



Medway Town Hall  
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# TOWN OF MEDWAY

## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

### PARKS COMMISSION

**APPROVED 8/25/2021**

Town of Medway  
Board of Park Commissioners Meeting  
July 28 – 6:30 PM  
155 Village Street  
Sanford Hall

**In attendance:** Please see attached sign in sheet for public attendance.

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

**Absent:** Lyle Core

**Others:** Julie Harrington, Director of Parks and Recreation; Peter Pelletier, Director of Public Works; Sean Harrington, Deputy Director of Public Works; Michelle Calhoon

Chairman Rossi called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM

#### **Public Comment**

No public comments outside of agenda items.

#### **Agenda Item One: Minutes from Last Minute**

Minutes not reviewed due to large public presence and full agenda. Item placed at end.

#### **Agenda Item Two: Picnic Rental Service At Parks**

The individuals who requested this topic be placed on the agenda were not in attendance. Ms. Rossi reviewed Pavilion Policy and Procedures, asking if members had any comments/changes prior to sending to the Select Board. Mr. Murphy stated that any individual who wishes to schedule a function will be required to speak with the Board of Park Commissioners first in order to reserve. Mr. Murphy asked that signage speaks to this request. Mr. Farrell made a motion to send the Pavilion Policy and Procedures as revised and with the intention to make it permanent to the Select Board. Motion seconded by Mr. D’Innocenzo. **The motion carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote.**

### **Agenda Item Three: 2021 Fiscal Year End**

2021 Fiscal year end was listed on agenda as item number 6: however due to large public presence, Ms. Rossi briefly stated that she will move discussing the 2021 Fiscal Year End to August as she has yet to receive the munis report from Carol.

### **Agenda Item Four: July FinComm meeting Follow up**

Item was moved up from agenda item number 7. Ms. Rossi shared that she and Ms. Harrington met with FinComm for an hour- long meeting on July 14h. No new issues were raised and it appeared that FinComm was happy with the Committee's responses. Fincomm's questions were reasonable and a follow up was sent by Ms. Rossi.

### **Agenda Item Five: Fall Fields**

Item was moved up from agenda item number 9. The topic will be moved to a special session as Ms. Harrington received the field requests yesterday. Ms. Rossi moved to summer scheduling for August. Ms. Harrington shared the August schedule and stated that there are no current issues as she worked out the scheduling logistics for Medway Jamboree and Mass Prep. Ms. Harrington stated that Old School needs an additional field for their clinic which will work out as baseball is over and the fence can come down. Ms. Rossi moved on to the MBYLL tournament and asked Mr. Soule (public commentator) to share his updates and/or needs from the Committee. Mr. Soule stated the tournament's request for use of Hanlon field for All Star games. Mr. Soule stated that there will be 4 All-star Games, 5th-8th grade and times needed are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mr. Soule stated that the teams will need grass or turf space to warm up on. Mr. Murphy asked if concession stands would be needed. Mr. Soule stated that the preference would be for the Boosters or someone in town to run the concession stand in order to make money. Mr. Soule stated that if there was no one available, the tournament would be willing to staff the concession stand. Mr. Soule asked the Committee that if the concession stand is not available, would a food truck be allowed to be brought in? **Follow up action: Ms. Harrington will follow up with the Boosters to ask about their availability to run the concession stand.** This event is a rain or shine event and the tournament can use both grass and turf field. Ms. Harrington and all members are o.k. with allowing an outside food truck if the concession stand is not viable. Mr. D'Innocenzo made a motion to approve the NBYLL tournament on August 14th at the rate of \$200 an hour with the use of the concession stand or outside food truck. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote.**

