

Park and Recreation Commission	Meeting Minutes
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Date: August 6, 2020, 12:30 PM

Place: Zoom Webinar

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

Commissioners Absent:

Task Force Members Attending: Jeff Thibault, Priscilla Karnovsky, Julie Jette

Task Force Members Absent: Avi Urbas

Non-Voting Task Force Members Attending: Bob Little and Paisley Boney

Non-Voting Task Force Members Absent:

Staff: Erin Gallentine, Parks and Open Space Director, Leigh Jackson, Recreation Director, Jessica White, Parks and Open Space Assistant, Gerry Kelly, Business Manager, Assistant Director of Recreation, Jon Lewitus, Michael Bartlett, Parks and Open Space Operations Manager

TOPIC	KEY POINTS/DISCUSSION
<p>Chairman's Welcome Approval of Minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W. Sheridan opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation in this task force. W. Sheridan detailed the agenda. She stated that we have been tasked by the Park and Recreation Commission to evaluate the future of the Larz Anderson Skating Rink and ice skating in general within Brookline. This task force will consider amongst other things the costs and benefits associated with maintaining a rink, repair and or replacement options for a rink, short -mid-long term concepts, goals and objectives, understanding community needs, potential opportunities for partnerships and funding sources. She stated that ultimately at the end of this process the goals/recommendations will be brought back to the Park and Recreation Commission for their consideration. She stated that these recommendations will be based on the work that is started today. She stated that we need to understand the value of this rink to the community, the problems and issues big and small with the existing facility. She would like for this task force to be optimistic as problems can bring opportunity. She stated that the recommendation brought back to the Commission needs to be in the form of a tangible report than can be communicated clearly. The recommendations can be from a small investment opportunity to a dream big

	<p>investment for the town and all reports and recommendations should include the value it brings back to the community.</p>	
<p>Introductions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task force members/ commissioners went around introducing themselves, provided their background information and shared their perspective and reason for wanting to be part of this task force. • Staff members introduced themselves. 	
<p>Summary of Facility And Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E. Gallentine stated she will be do a summary of the rink and share it with the task force in writing. The Parks and Open Space Division manages the refrigeration plant. Mike Bartlett, Operations Manager works with staff user groups, Recreation and the Refrigeration Contractor. American Refrigeration installed a new refrigeration system in 2006 and that included chiller, condenser and compressors. The chiller had the major breach on April 29, 2020 that is irreparable and requires a new replacement. She stated that the condenser is getting to a point of replacement. This should be replaced at the same time, since you need to go through the roof for both. She stated that it is something we have been committed to, the rink is loved and it's a real challenge for both herself and her division. There has been significant repair issues at Larz and it has not only been very expensive but labor intensive as well. Past repair/emergency work was detailed. She stated that she is eager to talk about what it takes to run a rink, so that everyone is aware of that. She wants to make sure whatever the solution is, it is not a temporary band aid and they we are looking at increased costs and safety concerns moving forward. This is a refrigeration system that uses ammonia and that needs to be managed carefully. • L. Jackson stated that in terms of Recreation's role at the rink, its shared effort between Parks and Recreation and they collaborate on the management of the facility. Recreation employees staffs the facility. She stated that we are a great employer of the youth in 	

	<p>Brookline. The staff numbers and job titles at the rink were detailed. She stated that we work together to make sure the rink is properly staffed and managed. She is excited to work with this task force on this project and knows that we can fix it together.</p>	
<p>Round table discussion of rink and its value to community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W. Sheridan thinks it's important for everyone on the task force to have the same information and to be on same page in terms of the value of this space for the community. She stated in terms of visit per year there were 9,569 visits just for public skate, and that number probably climbs closer to 10,000 when you count memberships. This shows how valuable and important this rink is. She wanted to point out that 172 of those visits were from resident seniors for public skate. • W. Sheridan detailed the major user groups and their total rental hour. • Rink rentals and rink rental hours were discussed. • B. Little stated that he wanted to add that when thinking about the rink we should remember that it is just not a facility for Brookline, it's get a much wider use than that. He stated that from his end he has schools from all over New England that want to come to Larz Anderson to play outdoor hockey. It's known far and wide as a destination. • P. Karnovsky thinks Larz cannot be assigned a value, it's an amazing open space that doesn't have a dollar sign. It is a piece that makes it Brookline majestic. She stated that Larz is not actually for hockey, it's not fully boarded and there are no locker rooms. She thinks that liability is an important piece to think about moving forward. She thinks we need to understand what it would take to make it a true hockey facility. E. Gallentine stated that it puts a lot of pressure on those providing the ice and service to make it something it was not designed to be in terms 	

