

BELCHERTOWN RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 13, 2016

Present: Bill Vosburgh, Tilo Schiffer, Nick O'Connor, Rob Opalenik, and Linda Racicot

Absent: Wilbur Quirk, Nancy Kwiatkowski

Meeting was called to order by Bill at 6:15 p.m.

REVIEW MINUTES

Minutes from December 16, 2015 meeting were reviewed, Tilo made a motion to accept the minutes from the December meeting, *Chris seconded, and motion passed 3-0-0.*

Wilbur Quirk arrived 6:30 p.m.

GUEST

Donna Spraggon arrived 6:00 p.m. Donna was invited to present the Recreation Survey she has created for the Recreation Committee.

>Before starting a slide presentation, Donna expressed she would like to get everyone's input regarding the survey, make changes and post on the web a.s.a.p.

>Slide 2, Survey Design-Donna asked as we view the slide show to offer comments for any additions the Committee wants to target under the caption of Future development (Foley & Tennis Courts)

Slide 3, Letter of introduction-Donna stated the phrasing of this letter does not show any commitment on behalf of the Recreation Committee to act upon the results of the survey. It was agreed that the survey would be on line to complete for a 2 week period. Donna suggested having her name/email be posted as the contact. She could field all survey questions and would forward all Recreation Dept. inquiries to Linda. All agreed.

Slide 4, Nick asked if the Committee will receive a print out of the survey results. Donna said yes.

Slide 5, Donna said a link to this survey should be posted on the Recreation Dept. website. The website itself is long and complicated and would be much easier to access through the Recreation website.

Slide 8, Listing of organizations/areas used- It was recommended to add the Senior Center, Flag Football and the High School indoor/outdoor facilities.

Slide 10, CHCS Tennis Courts- Rob asked that it states condemned for safety reasons and suggested that basketball court be added to the list.

Slide 11, Improvements to Foley Field- It was suggested to add parking lot and restrooms.

Slide 13, Prevent from using facilities- It was suggested to add cost to the list.

Slide 15, Advertising- It was suggested to create an opportunity for anyone taking the survey to submit their email address to the Recreation Dept. to receive the Recreation Dept. electronic newsletter.

>The Recreation Committee complimented Donna on her efforts. It was agreed that the survey would be on line January 18th and taken off line February 1, 2016.

>Donna stated she would have the results of the survey compiled by February 8, 2016.

OLD BUSINESS

>Wilbur stated 10 grant applications were submitted. There is approximately \$175K to disburse. Wilbur added the Recreation Dept. grant was very well written and the community preservation committee only had one issue.

2.b Who will benefit and why? "This court will be used by the Belchertown Public Schools as a teaching center for their Physical Education Program."

>Wilbur asked that the Recreation Committee strike that sentence.

Chris motioned to remove the sentence. *Bill seconded motion, passed 4-0-0*

>Rob asked if the Skate Park submitted a grant.

>Wilbur said no.

NEW BUSINESS

- >Chris informed the committee he is the liaison for the Patrick Center committee. He asked if the Recreation Dept. has an interest in the building.
- >Rob stated the property is of no use to the Dept. The top of the land is flat but dramatically slopes down towards the house.
- >Nick stated the Patrick Center has a sub committee that includes Nick O'Connor, Chairperson, Chris Daley, Steve Williams, Ed Boscher, and others.
- >Nick suggested a plan for municipal use by March to put on a warrant. He said the Patrick Center could possible be used for the School Central Office or the Family Center.
- >Chris asked if HAPS is federal.
- >Nick said no. The town will be given the first option.
- >Chris stated he heard about an auction.
- >Nick said Baker announced a lot of state surplus could be available to towns. Baker made decision to postpone the auction.
- >Chris asked about the condition of the Patrick Center.
- >Nick said the building was upgraded with vision impaired. He stated the committee will compose a larger vision for the communities needs; they will look at loosing recreation space vs. retail space, replace what the town may loose and what cultural can come into town. He stated that he talked to Gary about the highest need.
- >Rob stated DART, Design and Resiliency Team, is a team of experts assembled by the American Institute of Architects to bring our community together to develop priorities and recommendations for the area between the common and courthouse, including the schools, state school development, recreation areas, up to the NESFI land which is separate from selling land from assisted living.
- >Nick stated this opens up more grant opportunity and said he went to the board asking if he should continue his efforts. They concurred with him continuing his effort.
- >Rob asked if DART have money behind them.
- >Nick said yes.
- >Nick stated there are 5/6 areas designated for Recreation land and would like to get a line item on the books for Recreation space.
- >Rob stated there is a town meeting Feb. 22nd
- >Nick said he would like to concentrate on the area behind Footloose, which is 45 acres. Another good location is Piper Farm which is 46 acres.
- >Bill stated that Piper Farm is centrally located.
- >Nick said behind Mill Valley Golf Course is 107 acres, Constantino Field on Rte 9, Washington & North Liberty and behind Ledgewood Circle are most viable.
- >Rob stated a plan would need to be formed to ask for money.
- >Nick said submitting a park grant within a certain distance from a school zone allows more funding for grants.
- >Rob said the Town would need to front the funds and then an approved grant would refund the Town.
- >Nick said yes and it will be a consideration looking to the future.
- >Rob informed the Committee in 1998 a plan was submitted to design a Recreation complex on Sargent St. (located at Constantino field) and was denied.
- >Nick said the timing is right for a warrant article and we have what it would take to push it through at the town meeting.
- >Rob stated he has a concern where the money would come from and the affect it would have on non union town employees.
- >Nick said most major recreation projects in town gets funded by volunteers, the Town needs to get involved with funding capital projects and equipment.
- >Rob stated the committee needed to hear directly from Nick, what his plans are.
- >Nick asked for thoughts

- >Rob said everything sounds good however established town groups don't want any of this to hurt their agenda.
- >Nick stated everyone formed in this group have no agenda in mind.
- >Rob voiced the good news is we already own the land. To put in a state of the art basketball court would cost \$60-65K. A multi purpose field would be \$800K and guaranteed for 6 years.
- >Chris said Colleges have them.
- >Nick said our town could benefit having more basketball courts, and with Jessica's Playground eliminating one, he would like to see more courts developed with maybe a coffee shop which he feels would be utilized.
- >Rob said a multi purpose court with a dome should be considered. Years ago the cost was \$125K and now could be \$200K.
- >Nick said instead of the Community Development Group scheduling separate meetings, the Recreation Committee should consider asking the group to attend the Recreation Committee meetings.
- >Nick stated phase one will be to talk with Steve and Gary then request free cash on a warrant for February.
- >Nick said he feels more people will want to become involved. He stated Donna Spraggon would like to also be involved and feels she would do a great job.

DIRECTORS REPORT

- >Rob said the CHCS pool received a touch pad timing system for swim meets. It was donated through the efforts of the Stringrays and sponsors. Donna Spraggon coordinated the efforts.
- >Nick asked if there was a scoreboard.
- >Donna said no. Times will be registered on a console.
- >Rob stated the Stingrays swim team season ended in 5 wins, 1 lose.
- >Linda informed the committee the Kindergarten basketball clinic has approximately 30 participants, High School basketball has 80 participants and Instructional basketball has 75 participants.
- >Linda stated there will be a new adult art class offered this spring. The instructor, Kim Mook is an art teacher at CHCS.

Next meeting is Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at 6:15 p.m. in the Recreation Conference Room.
Chris made a motion to adjourn. *Wilbur seconded motion, passed 4-0-0.*

Meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.