

May 29th, 2019
Clinton Parks & Recreation Meeting Minutes
6:00pm
Clinton Parks & Recreation Building
560 High Street

Call to Order: 6:04pm

In Attendance:

- Ed Verrier, Yoanna Osborne, John Baird, Jodi Breidel, Matt Kobus, Interim Director Rosa Kairit, Economic Development Officer - Phil Duffy, Dave Baird (visitor), Dan Lucking & Matt Varakis - CALL

Administrative:

- Review and Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes- 3/28/19 & 4/24/19
 - Jodi motioned to table previous meeting minutes until next meeting; Yoanna 2nd; all in favor.
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- Personnel Update
 - **Director Position**
 - Yoanna - encountered a problem when we didn't follow the proper process; once the final candidates are interviewed, it must be done in a public meeting. For the past 12 years the board had conducted all interviews in private. We were not trained and did not know but it was not intentional; this was the first time it was addressed in terms or proper procedure. Now we also have a central and separate location electronically to collect resumes and conduct official commission business securely without relying on using our personal emails.
 - Options
 - Read instructions from Town Counsel, Bob Gibbons
 - Interview sessions must have minutes which must be finalized
 - Vote on them and release them
 - Nothing happens if no one complains or raises an issue
 - Attorney General could nullify any action made in Executive Session in error, but is unlikely to do so here
 - If we were repeatedly warned and continued to ignore warning, we could be penalized. Disobeying a continual reprimand could result in a possible \$1,000 fine or something similar. However, a civil penalty could be imposed to attend a training session which is more likely.
 - Consider conducting interview session again only in public
 - Important to let the public hear it and have access to the process
 - Jodi motions to redo interviews to in a public meeting to abide by the Open Meeting Law and not be in violation; Matt 2nd; all in favor unanimously.

- Yoanna explained we can summarize interviews, review and then vote at next meeting
- Suggested June 5th as long as both candidates are available - 6pm first interview and 7pm second interview
- **Parks Manager**
 - Rosa addressed Kris Becker's resignation on Thursday, May 23, 2019
 - Jody Goodrich and Tom Christy have risen to the occasion
 - Dept. acquired an additional worker, but is not going to hire a manager because position will no longer be valid after July 1st
 - Rosa asked that Jody and Tom could have raises due to overtime work, putting forth extra effort and stepping up to replace lots of institutional knowledge lost when Kris departed suddenly
 - Funds will not be an issue with raises or overtime
 - Jodi B. suggested it might be too soon - a week is not that long to suddenly warrant an increase even if merited
 - Rosa said that they cannot get overtime compensation since they can't get paid over 40hrs.; she pointed out they should be currently paid \$15\hr. because they were hired as groundskeepers; Rosa would like Tom's rate to be \$14 and Jody - \$15
 - Yoanna suggested it is fair because they are in a tough situation with extra work and down 2.5 workers for the amount of area they cover
 - Ed makes a motion that we give them this slight increase (last couple of weeks they have been working very hard; parks looks great, they do a lot of extra tasks and it's well worth it) Yoanna 2nd; Yoanna & Ed in favor; Matt, John & Jodi vote against. 3-2, motion denied.

Parks & Recreation:

- **Open Space Recreation Plan** - Update from Phil Duffy, Economic Development Officer
 - Town did receive reimbursement in for Ciesluk Property, a week after we purchased property in 2017
 - False statement that Open Space Plan not being complete would affect green community in the fall
 - Planning document & professional instrument for Land & PARC Grants
 - Yoanna asked isn't it important still to finish regardless of whether there is an immediate need for it as a matter of principle, in case an unforeseen need for it arises? Phil said yes, it is important to follow a plan but when we have a need for a plan, and that we should develop a plan for 2021.
 - Yoanna is concerned if we encounter a problem where we have to go back to complete this plan and then explain why it didn't get finished. She's not comfortable with setting the precedent of not finishing this plan.

