

Parks & Recreation Department

Dedham Recreation Center

269 Common Street

781-751-9250



Robert Stanley
Director

Debra Anderson
Assistant & Program Director

Tracey White
Administrative Assistant

March 8, 2021

Virtual Meeting via : Zoom

Present:

Tye Donahue- Chairman
Lisa Moran – Vice Chairman
Chuck Dello Iacono
Jonathan Briggs
Alix O’Connell
Robert Stanley – Director
Debra Anderson – Asst. Director
Tracey White – Assistant to the Director

Absent

Chairman Donahue opened the meeting by reading the Governors statement:

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic and State of Emergency, on March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order Temporarily Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20. Pursuant to the Order, public bodies are temporarily relieved from the Open Meeting Law's requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means."

Roll Call Attendance:

L. Moran stated present.
C. Dello Iacono stated present.
J. Briggs stated present.
A. O’Connell stated present.
Chairman Donahue stated present.

Public Comment

Michael Cocchi asked about the past meeting vote on the Code of Conduct, and would like the Commissioners who voted no to explain why they voted that way he and made comment to why he felt that the Code of Conduct was important as a Commissioner, he stated that Mr. Dello Iacono has made disparaging comments about him on Social Media.

Chairman Donahue asked Dr. Cocchi to keep on topic.

Dr Cocchi continued to say that the comments by this Commissioner reflected poorly on the Board and began to state reasons for his thoughts, and stated that Mr. Dello Iacono had bashed a Road Race as a Ponzi scheme

Chairman Donahue stated that though it was a public meeting, it was a public bashing on Dr Cocchi's part, and he could not allow Dr. Cocchi to continue, and that he should speak to Mr. Dello Iacono outside of the meeting, off Social Media, and one to one. He stated to stay to the point and that it was the final warning.

Chairman Donahue stated that he was unable to attend the prior meeting due to a work conflict and did not put it on the March Meeting Agenda as it was his final meeting and he thought better to have a new Commissioner have that vote.

A. O'Connell stated that she had brought it up at the November Meeting, as she feels that it is important, she suggested that Dr. Cocchi look at the November meeting to see the discussion and debate by the Commissioners.

C. Dello Iacono stated that he voted no on the Code of Conduct due to some language being in the document that he is uncomfortable with, he has heard from constituents that they agree and that is why he voted no. That does not mean in the future he may not have issue, if some language is changed.

L. Moran stated that she feels it is redundant, as she has already taken an Oath of Office when she was sworn in. The only other Board that has signed this is the Select Board. She has researched this and no other Board has been asked to sign a Code of Conduct and feels that it is being targeted toward Mr. Dello Iacono.

Donahue stated it is not a debate, it is possible that it could be an Agenda in the future.

Minutes

January 11th Meeting,
Motion by C. Dello Iacono, second by J. Briggs to accept the Minutes.
All voted in favor.

February 8th Meeting
Motion by C. Dello Iacono, Second by A. O'Connell to accept the Minutes.
All voted in favor, with Chairman Donahue abstaining, as he was not in attendance.

VFW/Providence Highway Corridor Action Plan Update

Town Planner, Jeremy Rosenberger stated that there are a few meetings coming up and he would like the Commissioners to help spread the word, for people to attend.

J. Rosenberg stated that Commissioner Briggs had asked to think big, and recently the Town has received as a donation a large area of Charles river adjacent properties.

C. Dello Iacono asked if the recent donation accepted by the Board of Selectman was helpful to this project.

J. Rosenberg answered yes and there is about seven acres donated and that could possibly give access to the river.

L. Moran asked what the time was for the Thursday, March 11th meeting was.

J. Rosenberger stated that it would start at 7:00pm and would be about an hour and a half.

Designing Dedham 2030 Open House Update

J. Rosenberger stated that there would be an Open House at the end of the Month and the topic would be Land Use for the Town, there will be many various topics and times,

J. Briggs stated that the meetings have been engaging and breakout rooms were great, and the meetings go by very quickly and appreciates the efforts to get people involved.

Chairman Donahue thanked J. Rosenberger for attending the meeting.

Cindy Giles asked if the Parks & Recreation had a seat at the table regarding the project.

J. Briggs stated there is no specific seat at the table, however that he had asked about a walking path along the river.

Dedham Four on the Fourth Road Race

Rob Nassar stated that the 2020 Road Race was unable to be had due to Covid-19, he is not sure if the Race will be able to go forward, however he would like to ask for a permit for July 4, 2021, and to use on July 2nd to set up for the event.

C. Dello Iacono hoped that would be the case.

Chairman Donahue asked if it was a One Day Permit

Director Stanley stated that since it is such a large event it is something that he feels the Commissioners should vote on.

C. Dello Iacono stated that due to having alcohol it does not fit the criteria of a One Day Permit.

Chairman asked for a Motion, moved by A. O'Connell, with a second by J. Briggs to accept the request for the Rally for Sally Road Race. All voted in the affirmative.

Emergency Item

Chairman Donahue stated here was an emergency item added to the Agenda as it is time sensitive.

C. Dello Iacono stated that he has sent all Commissioners a letter that needs to be approved by the Board regarding the William Gould Memorial and since it needs to be done by April 1, 2021 it needs to be voted on at this meeting.

A. O'Connell stated that the letter states it is for a statue and that she does not believe that the Board has made such a decision and it should be written as for a memorial of some kind.

C. Dello Iacono answered that he believes that is what the grant is for, that he can ask the writer to change the wording.

J. Briggs asked if Brian Keaney was on the Zoom meeting, he thought that they would be receiving more information about this subject, and he asked if there were hundreds of letters, and did not want to overstate. He believes everyone is for the project.

Chairman Dello Iacono stated he would need to get a letter with the Town Seal and make arrangements for all Commissioners to sign the letter.

J. Briggs suggested having it at the Dolan Center and all Commissioners could go there to sign the letter.

Chairman Donahue asked for a Motion to approve a letter for the grant for the William Gould Project, moved by L. Moran with a second by A. O'Connell,

J. Briggs asked to a change the wording from hundreds of letter to say a multitude of correspondences.

The vote was unanimous, to approve the letter with the changes that were discussed

Director Report

- Pool has been closed for one year this week, due to Covid and also some construction events.
- Windows are completed.
- HVAC Project should be completed by the end of March and then we will do some cleaning and filling water back into the pool.
- Hopefully opening at the beginning of May. We will notify the pool members this week, in discussion with Westwood who has had their pool open for a few months. Maybe open more hours and having to make reservations for a lane to use.
- June will start normal summer programs such as Clippers and Swim & Gym, we will open with restrictions.
- Spending freeze from the Town Manager, we are able to proceed with all day-to-day things for the Parks Department only necessities.
- We will be replacing the net that was stolen at Gonzalez Field, and will do some other maintenance on the field.
- We are inundated with soccer teams requests to use Gonzalez Field.
- We are having tree work done, such as at the Common and, Paul Park to remove hanging branched over the playgrounds or streets,
- Men's softball will be returning about the first week of May, we can fit in two more teams, if anyone is interested, we will be promoting in the next few days.
- Decisions need to be made regarding the Flag Day Parade; there have been budget talks and it is being discussed. Not any fundraising has been done. Not sure of the what the status of the bands will be, if they are able to participate. We are looking for ideas and suggestions.

C. Dello Iacono stated that he is happy to hear that discussions are being had about the Flag Day Parade, it would be wonderful to have something, he is hopeful that houghts are being discussed for the fireworks next year.

Director stated that he has had discussions with the Town Manager and Finance Director regarding funding, it will be in Finance & Warrant Hearing for next year. If we can do it, it would be after the parade! Hoping to be a tradition going forward.

A. O'Connell stated she wants to say that Gonzalez Field is not just a soccer field it is a multi-use field.

L. Moran asked what can be done to make sure that the net is never stolen again

Director stated that he is hopeful and is wishing that it will not happen again.

L. Moran stated that she is sad that Clippers were not able to have a season last year.

J. Briggs stated that we need to have discussions about safety/security cameras at Gonzalez with all that goes on that field and area. And with the Concession Stand and future equipment at that location. I am concerned to have the Flag Day parade with the restrictions and keeping people safe and with the spending freeze, it would be an issue, he stated.

Director Stanley stated that the Dolan Center Project need more funding and work will begin in April

L. Moran made a motion to accept the Director's Report with a second by J. Briggs, all Commissioners voted unanimously to accept.

