
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

May 18, 2021

7:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present: Christopher Feeley, David McNeill, Monique Doyle, Lisa Oxford, Michael Giardino, Joseph Halligan, Wayne Simarrian, Jeffrey Livingstone, Phyllis Malcom

Town staff also in attendance: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Assistant to the Town Administrator Chrissy Whelton, Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner, Recreation Director Ryan Jette

Other Attendees: Glenn Jones, Brett Feldman

Chairman Christopher Feeley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Town Administrator Jamie Hellen addressed the Maple Hill land and the town's right of first refusal. The Town Council met in Executive Session to discuss the property. A public hearing will be announced so that Franklin residents will be able to hear all the information and due process will follow.

1. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. McNeill made a motion to approve the Minutes from the April 6, 2021, CPC meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Doyle. Approval was unanimous.

2. Overview of the Town's recreation programs from Recreation Director Ryan Jette

Because of the 2020-2021 Covid lockdown, there has been a decline in participants. Revenue fell from \$500,000 to \$322,000. In 2020, 95 programs ran. Usually 100 programs run annually.

Programs run from preschool to those for seniors. Programs run all four seasons and include indoor programs. Spring programs include the Community Garden where the four more beds were added to the existing fifty-six. Donations are made to the Food Pantry from the Community Gardens. Summer programs include Concerts on the Common, Movie Nights, and educational opportunities such as First Aid.

The Recreation Department employs two full-time staff and two part-time office staff. Forty-five percent of the payroll includes staffing. Some seniors assist as part of their tax write-off.

The DPW works with the Recreation Department with fields and programs. Fields and playgrounds must be up to code. Playgrounds have a 15-20 year life-span.

The Recreation Department also extends community service hours to Eagle Scouts and students from Franklin High School and Tri-County.

New projects and Initiatives include: King Street, Fletcher Field, FHS scoreboard and safety netting, Beaver Pond, Adopt a Park, and trail improvements.

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A schedule has been set up for future projects which include: Beaver Pond expansion, new playgrounds (Nason, Fletcher, and King Street), pickleball at King Street, a scoreboard at Beaver Pond, development of passive recreation off Lincoln Street, and a study of wetlands and access.

Upkeep, expansion, and improvements made by the Recreation Department impact all populations.

3. Recreation Presentation and Discussion

Mr. Simarrian asked CPC monies could be used toward projects and maintenance. Ms. Oxford stated that the recreation programs are important for children and families. Mr. Livingstone noted that there are fantastic programs, including sports. "We have it so great," he said. Ms. Oxford said that the funding that has been secured is impressive.

Mr. Jette explained that demographics show that 25% of the population enjoyed the programs, mostly kids, although it is hard to quantify as Dacey Fields Delcarte are also widely used. Mr. Jette noted that the Recreation Department is always looking for new programs: senior basketball and aquatics at the Y. Mr. McNeil asked what percentage of town money is budgeted for programs. Mr. Jette indicated that the amount is \$580,000 but the Department tries to bring in enough revenue to make it self-supporting. Mr. Hellen commented that the CPC could work with the Recreation Department to spread monies around to check off projects and that every year, except for last year, \$100,000-\$200,000 is funded by the Town and that the Town also looks for state grants.

Mr. Halligan asked how much the CPC had at present. Mr. replied, "Zero." After the first year's collection, the CPC would have about \$1.79 million, with approximately an additional \$300,000 from the state. Mr. Halligan said that in November 2022, the CPC will have a full year of collection and state revenues. Mr. Hellen noted that the town taxes for CPC begin July 1, 2021 and end June 30, 2022. Mr. Halligan said that the CPC should save money for a and that monies could be used for a "rainy day," and to Mr. Halligan's point, there will be a fair application period before appropriating projects left and right.

Mr. Livingstone noted that changing demographics of the town should be considered and asked if the Recreation Department is understaffed. Mr. Jette replied that the Department is not understaffed though participation is not going down but that it can be handled. Elementary levels are dropping but other age groups are improving in participation. Pickleball is very popular.

Mr. Simarrian said that he would want immediate fixing of playgrounds when the money comes in, "Why wait?" Mr. Livingston agreed and said that urgent needs must be met but a percentage must be kept for big projects. Mr. Feeley said that the comments were off topic.

Mr. Jette continued that JFK grounds might include a cricket pitch. Councilor Jones joined and said that he was pleased with the Recreation Department and questioned why the funds would not be available until next year. Mr. Feeley said that no decisions have been made about funding. He agreed with Mr. Halligan that the CPC should allocate monies for future projects and that the committee must be fiscally wise with the money. Ms. Malcom asked about the 10% yearly allocations. Mr. Hellen said that the CPC must develop a plan for the public application process and that Town departments would apply. Mr. Feeley said that the committee would keep an open mind.

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Mr. McNeil made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47. It was seconded by Ms. Doyle.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique Doyle

Clerk, CPC Committee, Franklin, MA