- Jodi says we are getting off track because CPR dept. does not have need for this to be finished
 - Phil explains that while CPR had a big hand in the previous OSRP, in the next one it will be more focused on recreation and moving forward recreation should be involved.
 - Yoanna asked if we do need it to be done, there is a way for it to be done, and Phil says we should begin the process of updating for the next 5 years.
 - Yoanna says when next director is chosen, he or she will have time to discuss with Phil, and we are in process of doing that.
 - Yoanna thanked Phil for his explanation.
 - Phil says if we need a grant approved in November, it could be done. Rail Trail grant may require community input. If Board of Selectmen says it's important, then they can direct his efforts toward finishing it.
 - Phil inquired if we consulted with an arborist in our selection of trees to replace the ones that have expired. He brought up Central Park trees over by Russian Icon Museum specifically - there were trees planted on the corner, two Japanese maples; a Japanese maple is not a right match for that location. Says it is important to scale vegetation's functionality and more shade is required for that space.
 - Rosa said she asked for Sugar Maples and not Japanese Maples but she will look into it.
- **Clinton Area Little League- CALL Plaque** **
- Yoanna thanked them for being here and the effort put into maintaining the little league field.
 - Dan presents material to board, a packet from CALL about community sponsor appreciation plaque
 - Dan says big part of Vale Street refurbishment and work and effort behind this project has come from the CALL board and community partners of theirs. A certain number of individuals put in effort, almost \$1,000 dollar per donor.
 - Press Box behind home plate someone offered free of charged
 - CALL board at recent meeting decided to thank sponsors with a plaque
 - Heard from a sponsor, Arsenault Equipment, said it was a tremendous first impression when driving in town
 - Yoanna asked when competing, is field tournament level status?
 - In order to host tournaments, press boxes are required; those kicked it off. Have had one tournament last year. (Matt K. suggested we keep on topic).
 - Dan said packet points through CALL plan - see attached documentation. Dan asked are there any questions about the verbiage?
 - Jodi asked about location and Dan proposes somewhere left or right of flag pole to be installed on a piece of granite. Place 5ft. away from fence and 10ft. away from walkway.

- Yoanna asks that she needs to see the location, and that she would have liked to see verbiage written before it was put on the plaque.
- Yoanna says it seems like a slight rejection because CPR should have more prominence on plaque, not that the community doesn't deserve to be acknowledged.
- Matt V. asks what the implication is?
- Yoanna isn't trying to be argumentative but has concerns of the title
- Matt V. said this was actual revelation that what mattered here was safety of kids, crowning of field, and decision was based on when this was happening, then suggestion that press box would be good. Matt states no one is being singled out over anyone else.
- Yoanna says she wishes they brought in front of board before creating plaque, so that the language could be discussed before it was made.
- Since wording was put in without bringing it in front of CPR board, CALL would have to eat the cost if it is not approved.
- Yoanna states she isn't trying to be difficult and that Emily had stated that it should have been in front of the board as well
- Matt asks Jodi & John if this plaque offends them?
- Ed says they were willing to talk so they had time to review and discuss the matter
- Dan addressed Yoanna's question, then said Atlas Construction built the press box which cost close to \$12,000 and that the decision was based on monetary value of donations going way above and beyond. Therefore they had to put CPR second because of that factor.
- Yoanna said that effort is much appreciated and that it was our first time hearing this explanation
- Matt V. states that no matter what they do, they never get a thank you and feels there's always a problem from CPR's perspective
- Yoanna discussed that bringing in front of the board, being part of the process would have gotten it done the right way
- Ed acknowledge how hard CALL works
- Matt says any prior conversation with former director that we have all this money, and then told we have no money for the gates (?)
- Jodi suggests we should all follow process and that she doesn't have a concern on the wording of the plaque. We shouldn't get into the details of these things in general.
- Matt V. said that was a conversation they've been having for two years and couldn't agree more
- Yoanna says Matt's explanation helped a great deal. In fact, it reoriented her understanding of exactly which part of the field that was being highlighted, and was not addressing all of the Savage Field Renovation that the department had been working on for several years.
- Matt V. said any dollar or sweat equity they invest is for the community; he doesn't care who gets credit as long as the kids are happy. Feels like he always needs to tell people CPR is involved. Said their CALL windscreens don't have logo on them.

