

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
Public Parks & Recreation Committee
Zoom # 834 3707 2283
May 19, 2021, Wednesday

Present: Jane Hackett, Chairman
Michael Molisse, Vice Chairman
Ed Harrington, Councilor
Ken DiFazio, Councilor

Absent: Pascale Burga, Councilor

Also Present: Ted Langill, Chief of Staff
Joseph Callanan, Town Solicitor
Chief Fuller, WPD
Steve Reilly, Recreation Director
Ryan MacLeod, Recreation Dept.
Brian Kowalski, Recreation Dept.
Casey Tocchio, Recreation Dept.
Brian Smith, Asst. Superintendent, WPS
Robert O’Leary, Athletic Director, WPS

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Hackett called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Showcase of Active & Passive Recreation Improvements

Asst. Superintendent Smith introduced Rob O’Leary, the new Athletic Director to the group. Mr. O’Leary gave a brief overview of student activities. Chair Hackett welcomed him to Weymouth.

Director Reilly provided an overview of what the Recreation has done over the past year. He acknowledged the work of the recreation staff, pointing out that a lot of communities shut down during the pandemic, but Weymouth Rec managed to still service the community. This was an example of what could be accomplished in an abridged program. It was a successful, smaller program, but still a great outlet for the kids and community.

A slide show was presented showing improvements accomplished with the DPW and WPS:

Park Improvements

- Sarah Brassil Park
- Great Esker Park
- William F. Newell Memorial

- Webb Park

Trail Improvements - Trailheads, signage and markers

- Bradford Torrey Bird Sanctuary
- Woodbine Island Conservation Area
- Great Pond Trail
- Weymouth Landing Canoe and Kayak Launch
- House Rock Park

The improvements were done from the passive focal point. Improvements include new playgrounds, sidewalks, resurfacing, tree and brush clearing, accessible ramps, rebuilt seawall and picnic tables, parking and guardrails, lighting and signage, maps, GPS mapping, trail markers and benches.

Active Locations: Legion Field, Lovell, Libbey, Weston Park

- These fields remained open, adhering to COVID guidelines. Nick Qualia did a lot of the programming for the high school programs. Maintenance was ongoing, with impact testing for wear and tear. The fields are really wearing well due to the continued maintenance. They want to be sure they get as much life as possible from fields before replacement. Fee structures generate revenue that will contribute to future replacement costs. Weymouth has hosted many tournaments, and some went out to bid. It brought in well in excess of what they would have charged at regular rates, so it has been successful.

Establishment of Enterprise fund for fields-

- moving forward now they have a good data set- and with no impact to the general funds. The aim is to safeguard the revenue to provide for maintenance and eventual replacement costs.
- Generation of forecasted revenue is based on historical data. Included is a chart with the target numbers.

Chair Hackett responded that she is pleased that this is happening; it's a great financial move, and she is glad it is moving forward.

Weymouth Farmers Market-2021 Market

- Casey Tocchio provided an update on the administrative responsibilities. Acquired USDA grant funding, because it is considered essential services – it was run safely and successfully, with a 40% increase over 2019. Going into 2021, they were able to use grant money to improve access and it's one of the few town-run markets in the state to achieve sustainability.

Ryan MacLeod reviewed the Great Esker program. Funding was obtained to renovate the nature facility. The GE program employs 75-100 seasonal workers, and although they were able to retain everyone on last summer, they weren't able to hire new workers. It was one of the only municipalities taking on programming. They ran offseason programming and one vacation camp. It's been a great hiring process so far for this year,

with 65-70 interviews scheduled. Registration began 4/1 and they received three times more applications than in the highest year. They have a host of vendor programs, including a Taste of Broadway. They are working with the WPD for the Junior Police Academy, which sold out in 27 minutes. There are two main campuses for summer programming- Great Esker and Wessagusset School and he thanked the staff for allowing them to provide a more stable summer program at Wessagusset. The theme is inclusivity; WPS offered social emotional help for staffing so they mirror what the schools are doing. They are applying for state voucher applications through the Health Department so they can accept state vouchers to be used for the programs and it will give them the ability to help at least 30-50 families serviced through the Department of Children & Families. Upcoming registrations are due out in the next week.

Joe Hajaar, rink manager at Connell, provided an update on the programming at the facility, including Open Swim, Open Skate, Annual Pass, and water exercise programs. The ice was occupied mainly by WHS and Youth Hockey programs, Men's South Shore Conference, and they also hosted sled hockey. There are advertising opportunities, with an interactive sign that senses the time spent in front and offered through Livebarn- an online viewing subscription service, which was installed free of charge and generated revenue.

Vice Chair Molisse thanked them for a great presentation. Councilor Harrington pointed out that Weymouth's Joey Howard was an MVP on the USA Paralympic Hockey Team. He suggested they might consider hanging his jersey in recognition at Connell.

Chair Hackett requested confirmation that the enterprise fund will not include any revenue from Connell. Director Reilly responded that it will not yet; they want to track the revenue over a few years, first. Chair Hackett pointed out that all the hard work has had a social and emotional benefit to Weymouth, and she is grateful for their perseverance.

Establishment of New Police Division- Natural Resource Unit

Chief Fuller reported that things changed over the last year and a half. Harbormaster Paul Milone had been talking with him and the Mayor before he died, on program models of natural resources officers. Weymouth doesn't necessarily need a fulltime harbormaster; they want to take the boats out in winter. Brian Morse was assigned to fill the role of harbormaster in title only, as head of Special Operations. The other harbormasters will come back, along with one new one, and Paul's wife, who was the commander of Pt. Allerton for years, will help out with training to work a program of 6 months a year. Two of the officers assigned to the unit have boating skills- Jack O'Rourke, Ed Yakubian. Salaries were shuffled and they picked up Brian Willard (former ACO in Hingham, Scituate and Cohasset) and Officer Parker, who are both certified shellfish officers, in order to do more with the same, and improve efficiency. They will be visible out in the parks. There are 5,000 licensed dogs in Weymouth. Instead of just chasing dogs, they will conduct shellfish inspections. They have a quad parked at Great Esker. It will be good for people to see their presence in the parks. The mooring system and fee structure are both online. The unit is in its infancy, but the goal is to add to it as it goes forward.

Chair Hackett thanked the Chief for the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:19 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Molisse to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Harrington.

A roll call vote was taken:

Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely-Yes, Vice Chair Hackett- Yes, Chair Molisse-Yes.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Jane Hackett as chair of Public Parks and Recreation Committee
Voted unanimously on 30 August 2021