	<p>of an ice hockey facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• J. Thibault stated that through the leagues that BYH belongs too, we have hosted many games each year and it's a magical thing to see. It teaches kids a lot about what they view at their ice as Brookliners or BYH kids. He stated that BYH uses Larz for about 28 percent of ice that they buy each year, its essential to the program.• J. Jette stated that it was interesting to hear about the percentage of hours it occupies for BYH. She wanted to reiterate the multigenerational aspect of this, it is one of the few assets in Brookline where you see activity by a full spectrum of generations. She thinks there is a lot to be said about that. She stated that last year Baker extended day was never able to use the ice because of conditions.• W. Sheridan stated that as former PTO President at Lincoln School, her children who attended Lincoln extended day used Larz Anderson skating rink, but she is not sure how recreation categorized uses. That would be a question to ask Recreation moving forward.• P. Karnovsky stated that the fact that there is a little ice is what makes this so valuable and the essence of multigenerational. Kids learning to skate with grandparents is amazing.• The little ice was discussed.• A. Bellalta loved hearing all the information from all the ice user groups and how multigenerational is so important. She asked besides the locker room space, is there something of the current space that is deficient. She also asked if the task force feels if the space is conducive for participation and spectators. N. O'Connor stated that it's not conducive to watching a game. N. O'Connor discussed the locker room and how it without a doubt needs to be upgraded. W. Sheridan stated that in order for this task force to really produce high quality recommendations, come up with goals and	
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	<p>objectives for short-mid long term goals its really critical to understand all problems. She thinks before the next meeting all members of this task force need to spend time identifying problems associated with this rink/facility and bring that back to the table for discussion at the next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Bain is a non-skater but stated that people love open air skating rink. He stated that it's a jewel to have that rink up there. 	
<p>Round table discussion of goals and objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short-Term-Mid-Term Long Term Concepts 2. Development of Alternatives 3. Research, Program & Content Development 4. Partnerships & Costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Bain thinks in regards to short terms goals, that maybe we need to understand the costs to get this up and running as a temporary solution. • E. Gallentine has put together a chart looking at a draft schedule for a new refrigeration replacement package. E. Gallentine detailed what that schedule entailed. She stated that things have changed over time and we would need to look at energy efficiency. She stated that one of the problems with this rink is that it uses calcium chloride. She stated that we would want to go to a glycol system. There is a lot that would go into designing this package for the rink and all those options should be analyzed. She stated that the Chiller alone has a 12-14 week lead time. She stated that with the installation, architectural work, and the crane and building safety this draft shows an aggressive schedule of 46 weeks. E. Gallentine stated that in terms of cost there is an estimate of \$800,000, and this included no facility enhancements just replacement of the refrigeration system. There may be conditions found during demolition or design that could lead to increase in expenses. • P. Karnovsk and E. Gallentine discussed where the refrigeration system is located. • J. Carroll stated understand a short term easy fix of replacing the refrigeration system and keeping the facility as is, but understands that it does not address the dressing rooms. He wondered if a feasibility study for the amount of land use to allow any amenities 	

