservoir. There was a scope of service developed and executed to the Roach Brothers from the MRWA water main break.● The Larz Anderson Park tempietto and structure have been awarded to Sumco. The scope of this work was detailed. The schedule of work was discussed. The Larz Anderson Park roadway, parking and lighting will be going out to bid. She is hoping to have the projects happening simultaneously. J. Carroll and E. Gallentine discussed who would be managing these projects.● The Carlton Street Footbridge has been awarded.● A Muddy River Phase II Restoration project update was given.● A Davis Pathway Footbridge update was given.	
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<p>Other Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● L. Jackson thought it was appropriate to make a comment about the feeling that we are all feeling right now based on the riots at the Capital. It made her think about the relationship with the community and she is recommitting to make sure she is focusing on being open and compassionate with people. She is very interested in community engagement and wants to focus on listening to understand, rather than listening to respond. She stated that there is so much unease on top of COVID and she wanted the Commission to know that she feels strongly that the Commission is a resource for her and she envisions working together to get through all this by supporting one another. She stated that there is lot to enjoy with parks and recreation, to help decrease stress and bring joy and fun to one another. She wanted to let the Commission know that she recommitting herself to that charge.● Dr. Swanni Jett addressed the Commission. He has shared the official order as of yesterday to pause all athletic sports until February 1st. He wanted to thank L. Jackson, E. Gallentine and the Commission for all that they are doing; he knows it's a very stressful time to try and have sports during a pandemic. He discussed the COVID surges/cases per week in Brookline and discussed COVID cases in the US. He stated that with every new case, Brookline gets put in the red and puts a tremendous burden on both the Heath Department and contact tracing. He stated that with the community's help he is hoping to stop transmission through sports and attempting to stop transmission through schools as much as possible. The goal is not to cancel sports, but to shift to the right for at least two weeks to get Brookline out of the surge.● J. Bain wanted to thank Dr. Jett for his time and the data/comments he has provided to the Commissioners. J. Bain and Dr. Jett discussed the COVID vaccine timeline.● W. Sheridan thanked Dr. Jett for his leadership and dedication to keeping everyone safe in town. She stated that the Commission is	
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	<p>dedicated to Parks and Open Space, and the Commission knows the power of recreation to help improve the overall quality of life, health and wellness and social/emotional well-being of kids, teen and adults. She stated at this time of pandemic she personally has seen the power of COVID, not only in the community and country but in her own family as well. She has also seen firsthand the power of recreation and sports right now. In her own house she has three children and she has seen sports and recreation lift up her kids up from an otherwise empty, lonely, activity-lacking day with little to no social interaction or exercise. She has real concerns that pausing has more risks than benefits to some children in the community. She respects Dr. Jett's decision but she is struggling to understand the matrix used to make the decision to pause sports and recreation, and she is curious if the surge numbers quoted are directly related to sports-particularly sports and recreation that happens at outdoor facilities. She asked if Dr. Jett is on or has consulted with panel 4 to understand their take on all of this. She stated that with all due respect those are her concerns. Dr. Jett stated that there is a pause on sports and any activities. He stated that if you look around the nation, sports are not immune to COVID. He is seeing that a lot of times people are not even having symptoms. He stated that the matrix he is using is the matrix of death and stopping the transition of disease in Brookline. He stated that we have had more cases in the last three months than in the whole pandemic. He stated that the first step in reducing transition of any infectious disease in a community is stopping activities that you are doing to get there. He stated that to him every life is important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● N. O'Connor wanted to thank W. Sheridan for her comments. She stated that we are creating a new vulnerable population with the kids being out of school. She looks at her grandkids doing schoolwork from their beds, being depressed and sad and all they have is sports. She knows the virus gets into sports and into classes and they are not immune. Then you take the kids	
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	<p>away from sports where they are being safe, masked and following protocols and at the same time she is seeing kids outside on top of each other not wearing masks. It breaks her heart to see another thing taken away from these kids. She doesn't want to see dead kids, but thinks maybe we could find a delicate balance to keep parks and rinks open and to keep the kids and residents active. She knows Dr. Jett has a tough job and hopes he understands the emotional part.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dr. Jett stated the parks and rink are open, and he has even received letters asking why parks and the rink are even open. Dr. Jett and his staff have been solely concentrating on COVID. He stated that a pause now might save us later when everyone else is shutting down. The utmost importance to him is saving lives. Dr. Jett discussed the emotional stress from this disease. He is a sports fan and understands the emotional strain of not playing sports.● J. Carroll thanked Jr. Jett for all that he does. He stated that on February 1st he is wondering what will change in the protocol. He wonders if there a plan being developed. Dr. Jett stated that L. Jackson did an excellent job following COVID protocols in the summer. His goal is on January 25th is to take a look at the data and see where Brookline is at, and make a decision. L. Jackson stated that she is always consulting with Dr. Jett and has solid protocols in place for the sports to happen. She imagines picking up the activities with the protocols that have been approved.● W. Sheridan asked what else has been put on pause besides sports. Dr. Jett stated that right now sports have just been put on pause. E. Gallentine stated that there have been a whole host of things held back by the Governor. E. Gallentine stated that is she is very appreciative that Dr. Jett has worked with us to keep parks and open spaces open. It is a tough situation for Dr. Jett, the community and the kids as it relates to healthy activities/sports. She feels what W. Sheridan and N. O'Connor have been saying, certainly with her own kids she knows it's hard and wanted to let Dr. Jett know she	
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	<p>respects him and for what he has done for the community. She wanted to thank Dr. Jett for all the work he has done to keep the parks and open spaces open and wanted to publicly express her gratitude.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● L. Jackson wanted to second E. Gallentine’s comments. She has shared in and recognized the emotion in her own family and household in regards to the sports. She stated that she appreciates Dr. Jett and respects where he is and his decision. She thanked him for his comments and taking questions tonight. 		
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● C. Batchelor moved to adjourn. Seconded by J. Bain. All in favor. 		

Next Meeting: February 9, 2021

Location: Zoom Webinar

A true record

Attest Jessica White

Date: 1/12/21