- Dan said speaking for their entire board, they are not looking for any credit but want to give the best little league experience they can
 - Yoanna asks if the board is okay with the wording. Ed says that he would like to go over the wording and see if we can come up with a resolution. Jodi asks if he wants to make a motion. Yoanna states she is satisfied but wants to see the location being suggested.
 - Matt V. says they have every right to work together on location. He also points out that it already cost \$2,000 for plaque; so if CPR will take that fact under advisement, CALL would appreciate approval.
 - John says he has no problem but wants to see where it goes
 - Ed makes motion to accept plaque as written and the location of the plaque will be decided upon after a site visit; Yoanna 2nd; 4 in favor - Matt K. abstains.
- **Savage Field Windscreen - CALL**
- Dan says he did not put this on agenda but knew about it few days ago
 - Matt Kobus put on agenda because few weeks ago brought it up and it never made it on last agenda due to timing
 - Matt V. says he has no issue with any of the windscreens but if we have questions, just let them know
 - Yoanna said windscreen behind home plate had banner on windscreen
 - Matt V. said it was for sponsors' photos at the All-Star Game Day then taken down later
 - Yoanna states that it's a process situation again.
 - Matt K. said it was a discussion point that his board had concerns
 - Yoanna says that there should be an open channel of communication. Our CPR windscreen had a white background which interfered with the players ability to see the ball behind home plate, so it was removed. Then the Sponsors' Banner (in white) appears behind home plate without warning. If someone told Rosa about it getting put up for the event, instead of it just getting installed, that would improve relations between the department and the league. Simple heads up would have prepared us to see the banner there after the controversy of removing the previous one. We also had no idea how long the new one would be mounted there, etc.
 - Matt V. said when you notice something that's supposed to be positive and then you turn it into a negative one. Think that's just how you are wired.
 - Yoanna said she didn't mean it to be like that more of a process thing. For instance, we normally require people to rent the Pavilion space by filling out a form, etc., and CPR coordinates scheduled use of that area. But on the day of the All-Star Game festivities, merchandise was openly being sold in that space without arranging for use ahead of time.
 - Jodi agrees that if there isn't an event down at the field that it would be used by the public

- Dan suggests some permanent signage on the Pavilion space to indicate rules for usage
- Matt V. asked Rosa if there is no sign, is it considered open and Rosa confirms that it is, but signage would certainly help
- Dan suggests this topic should be discussed at another meeting
- **Original Agreement for Field Use with CPR & CALL**
 - Yoanna talks about meeting notes in March 6th minutes when Jay Laganelli attended, looking at Athletic Field Use Agreement; two different fees but separate usage and we waived it for when lights are not being used.
 - Yoanna asked if actual form was ever filled out with Emily?
 - Jodi is asking if we are saying we are trying to get \$25 fee from them per game
 - Rosa said she doesn't know where Emily left off, but they waived the \$300 charge for lighting
 - Matt V. said historically they have only ever paid for light usage, and they have never ever paid game fees. Said when they use Fuller Field or St. John's Gym, they make a donation to the gym. Given how much maintenance they donate in time and funds through volunteer effort, plus this being a public department funded by all of our taxes, he would be surprised if they were ever charged a fee for those games.
 - Yoanna said little league never put Emily on SI (scheduling software), but Matt K. says that now Rosa is tied in
 - Rosa discussed usage fees were never put in Rec Desk so that she can put them in the system; Matt V. said they will give her the schedule and add Rosa as an admin.
 - Yoanna discussed the Snack Shack and whether arrangement for donation to Clinton Youth Softball Program was honored as per original proposal in April 2018
 - Matt V. said Snack Shack should be accessible to softball/baseball events in general
 - Jodi asked if \$800-1,000 donation cannot be made to municipal department per town counsel's explanation
 - Dan says Matt V. will be your contact for the schedule going forward

Community Initiatives:

- **Youth Community Center-** Jodi Breidel, WHEAT Director
 - Speaking on behalf, the grant did go through for community center, almost \$30,000 and \$71k grant to operate for kids 10-14yrs. old (middle school ages); letter of intent, seeing if we could do something together linking CPR's expertise & other community resources.

