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TOWN OF MEDWAY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

PARKS COMMISSION

APPROVED 9/29/2021

Town of Medway
Board of Park Commissioners Meeting
August 25, 2021 – 6:30 PM
155 Village Street
Sanford Hall

Park Commissioners: Debi Rossi, Chair, Sean Murphy, Richard D’Innocenzo, John Farrell, Lyle Core

Absent: None

Others: Julie Harrington, Director of Parks and Recreation; Peter Pelletier, Director of Public Works; Sean Harrington, Deputy Director of Public Works; Susan Dietrich, Chair of the School Committee; Glenn Trindade, Select Board Member; Paul Mahoney, Tina Wright, Kathy Campbell

Chairman Rossi called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM

Public Comment

No public comments outside of agenda items.

Agenda Item #1: Peace Garden Presentation – Tina Wright

Ms. Wright shared information about an ongoing project to create a peace garden in honor of children from Medway who have passed away. The garden will be located at the basketball courts in Choate Park. It will be 8 feet in circumference and made of marble stone. She wanted to be sure the Parks Commission fully approved of the plan to complete it this fall.

Ms. Rossi clarified that the Conservation Commission already approved the site. She also asked Ms. Wright to confirm that per the Select Board’s wishes, the project is self-funded, which Ms. Wright confirmed. Next, Ms. Rossi shared concerns that this section of Choate Park is currently somewhat unkempt and that this peace garden could ameliorate this issue. The committee, along with Mr. Mahoney, discussed how the area would remain a play area with natural, non-invasive plantings.

Next Ms. Rossi asked Mr. Pelletier for a status update on the construction process; he replied that weather and staffing issues have slightly interfered, but he aims to begin in mid-September.

The committee then discussed issues of lighting at the peace garden; Mr. Farrell shared his concern that the lack of lighting would potentially lead to vandalism. Ms. Wright replied that the project currently lacks the funding to provide lighting, but stated that she would look into funding options. Mr. Trindade informed the committee that there is no electrical outlet available; therefore, adding a conduit would be expensive and significantly increase the required budget for this project. He also clarified that this is intended to be an area of contemplation, which would not necessarily require lighting. Instead, he suggested an outdoor camera that does not require hard wiring in order to dissuade vandalism. Mr. Mahoney replied that he did not feel vandalism was a likely concern, due to the personal, sensitive nature of the garden; he felt that rather, people might be more likely to potentially litter or leave objects behind.

Mr. Core also brought up the issue of the basketball court being repurposed as part of this project, to which Mr. Trindade replied that there has been a significant increase in the usage of Choate's basketball court. Mr. Trindade asked if the Board would support putting more basketball equipment in the town in order to avoid any issues with replacing Choate's current facilities. Mr. Trindade estimated that it would likely be about \$5,000 per hoop. Additionally, Mr. Trindade shared that the budget does not currently include a fence to enclose the courts. He also shared his concerns that adding new facilities in a more central part of Medway would ensure accessibility to all interested parties. Ms. Rossi expanded on Mr. Trindade's point about fencing by asking Mr. Pelletier the approximate cost of fencing. Mr. Pelletier stated that it would be approximately \$10,000.

Mr. Murphy asked if Ms. Wright has all the funding she needs for the peace garden progress, to which she replied that she has sufficient funding. However, she did share that community members can donate to the project, but that the ultimate purpose is strictly to honor the children and bereaved families. She expanded on the details of the project, sharing that each paver will show an etching of a child's name and information. Additionally, she informed the Board that there are 12 core families who are involved, but 40 families in total. Ms. Rossi asked if families will be able to decide the location of their child's paver, which Ms. Wright confirmed. Ms. Wright also underscored the importance of all community members reaching out to the appropriate families and being as inclusive as possible. She shared that the general guidelines are targeted at individuals who passed away prior to age 40 and had a strong connection to the town.

Mr. Mahoney then shared that interested families can contact the Friends of Choate in order to get involved. He affirmed that the intention is not to be exclusive, but to also keep it relatively confined to the town and tethered to the original goal of the project.

In regard to the construction of the peace garden, Mr. Trindade inquired about weather and timing; he stated that completing construction in October would be preferable, due to concerns regarding rain and runoff.

Ms. Rossi offered a motion to move this project forward to the Select Board to continue as presented. Mr. Farrell seconded this motion, which carried unanimously. Core: aye, D'Innocenzo: aye, Murphy: aye. Vote passed 5-0-0.

Mr. Trindade also asked the Board to vote to pass a motion for the creation of more basketball courts at the high school. In response, Mr. Mahoney shared that there are tentative pre-existing plans to improve the fields and adjust the layout, as opposed to strictly creating new basketball courts. As a counter, Mr. Trindade stated that for approximately \$25,000, the town could create significantly more basketball courts. Ms. Rossi agreed with this idea and stressed the

importance of constructing new facilities at the high school in particular. Mr. Core responded to Mr. Trindade, sharing that weather, particularly snow, could be an issue. Mr. Farrell also shared that creating basketball courts in parking lots could be highly dangerous. Instead, he suggested they go behind the schools.

Mr. Trindade also suggested adding new basketball courts at McGovern School, due to its significant amount of usable space. Mr. Mahoney added that the Open Space Committee recently did a review of all usable plots, which included spaces on the west side of town. He stated that this could help with the issue of accessibility and centrality of location. He also shared that the VFW lot is not a viable option, due to sloping and drainage issues.

Ms. Dietrich shared her perspective as a member of the Master Plan Committee: she shared that the majority of families with children live on the west side of town, which currently lacks basketball courts. She shared the importance of keeping resources central, as the Master Plan Committee has received significant feedback about this issue. She encouraged continued consideration of the town geography as a whole, as there is a current lack of centrality of recreational resources. She asked what will happen to the volleyball court after the creation of the peace garden. The Board clarified that it will be there during construction, but not long-term.

In response, Mr. Farrell shared the importance of increasing funding for a playground or park area on the west side of town. Mr. Core suggested Idylbrook as a location for this new facility. Mr. Trindade again asked for the Board's support in finding other areas for outdoor basketball facilities. Ms. Rossi stated that this is not technically a votable issue yet; instead, she suggested Mr. Trindade return with a suggestion for a specific location, which the Board wholeheartedly agreed with.

Agenda Item #2: Pickleball Courts Policies and Procedures

Ms. Rossi asked if there were any softwares or apps to reserve time on the pickleball courts. Ms. Harrington shared that there is an existing technology in surrounding towns, such as Franklin and Millis. Ms. Rossi suggested the Board research other towns' protocols and return with further information. In response, Ms. Harrington stated that she will reach out to Franklin directly and share further details at the next meeting.

Next, Ms. Campbell presented her ideas to the Board regarding fencing for the baseball field; specifically, she shared that the fence is currently 10 years old and broken. She suggested that the Town cover this cost, which would be approximately \$10,000. She stated that the fencing must be temporary. Mr. Farrell shared his concerns that this kind of fencing breaks down easily and is only sustainable for a few years. Additionally, he stated that framed portable fences are available and could be an appropriate alternative. He offered the baseball shed as a storage facility for the portable fences. Mr. Murphy asked for clarification regarding why a fence is necessary for baseball; Mr. Farrell replied that the rules of baseball require specific delineation regarding specific distance in order to determine what constitutes a home run. After brief research, Mr. Core submitted a quote for a temporary mesh fence via an online vendor. Ms. Rossi suggested presenting the new, ideally lower, proposal to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee once Mr. Core receives the quote. The Board members all agreed with this approach.

Agenda Item #3: Fall Fields

Ms. Harrington shared that she has received the majority of town teams' schedules in order to coordinate timing and access to fields for fall sports. She shared that many teams have been willing to share facilities, which has made scheduling smoother. Mr. Murphy shared that it is not necessary to give one team access to fields every day of the week; he felt this would ensure equity of access for all teams. Lastly, Mr. D'Innocenzo asked about the status of the softball fields at the middle school, which Mr. Pelletier stated would be ready in spring 2022.