### **Agenda Item Six: Mustang Statue**

Item was originally number five on agenda. Ms. Rossi opened the discussion by reading a public letter that was given to the Board of Park Commissioners and by acknowledging the public interest in this topic. Letter is included at the end of the minutes. Ms. Rossi then invited Mr. Morse to speak to the Committee and those in public attendance as to the timeline of events from his and the Phipp's family's perspective. Mr. Morse introduced himself as well as introduced Mr. Phipp's and his legacy in the Medway Public School system. He spoke to the

genesis of the statue, citing the decision to honor Mr. Phipp's through the Mustang statue back in February 2020. Mr. Morse then spoke in great detail as to what Mr. Phipp's legacy means to the community ( ie. school and community pride); to the family's meeting and interactions with the Medway School Committee; the School Committee's initial approval of the statue; the School Committee's reversal of approval; the erosion of trust between the Phipp's family and School Committee; the fundraising and donation process; the decision and approval to place the statue at the fire station after it no longer seemed like a viable option at the High School; the School Committee's reversal in their decision; and, lastly where things stand now. Ms. Rossi and Committee members asked questions and clarifications from Mr. Morse in regards to timeline, interactions with the School Committee and fundraising process. Ms. Rossi then asked Ms. Dietrich to speak before them and before the public attendants. Ms. Dietrich read her prepared remarks. Please find the remarks attached to the minutes. Outside of her prepared remarks, Ms. Dietrich spoke to the school's plaque memorialization process as well as the School Committee's perspective as to the language used during the fundraising process which did not speak directly to Mr. Phipps and his legacy but more to school and community pride. Ms. Rossi shared an article in the newspaper that she had found in regards to the family's fundraising for the statue and stated her opinion that it seemed clear as to what was being asked of the community members to donate to. Mr. Morse, from his public seat, spoke to his involvement in the fundraising and shared the exact language used when asking for donations. Ms. Rossi and members of the Board asked questions and clarifications from Ms. Dietrich to which she offered responses. Ms. Rossi opened the discussion to public comment. Mr. Bolanzi spoke from his seat, sharing his disgust and disappointment that this issue has been politicized and has become this heated over the plaque itself and what the plaque should read. Two members of the Medway Friends for Performing Arts then sat in front of the Board and public attendants to read their prepared remarks in regards to placing the statue at the school in a place outside of the athletic fields so that it feels more inclusive and representative of all students. Mr. Bolanzi then took a seat in front of the Committee and public attendants to express his opinion that the statue should be placed at Hanlon Field. Mr. Crowley, member of the Select Board then took a seat to address the Board and public attendants as to how he and the Select Board were brought into this matter; the Select Board's approval to place the statue at the Fire Station; and clarity as to how this matter is now coming in front of the Board of Park Commissioners. Mr. Leo O'Rourke sat in front of the Board and public next offering his opinion that the School Committee is reacting to public pressure and changing their decision based on this. Mr. Paul Mahoney spoke next in front of Committee and public attendants and echoed Mr. O'Rourke's concerns over the School Committee by stating he feels the School Committee is "saving face". He further stated that he would like to see the statue at Hanlon Field and would support the Parks Commissioners Board approving this. Up next to speak was Leanne Harris who shared that she too would like to see the statue at Hanlon Field and that in her opinion the field is used by all students as this is where the school has held graduation and other events. Leann proposed where on the field she believes the statue should be placed and turned into the Board 2 photoshopped pictures of the flag at Hanlon field with the statue. Next to speak was Mr. Coyle asking if Ms. Dietrich knew of the student who wrote the letter originally read at the start of the meeting and then asked about who again donated the money and where is the money currently. Andrew Harris spoke next as a Medway graduate. Andrew stated that Hanlon Field is not only used by athletes or appreciated by athletes and that he would love to see the statue at Hanlon Field. Hunter Harris spoke next and read a prepared statement that expresses his opinion that the statue should be placed at Hanlon Field. Tim Harris was the last to speak, echoing the sentiments of his family members and expressing his gratitude for Mr. Phipps and his contributions to Medway School. Ms. Rossi opened up the discussion to the Committee members asking if anyone had questions or comments. Ms. Rossi stated that she would be

happy to see the statue at Hanlon Field. Ms. Rossi's one concern would be vandalism. Mr. D'Innocenzo stated that he would have loved to see the statue in the school. Mr. Farrell stated that he would have liked to see the statue outside of the school however that he would be happy with the statue at Hanlon Field as well. Mr. Murphy stated that he feels that Hanlon Field is used by so many people, even individuals outside of the school and town. He stated that he is disappointed that this matter has had to be so contentious. Mr. Murphy spoke to the Board working hard to make decisions in the interest of the town. Ms. Rossi summarized the question at hand of where should the statue be put and recognizing that the Phipp's family has to make the final decision. Ms. Rossi made a motion for Hanlon Field to be approved as a third option for the family. Mr. Farrell seconded the decision. The motion carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote.

**Action Items: Park Commissioners Board will work with Phipps family and DPW as to placing the statue at Hanlon Field.**

Side conversation took place about installation costs and how leftover money from the fundraiser should be used.

**Break In Meeting While Members of Public Exited Sanford Hall**

**Agenda Item 7: Zoom vs. In Person Meetings**

Item was originally item number ten on the agenda. Each Committee has the responsibility of deciding to continue to use Zoom for meetings or to meet in person. Ms Rossi made a motion to meet in person with the option to call in if unable to be present. Mr. D'Innocenzo seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with a 3-0 vote as Mr. Farrell was not in the room at the time of voting. Meeting time moving forward was agreed upon for 6:30pm

**Agenda Item 8: Master Planning Update:**

The item was originally number 3 on the agenda. Ms. Rossi provided a brief Master Planning Update. Ms. Rossi stated that the Master Planning Team is encouraging all residents to take the survey which can be done by scanning QR code. The Master Planning Team is also encouraging residents to host "Meetings in a Box". Feedback from both the survey and Meetings in a Box are vital to the work that the Master Planning Team is doing.

**Agenda Item 9: Director's Update:**

This item was originally number 12 on the agenda. Ms. Harrington led the conversation by stating the Committee needs to approve football for the fall. Outside groups want use of the field come September. Ms. Harrington shares the tentative scheduling plan for fall. Pete from DPW talked about scheduling needs for softball. Currently there is a lot of construction taking place. No estimate on how long construction will take place for. Ms. Rossi makes a motion to approve Medway Football to use Charland Fields starting August 1st. **Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote.**

A special meeting may have to be scheduled to review fall fields.

Ms. Harrington's swim team has been very successful and will be finishing up next week. Ms. Harrington shared that camp is going well and Boating Day was a "beautiful day". Ms. Harrington shared that the Pixie festival had a great crowd and would probably consider doing the event again. More concerts in August. Ms. Rossi congratulates Ms. Harrington for doing a great job with organizing. **Follow Up Action: Special meeting set up for August 18th**

### **Review of Minutes from May 26th and June 30th**

Ms. Rossi reviewed edits made to minutes. “summer concert set and was fully funded”. Ms. Rossi makes a motion to approve minutes as amended. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.

**Motion was carried with a 3-0 vote and one abstention from Mr. D’Innocenzo.**

Ms. Rossi reviewed edits made to minutes and asked Ms. Harrington to make corrections. Mr. D’Innocenzo’s name and Ms. Rossi’s name was spelled incorrectly and Ms. Dietrich was not listed as attending the meeting. Edit on memorial tree as it was stated that the location was not approved however the location is approved. A few spelling corrections. Discussion around dogs in parks. Parks Commissioners Board cannot override the Medway Bylaws which is why the Committee cannot approve signage. Ms. Rossi makes a motion to approve corrections. Motion seconded by Mr. Murphy. **Motion was carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote.**

**Meeting Adjourned by Ms. Rossi: 9:07pm**  
**Next meeting: Wednesday, August 25, 2021**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Michelle Calhoon, Recording Secretary

**Attached Public Correspondence:**

Samuel McKeown, 9 Barber St, Medway, MA, 02053.

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Dear Medway Parks Commission,

I am Sam McKeown — a Medway High School graduate of the Class of 2020. At MHS I was involved in a wide variety of activities, from baseball and basketball, to National Honor Society, to Peer Counseling. Additionally, during my Senior year, I served as the student advisory member to the Medway School Committee. Finally, I was extremely proud to be elected by my classmates to serve as the President of the Class of 2020.

Beginning last year during my time with the School Committee, I have loosely followed the discussion surrounding the fundraising for a mustang statue at the High School. While I am unaware of the specifics of this process, it has recently become clear that the Select Board and Parks Commission may look to add said statue to the area around Hanlon Field. I object to this for two main reasons.