- **Before & After School Program at the Elementary School**
 - Spoke to superior at 21st Century Grant that is coming back; initially tying into community center, but Supt. Steven Meyer said this is a better fit for CPR which should take over the afterschool programs. (Elementary program after 3-5 years is a money maker now).
 - Grant would allow CPR and school dept. to collaborate over a year period to evaluate if program is feasible; examine if it is working then transition into multi-year program with plan in place. Something CPR should look into.
 - Superintendent is supportive of CPR using their facilities
 - Would open up to scholarship funding to provide for elementary school children who don't have financial resources to participate

- Yoanna thanked Matt V. and Dan for coming

Department Issues:

- Maintenance & Clean Up Policy
 - Matt Kobus said because it's something we look at, it is important how parks are maintained; blowing/mowing isn't consistent
 - Thursday grass was blown all over the place on sidewalk, and that weekend was semi-formal dance for middle school
 - Presented pictures of grass all over background in pictures for semi-formal
 - Grass wasn't blown down Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday
 - Matt K. says every time a weed whacker or mower is taken out, so should the blower be brought as well; that it is critical practice & shouldn't be over looked
 - 15mins extra to blow and 30mins to weed whack is not that much extra time
 - Carlisle Park wasn't maintained over weekend; understands issue of being short staffed but said if veteran's family the park is named after saw condition, this would be a poor reflection of the town. Acknowledged it was mowed today but not on Memorial Day.
 - Rosa says safety trumps park maintenance, especially with Memorial Day. Department simply doesn't have enough people to cover all the work.
 - We have seven parks and are supposed to have that amount of workers, but we only have three. Memorial Day weekend was a bigger priority.
 - Matt K. says that it was not acceptable. Rosa knows it's mowed twice a week.
 - Yoanna said others offered to go help or step up in some way and asked if they have to be certified?
 - Rosa said she would have to check with lawyer about liability coverage

- Rosa says with everything going on they do park projects, safety concerns, and that is still not enough to get to every park with only 3 people
 - Rosa says she just found out today that we only had one blower so she went out and got another one
 - Rosa said tackling jobs in stages hasn't been working, so they are redoing the whole plan of how to address the workflow
 - Yoanna said we do get compliments, but it's unfortunate that the grass was not blown off
 - Ed said that since Rosa has taken over, she is a lot more "hands-on" than Emily, by speaking to the guys daily, and that she really has done much to improve things
 - Rosa said she involved herself in the way they schedule things and that she is watching them more closely
 - Ed noticed that she has a better relationship with the workers here in the office by the way she talks and explains the procedures to them... just more positive overall
 - Matt K. said that there are a lot of inefficiencies that need to be fixed
- **Department Updates**
 - Rosa shared some of the compliments that she has received about the parks' appearance.
 - Yoanna shared conversation she had with Asst. Principal Robert Seed at the Middle School concerning recent vandalism of CPR property. If these students are caught, they will be expected to pay back for the damage they caused. A few bad apples shouldn't change our culture here in town (i.e., most kids respect adults and property). It should be the other way around.

Matt Kobus motioned to adjourn at **7:49pm**; John 2nd ; 4 in favor (Jodi had to leave early)

TABLED:

- Dress Code/Appearance Policy
- Employee Scheduled Hours
- Parks Yard Appearance & Condition
- Building Property Update- Fence at the building side yard