	<p>has been done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• B. Little and E. Gallentine discussed American Refrigeration and their professional background. B. Little wonders if there are other companies that we should consider talking to who work with outdoor rinks. E. Gallentine stated that they service many different rinks, they have engineering and design experience. They are a full service company and are very familiar with the Larz Rink. She stated that we have worked with RECCO in the past. M. Bartlett discussed RECCO and how the American and RECCO are now one company. E. Gallentine provided the task force with the lead time information on chiller and condenser, how long it would take to be manufactured, ordered and installed. She works with other folks to look at design time and public bidding law.• B. Little wonders if we are bound by the gift of the Larz Anderson property to keep it as an outdoor recreation facility without a roof and or building. E. Gallentine stated that we are bound by the request, but the request does not limit the rink to be outdoor or uncovered. The request requires that the land be used for recreation, educational and or charitable purposes. The limitations come into place with preservation restrictions. Federal and state funding for Larz Anderson was discussed. Article 97 protected status was discussed.• W. Sheridan wanted to reiterate that we really need to understand all the problems to understand and evaluate possible solutions. She stated that is up to this task force to come up with goals and objectives, and to solve the problem and prioritize the solution to bring back to the Park and Recreation Commission.• N. O'Connor stated that E. Gallentine gave a timeline of 46 weeks and she believes that we need to get this into the CIP as soon as possible to get it funded. W. Sheridan stated that if it can't be funded by the town, she is thinking about some form of partnership that	
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	<p>could make it happen faster. She wonders if there is a temporary ice surface/ solution to make this happen to buy time and still have some sort of outdoor facility sooner rather than later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Bellalta agrees and she thinks one of the short terms goals is to figure out what are we doing this season for all the programs. She wonders if there an investment that needs to be made this season. E. Gallentine wanted to be clear the \$800,000 would not address this season. A. Bellalta thinks how we address this season is a short term goal. 	
<p>Work Process & Operating Logistics for Task Force Proposed Meeting Dates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W. Sheridan stated that research needs to be done to investigate to see if there is a legitimate possibility of having a temporary solution for this winter. Paisley Boney would be happy to do that. He would love to see any reports/recommendations from American Refrigeration and to really understand restrictions on Larz Anderson from a use perspective. The question to him is what the ultimate objective here is? Is it to keep it an outdoor rink because people like it or is the objective to come up with a facility for a bunch of purposes that the town needs and potentially be economically profitable. He wonders from a town perspective how sensitive are people to parking. E. Gallentine will have a conversations about restrictions and provide documents to P. Boney. There has been conversations with American to discuss the possibility of some type of temporary refrigeration and what it would cost to rent. She stated that we would not have calcium chloride in the pipes, so we would need to be deal with that. American was talking 50-80 thousand for a rental, but there are concerns around where this temporary plant would go. E. Gallentine detailed some independent options. She stated with these options you are looking at 200-300 thousand for outdoor ice systems built from scratch. W. Sheridan stated that the rink loses money every year. W. Sheridan stated that there is a huge range of work to 	

	<p>be done, the operating budget for the rink needs to be evaluated analyzed and in her opinion restructured with any designs/decision that comes out of the task force. L. Jackson recommends that we review the budget at the next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W. Sheridan stated that it has been proposed that the task force meet every other week midday. The next task force meeting will be Thursday, August 20th at 12:30pm. • W. Sheridan stated that the task force will be receiving emails with additional information from E. Gallentine. She thinks it would be helpful to share a list of preservation restrictions. She stated that in terms of action items, she would love for everyone to think about not only the values discussed today but that potential problems with the facility right now. She would like to think about the issues at Larz Anderson so that we can come up with objectives that makes sense moving forward. • Don Haber addressed the Task Force. He lives on Avon Street directly across from Larz Anderson and is always interested in what's going on at the park. He is the VP of Jamaica Hills Neighborhood Association. He loves that he has this wonderful park to enjoy and is happy to be able to participate and contribute to this worthy cause. • Ann Kamensky addressed the Task Force. She wanted to say that she listened not only as a parent of an ice skater but as a Pierce School parent. She stated that if there any renovations going on to remind everyone to think about accessibility for everyone. 	
<p>Adjourn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W. Sheridan moved to adjourn. Seconded by N. O'Connor. All in favor. 	

Next Meeting: Location: Zoom Webinar

A true record

Attest Jessica White

Date: