

Haddam Park & Recreation Commission
“Regular Scheduled” Meeting
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
Thursday, June 11, 2020
7:30 pm EDT
Via GoToMeeting Teleconference

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In attendance: Chairman Jason Lonergan, Commissioner Peter Christopher, and Commissioner David Law

Not in attendance: Vice Chairman Jennifer O’Neal and Commissioner Daniel Belanger

Staff in attendance: Barbara Galloway, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Chairman Lonergan called the videoconference Meeting to order at 7:31, followed by a brief technical glitch. He then re-started the Meeting at 7:43 PM.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the May 14, 2020 video Regular Meeting

Commissioner Christopher made the Motion seconded by Commissioner Law to approve as printed the May 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes. The Motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Christopher made the Motion seconded by Commissioner Law to amend the Agenda to allow resident Matthew Prey to speak to the commission at this point in the Meeting. The Motion was approved unanimously.

3. Matthew Prey (Matt) had contacted Commissioner Christopher, asking to speak before this commission about a Boy Scout project he would like to complete at the Great Hills Athletic Center as part of his efforts to attain Eagle Scout prior to his 18th birthday in January 2021, when by regulations he will no longer be able to serve in the Boy Scouts of America. He explained that with the approval of the Little League, he would like to construct a kiosk, reflecting history of the Jail Hill ballfields, on a triangle of grass near the existing concession stand, and he would also construct and install replacement benches near the upper field at the site of the existing decrepit wooden benches. The site overlooks the upper field and is a high foot traffic area. He responded to the commissioners’ questions about the specific location, the size of the construction pieces, and how his work will be secured and finished for safety, security, and appearance. The project will be entirely funded by the Haddam Little League with no costs to the Town of Haddam or this commission. Earlier Haddam Park & Recreation Commission had approved the kiosk idea years ago. Matt would like to start this project within the next month and complete the work over the summer months. Matt agreed to meet Chairman Lonergan and any other available commissioners at the Great Hills property this Saturday morning, June 13 at 9:30

AM to map out and further explain details of his plans. He thanked the commissioners for their time and attention.

Commissioner Christopher made the Motion seconded by Commissioner Law to amend the Agenda to allow resident Bunny Batzner to speak to the commission at this point in the Meeting regarding walking trail extension plans the commission has been investigating. The Motion was approved unanimously.

4. Haddam resident Bunny Batzner had contacted Commissioner Law following a recent presentation that Chairman Lonergan had made to the Conservation Commission regarding this commission's preliminary plan for repairs to and a possible extension of the existing walking trail at the Great Hills Athletic Complex. Ms. Batzner explained that her family owns property on Church Hill Road that abuts the Great Hills property. She had recently had to post signs on the family property since it became evident that people, most likely hiking from the Great Hills fields, had been trespassing on the property. She said she was not certain how far the commission's plans had already proceeded, but she wanted to make the commission aware of her concerns and hoped to work with the commission to divert the walking path extension at Great Hills away from her family property, if possible. Chairman Lonergan informed her that the plan was in its early stages since a survey and proper work applications would have to be completed and the work could require a bidding process. Chairman Lonergan attempted to determine the location of Ms. Batzner's family property on Church Hill Road in relation to the current walking paths. Chairman Lonergan invited Ms. Batzner to also meet him at the Great Hills Athletic Complex on Saturday AM while he is there discussing his project with Matt Pray. She agreed to meet the group at Great Hills at 9:30 AM, as well.
5. Facilities and Field Use Requests – discussion/approval
Chairman Lonergan informed the commissioners that, per State and local rulings, outdoor public venues would be allowed to open with the accepted CDC restrictions as of June 17. After he communicates with the Town's Health Department agency, he believes the ballfields can officially open on Saturday, June 20th. Chairman Lonergan stated that he will approve all Field Use Request forms that had been submitted earlier for a starting date of 6/20/2020 and send a refreshed version to all involved groups. Commissioner Christopher noted that he has all relevant proofs of insurance and had forwarded them to Chairman Lonergan.
Commissioner Christopher made the Motion seconded by Commissioner Law, pending the approval from the Town of Haddam Health organization, the commission will amend its currently suspended use of the *Field & Facility Use Request* forms to allow for the official opening and use of the fields at Great Hills and Brickyard properties as of June 20, 2020 with current proof of insurance and the strict agreement of all groups using the properties to self-regulation, ensuring that the teams are following all of the CDC, State and Town safety, sanitary, and social spacing regulations and group gathering restrictions that are and will remain in place to one accepted degree or another for the foreseeable future. The Motion was approved unanimously.