Next, Ms. Harrington stated that lighting must be arranged for the grass fields. Mr. Murphy observed that no high school teams play on Hanlon the majority of weekdays; he was concerned that community members might assume the Board is specifically preventing high school teams from accessing that facility. Ms. Rossi asked if the lights are a workable solution to scheduling issues for the grass fields. Mr. Core shared that buying these lights could be difficult logistically, as people would be responsible for setting them up and breaking them down every evening.

In terms of pricing, the gas lights would be roughly \$7,000 and the portable lights would be approximately \$10,000. Mr. Core also suggested spreading out the lights in order to light a broader area and potentially facilitate the access of multiple teams, as opposed to just one. From there, teams could split the cost of usage. For reference, out of town teams have a \$75/hour fee for access to the fields. Ms. Rossi suggested renting the lights this year and revisiting the issue of buying the lights in the future. Mr. Murphy suggested providing teams with the option to pay a flat rate (\$1,800) for the season for access to lights, as opposed to paying for individual nights. The field rate would remain at \$75/hour. From there, the Board could finance any remaining costs. Medway Youth Soccer and Scorpions would be \$3,500, \$2,000 of which would be provided by the Board.

Mr. Murphy offered a motion for the cost of using the back high school field (with access to lights) to be split between Medway Youth Soccer (\$3,500) and all other groups (\$3,500). The Board will contribute money to cover the difference. Mr. D'Innocenzo seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Core: aye, D'Innocenzo: aye, Murphy: aye. Vote passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Rossi motioned to accept the fall fields schedule as proposed. Mr. Farrell seconded this motion, which carried unanimously. Core: aye, D'Innocenzo: aye, Murphy: aye. Vote passed 5-0-0.

Agenda Item #4: Chair Update

Ms. Rossi did not have any updates at this meeting.

Agenda Item #5: Director Update

Ms. Harrington shared that John Regan, an out-of-town pick-up lacrosse coach, wishes to rent the turf fields at an in-town rate, due to Medway residents being members of the team. The Board did not feel that this was an appropriate or fair deal. Ms. Rossi suggested that Ms. Harrington inform them of the out-of-town rate and schedule them accordingly.

Ms. Harrington also shared that she is taking over the responsibility of the Pumpkin Walk. She asked for the Board's support on the day of the event. Ms. Rossi asked if high school students can receive community service hours for helping, which Ms. Harrington confirmed.

Agenda Item #6: Approval of Minutes - July 28 and August 17, 2021

At the end of the meeting, the Board reviewed the July 28 minutes. Ms. Rossi and Mr. Farrell observed a number of misspellings, as well as an omission of some important points made by the Board, as well as a missing supplemental document. All appropriate changes were made.

Mr. Farrell motioned to approve the July 28 minutes. Mr. Corer seconded this motion, which carried unanimously. D'Innocenzo: aye, Murphy: aye, Rossi: aye. Vote passed 5-0-0.

Next, the Board reviewed the minutes from August 17. Ms. Rossi suggested a handful of changes to the language for clarity, all of which were incorporated.

Mr. Farrell motioned to approve the August 17 minutes. Mr. Core seconded this motion, which carried unanimously. D'Innocenzo: aye, Murphy: aye, Rossi: aye. Vote passed 5-0-0.

At the conclusion of this discussion, Ms. Rossi stated that the next meeting is September 29, 2021 at 6:30pm. She shared that she will reach out to the Select Board about the policies and procedures for the pavilion and pickleball facilities.

Motion to Adjourn: At 9:06PM, Mr. Farrell motioned to adjourn. Ms. Rossi seconded this motion, which passed unanimously. Core: aye, D'Innocenzo: aye, Murphy: aye.

Meeting Adjourned by Ms. Rossi: 9:06pm

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Respectfully submitted by,
Amelia McLaughlin, Recording Secretary