**Town of Westborough Recreation Department**

**Recreation Commission**

**Date:** Tuesday, December 5, 2023 **Location:** Room 207, Forbes Building, 45 West Main St. Westborough, MA 01581

**Convened:** 6:00 p.m. **Adjourned:** 6:55 p.m.

**Committee Members Present:** Jennifer Kirkland, Bill Clausen, Brian Kane, Katie Welch, Colleen Dowd, Mike Wilsker, and Grethel Guzman-Ruck.

**Others Present:** Earl Storey, Andrew Bradley and Jim Gobbes.

**Committee Members Absent:** Chair Bethany Travis, Matt Griffith, and Josh Aponte.

**Request to us Haskell Field During Off Season || VOTE**

Jim Gobbes and his group of soccer players have come in the past to play on Haskell Field in the winter when the fields are closed. They were approved in the past to play on the field and they are reaching out once more to see if they could play on the field this season. It was discussed that if other groups would like to play on our fields when they are closed, the procedure would be to reach out to the Recreation Department by any means. Colleen made the motion to approve Jim Gobbes’ request to play on Haskell Field with his group this winter season. Brian seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 4-0-0 and the motion carried. Jim Gobbes and his group can play on Haskell Field this winter season.

Jim Gobbes added that he would like to have his players sign a waiver when they play. Jenn said that she would be able to provide him with a waiver the Recreation Department typically uses.

**Financial Aid Form || Possible Vote || \*\*Colleen Dowd**

Colleen explained that in regards to financial aid for Little League, a parent would reach out and let them know they need financial assistance and there is no paperwork to fill out. Sometimes, requiring parents to fill out forms can become hurdles. There may be language barriers, fear of government agencies, or other things that inhibit parents from filling out our financial aid form. Jenn explained that although these things may cause issues, we need some documentation for auditing purposes and we need to know and hear from the parents that are signing up their children. The commission suggested that we may need to start advertising our ability to work with parents who need financial aid. We can look at spreading the news through the schools, Youth and Family Services, and churches or other houses of faith.

**Youth Commission**

Jennifer explained that to have a Youth Commission, we would need to have a seven or nine-person board and that these youths would have a vote on every item up requiring a vote. Earl recalls at one point having youth come to the meetings but they only participated a few times and stopped attending altogether. Jennifer suggested having a standing item on every agenda, giving the opportunity for any youth to come and voice their opinion or suggestion in front of the Recreation Commission and perhaps these opportunities can be announced in schools during morning announcements. Colleen emphasized the importance of this if the purchase of a Community Center space comes into fruition. Jenn suggested that we may be able to have a Youth Open Forum by February’s Recreation Commission Meeting.

**Recreation: Updates to Include Fall Programs, Golf Course || \*\*Jennifer Kirkland**

Earl Storey, the previous Recreation Commission Chair and our retired Parks Lead Person explained to the board, the difficulty he has had with Westborough Youth Soccer. Not only are goals left on the field, but they also play on the same spot each time which wears down the field. Communication has been difficult every year because the governing bodies of the youth groups frequently change. Earl suggested having them move the field lines twice in the summer and once in the fall. Jenn said that Mike Hightower, the Golf Superintendent, suggested having them submit field plans with their permit to ensure that they do not play in one spot on the field. Bill suggested that this may be just an issue of education and communication with Westborough Youth Soccer.

There was discussion around how to make Roger’s Field more usable as it’s very wet due to being located near Cedar Swamp. Earl suggested skinning one of the fields to help with drainage. Jenn commented that Little League should be involved in the discussion before moving forward.

The Golf course is closed. Matt Griffith, Westborough’s Golf Pro, felt that with the change in time and the cold weather, it was best to close for the season. Recreation Middle School and High School Basketball started last week. There will be a public information session on December 12th about the dog park and the architect will present to the Selectboard on the 19th. The Golf Course Building Committee has not been appointed yet but they will be working on next steps to implement the Golf Building Use Committee’s recommendation.

**Community Center Updates || \*\*Jennifer Kirland**

Agreements are being finalized and the assessment is done.

**Approve Minutes: November 7, 2023 || VOTE**

Bill made the motion to approve the minutes from November 7, 2023. Brian seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 3-0-0 and the motion carried. The minutes from November 7, 2023 were approved.

**Next Meeting: Memorial Hall, January 2nd, 2023**

Brian made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Katie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 3-0-0 and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Rec. Commission approved these minutes on Tuesday, January 2nd, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grethel Guzman-Ruck