Assistant Director Report

D. Anderson stated that Karate and Mini Chefs were in full swing and as is gymnastics and dance is underway,

- Gymnastics show will have some type of show, not sure of what that will look like
- Adding mini sessions of gymnastics program
- Added a Stem & Play Program
- Adding Golfing Lessons
- Collaboration Program with Police Department for April Vacation Programs
- Continue Police Program for the Summer, most likely at Paul Park.
- Summer registration Swim & Gym Program is Full for Session one & two.
- All Day Program is 50% full
- All Day registration is rolling in.
- Letters have gone out to former summer employees; we only are applications for prior employees at this time, as they may not be able to hire new staff yet.
- Fishing & Game Department has been sending people to use Boat Launch, only 5 people at a time.
- LL Bean will be doing archery.
- The Bissonnette family will still be having a walk this fall, in honor of Thomas Bissonnette, hopefully on October 16, 2021. They will be discussing with the Police Department; nothing will be any different then the permit that submitted prior to Covid-19 prior to Covid-19.

Chairman Donahue stated he is on that Committee and all permits will be resubmitted, and all Departments will be notified and asked for approval such as the Police Department, and the Boards that need to approve the event.

L. Moran asked if there will be tennis lessons this Spring or Summer.

D. Anderson answered that there would be, and she has been discussing with the Human Resource Department.

L. Moran asked if there was a flyer done, as she has seen ones from the Community House and Dedham Health and Athletic Club

D. Anderson lost connection.

Motion to accept the Assistant Director Report was made by J. Briggs with a second by C. Dello Iacono, all voted in favor to accept.

Chairman Donahue stated that if anyone had any questions, they should call the Assistant Director.

Old Business

L. Moran asked if the Chairman had sent the compilation of Director and Commissioner goals

Chairman Donahue stated that he would email to the Commissioners.

D. Anderson rejoined the meeting.

D. Anderson stated that there is a flyer, and he would forward to the Commissioners.

L. Moran asked if there could be some type of cultural dances, maybe one week and something another week.

D. Anderson lost connection.

C. Dello Iacono stated that he abstained from the vote of the Rally for Sally, as he is a volunteer for the Race.

A. O'Connell asked if the Code of Conduct could have a reconsideration vote.

T, White stated that Town Clerk, Paul Munchbach stated there is no time frame and you could post for a discussion and vote at any time.

New Business

C. Dello Iacono stated that the Dog Park Committee met last week, and three of the four members have been sworn in by the Town Clerk, the committee asked if the Commissioners had any goals for the Dog Park Committee

A. O'Connell stated that the posting was under Parks & Recreation and there were some questions about why it was posted that way.

C. Dello Iacono stated that it had not been formed yet and going forward it would be listed as the Dog Park Committee

J. Briggs asked what the Dog Park was looking for.

C. Dello Iacono stated ideas and thoughts.

J. Briggs stated that Hanover has a Pickle Ball facility, we should be looking for a place that would be appropriate to place a few courts, possibly at the Dolan Center.

A. O'Connell asked how residents would get the equipment back and forth to a court.

J. Briggs thought of possibly having permanent nets sets and people bring their own rackets, as they do with tennis.

L. Moran stated that the Leprechaun Catching Contest was happening, she has printed and electronically have sent through all the schools, and asked Commissioner O'Connell if she would like to participate, as she hadn't heard from her.

A. O'Connell stated she would be happy to participate.

Chairman Donahue stated that he would not be seeking another term on the Board, and that he has enjoyed his time on the Board and thanked all Commissioners past and present, the Administrative staff and the Parks Department, he appreciated everyone working together with everyone.

C. Dello Iacono thanked Chairman Donahue for his three years on the Board and especially this past year as the Chairman, during such a difficult year.

L. Moran stated that she appreciated all work that Chairman Donahue has done for the Parks & Recreation Department, and virtually presented him with a gift she had made for him, a personalized jacket.

Chairman Donahue thanked Commissioner Moran for the gift.

J. Briggs stated that Chairman Donahue was wise beyond his years and his knowledge of how Committees and Boards all work and congratulated him on all the terrific things happening in his personal life.

Director Stanley thanked Chairman Donahue from him and the staff for his weekly calls, to check in and always asking if there was anything he could do for the Department.

L. Moran asked for a date for the following meeting.

Chairman Donahue stated it would be April 12, 2021 at 7:00PM

L. Moran wished Commissioner Dello Iacono best wishes as he seeks re-election to the Parks and Recreation Commission on April 11th, Election Day.

C. Dello Iacono made a motion to adjourn, with a second by J. Briggs all voted unanimously.