6. General Review of current budget financial reports (04/2020)
The commissioners had received emailed copies of the financial reports earlier in the day. Reviewed were “Adjustments to Budgeted Expenditures - General Fund July 2019 to June 2020”, dated 06/08/2020 and “Adjustments to Budgeted Expenditures - Capital Non-Recurring July 2019 to June 2020”, dated 06/08/2020. Chairman Lonergan reviewed the current 2019-2020 General Fund and Capital Non-Recurring budgets and noted that the biggest expenditure reflected is for mowing (both Great Hills and Brickyard fields) and sanitation (currently one portable toilet at Great Hills) and relocation of fencing at the Brickyard.
7. Unfinished Business
- a. *New Communications with Service/Maintenance Performers re: previously discussed Planned Activities (inspections, repairs, renovations) at each town field site*
Chairman Lonergan stated that he will be contacting the playground inspection firm that had been scheduled to complete inspections of the playgrounds at Great Hills and the Haddam Elementary School properties in April. The inspection work had apparently not been done and there had been no communication from the inspection company and he had been unable to contact a representative since. Chairman Lonergan will again call the company and will hopefully find out when the inspection work would actually be completed and when the commission can expect the inspection reports that describe the site conditions and provide the commission with required repairs and upgrades.
- b. *Updates on Property Activities*
- i. Haddam Elementary School property/Higganum Center
There were no further reports presented to this commission re: activities in Higganum Center, involving Haddam Elementary School, Higganum Cove or other sites. Chairman Lonergan said that he will contact the town planner and the chairperson of the Economic Development Commission re: these areas about which this commission has an interest and might be able to provide some oversight.
- ii. Great Hills Fields
- a) *Any Work Completed at Great Hills fields*
Maintenance and mowing of the fields have been ongoing.
- b) *Plan for Required Safety Repairs to and Potential Extension of the Walking Path at Great Hills*
Beyond the discussion with Ms. Batzner in Item #4 above, the commissioners continued to discuss the plan to do repairs and make a possible extension to the existing walking path at Great Hills Athletic Complex. Chairman Lonergan suggested that any commission members would be welcome to walk the entire length of the walkway with him this coming Saturday morning to see for themselves the condition of the path and discuss the walking path improvement/extension work that they are considering. The suggestion was made to complete purchase orders using the current year’s funding for, at minimum, the public safety-related portions of the work that needs to be done immediately to the walking paths, parking lots, and driveways of both fields for work that has long been put off.

Chairman Lonergan asked for a volunteer to help him begin the walking path project by engaging a potential contractor for a job cost estimate. Chairman Lonergan noted that this job may require a bidding process, depending on the involved costs.

Commissioner Christopher offered to contact the current landscaping company and discuss the general plan with him. Chairman Lonergan said that he had already taken photos of the area and is willing to work on a written plan for the work that needs to be done. Chairman Lonergan said that he will contact the town planner to get his advice and the Town's input on requirements.

Commissioner Christopher made the Motion seconded by Commissioner Law to have Chairman Lonergan prepare purchase orders from the 2019-2020 budget to allow for cleanup and maintenance/repair work not to exceed \$5,000 to be completed at Great Hills and the Brickyard fields, to address safety issues, inclusive of repairs to the walking paths at Great Hills and re-grading the gravel on the driveways at both fields. The Motion was approved unanimously.

Other related issues needing to be addressed this Spring/Summer include repairs to the grass medians, adding to and landscaping of the mulch around plantings, and the trimming of the trees along the circumference of the fields that would facilitate safe and easy pedestrian traffic.

iii. Work Completed at Brickyard property

Commissioner Christopher reported that all of the work has now been completed at the Brickyard field with general site overgrowth removed and field cleanup, the needed reversal of the fencing, the replacement of the backstop, and the proper positioning of the base pins and placement of the bases all now finished. The needed driveway gravel regrading still must be addressed. Mowing and general maintenance have been ongoing.

iv. Discussion of Higganum Cove activities and plans

No additional information was available for activities at the Higganum Cove. Chairman Lonergan said that he would be contacting the town planner and the EDC chairperson to get any new information to share with the commissioners.

c. *2020-2021 Budget Request Outcomes - any updates*

Chairman Lonergan said that the commission had discussed its 2020-2021 budget requests at a previous meeting and, although the commission was not approved for its entire request, he believes that the commission could complete much of its planned work with the funding provided.

d. *2020-2021 Capital Planning Budget any new information*

Chairman Lonergan stated that although he had filed a Capital Plan for the commission, he had not been contacted by anyone from the Town regarding outcomes of the request. He noted that he remembered seeing a line item added to this commission's capital plan for a \$10,000 grant for future activity at Swan Hill/Higganum Cove on the Capital Plan budget presented for the

virtual town hearing earlier in June. He planned to contact the town planner to discuss details of this addition.

8. New Business

a. *Discussion/ Motions/Votes on New Business items – as needed*

Chairman Loneragan stated that with the fields opening in the near future, he will contact Pete's Waste Removal and restart trash pickup and the sanitation company to have a portable toilet installed at the Brickyard and a second portable toilet installed at the Great Hills site, where there is already one that was kept there during the winter.

b. *Any new ideas for the Commission's ongoing list re: potential park-related and recreation-related activities*

No new ideas for park/recreation activities were introduced at this meeting; however, some activities that have been suggested in the past were discussed in the items above.

c. *2020-2021 Haddam-Killingworth Recreation Authority members*

The recording clerk reminded the commissioners that it is the time of year to select the Haddam members (of this commission) to serve on the 2020-2021 Haddam Killingworth Recreation Authority Board (H-K Recreation Authority Board) so that their names can be presented at a town meeting for approval. Chairman Loneragan said that he wanted to contact both Vice Chairman O'Neil and Commissioner Belanger, current Haddam members of the H-K Recreation Authority, who are not present at the meeting tonight to be sure they are interested in staying on the board. He will inform the recording clerk once he has talked with them. For Commissioner Law's information, Chairman Loneragan stated that the Meetings are every other month and that the board's purpose is to provide oversight to the H-K Recreation Authority staff, who are paid employees. Commissioner Christopher stated that he would like to serve on the board again. Commissioner Law stated that if either of the other board members decide not to continue, he would be willing to serve.

9. Correspondence

There was no correspondence/mail received and/or presented for attention.

10. Adjournment

Commissioner Christopher made the Motion seconded by Commissioner Law to adjourn the Meeting. The Motion was approved unanimously. The Meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara D. Galloway
Recording Secretary