First, (while I am by no means an expert on town governmental procedures), it seems questionable to me whether the Parks Commission and/or Select Board even have the authority to place a statue on school grounds. While Parks has authority over things such as “maintenance” at the high school fields, it appears to be a major stretch to place the creation of a statue under a statute clearly meant to cover things such as cutting the grass. For instance, during the highly contentious debate over naming Lampson Field, Parks did not look to intercede in the School Committee’s process.

And even if it is argued that Parks and the Select Board have authority over placing a statue on school grounds, it is clearly a questionable move made by a few members of town government based more

upon their own political motivations than what is the best for students in the very school this issue concerns.

The School Committee has advocated for a different location for the statue — right next to the entrance to Medway High School, which every single student walks through every single day.

This brings me to my second area of objection to placing the statue at Hanlon Field. During my time at Medway High School, I was involved in a wide variety of groups with a wide variety of students. And in my role as Class President, it was my job to make decisions that were best for *all* students. Whether or not it is intentional, placing a statue at Hanlon Field sends the message that only athletes are valued at Medway High School. Particularly when an option (as advocated by the school committee) exists that will be equally shared by *every* Medway student, it seems questionable to make an explicitly exclusionary decision.

I ask that the Parks Commission and Select Board allow the School Committee to make decisions that so directly impact students, as they are who we have elected to consider these issues.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

-Sam McKeown

Good Evening,

My name is Susan Dietrich, 46 Fisher St, and I am here in my capacity as Chair of the Medway School Committee. I will submit a written copy of these comments to be attached to the minutes as part of the formal record of this meeting.

I am here this evening to speak about the agenda item labeled “Mustang Statue”. After speaking with the Chair, Ms. Rossi, last week, we agreed that it would be helpful for me to share a brief summary of the events that led to the issue of the mustang statue coming before the Parks Commission.

On May 3, 2021, the Medway Select Board voted unanimously to place a statue of a rearing mustang, the high school mascot, in front of the fire station at the corner of 109 and Summer St. A couple of weeks later, some residents contacted the Select Board to express their desire that the statue of the high school mascot be placed on school grounds. I contacted Select Board member, Dennis Crowley, offering to discuss the issue, as the School Committee had previously approved the donation of the statue to be placed in the atrium at the high school. Mr. Crowley indicated at that time that he felt he had a good handle on the issue and would be in touch if he heard anything.

On June 10, 2021, I had a meeting with Mr. Crowley, Town Manager Michael Boynton, and the Superintendent, Armand Pires, at which time Mr. Crowley suggested a location for the statue at Hanlon Field, subject to a vote by the Parks Commission, based upon language in the Service Level Agreement implemented in 2015 when Parks took over responsibility for scheduling and maintenance of the turf fields. I requested an opportunity to bring this suggestion back to the School Committee, and the School Committee met for a workshop at the high school on June 17, 2021.



During that workshop, members of the School Committee expressed concerns that a location at Hanlon Field would not be inclusive of all students, as it might appear to apply only to athletes instead of representing all students. The School Committee walked the grounds at the high school and identified an alternate outdoor location for the statue, on the grassy area to the right of the main entrance of the high school, between the entrance to the gymnasium and the door to the Medway Cable Access studio. The Committee discussed that this location would be central and inclusive of all students, and we agreed on language for a plaque to accompany the statue that mirrored the language used by the donors in the fundraising campaign.

I would add that, on a personal note, I remember at my college alma mater, as soon as you come through the main gates, you see a beautiful statue of an eagle on a pedestal, prominently displayed in front of the main administration building. The mascot's central location on campus sent the message that we were all Eagles, and no matter what your major was or what activities you did, you belonged to the school, and everyone felt included in that sense of school pride.

That same desire for all students to feel included led the School Committee to identify a prominent central location for the mustang statue at the high school.

On June 24, 2021, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the outdoor location on the grassy area to the left of the gymnasium, along with a plaque to read: "This statue represents the longtime dream of William R. Phipps, teacher, coach, and athletic director in the Medway Public Schools from 1966-2003." The School Committee also directed Dr. Pires to work with Mr. Boynton to contact the family and let them know about the alternate location and updated approved plaque language.

When the family was contacted to set up time to discuss this, they politely declined stating that they were happy with the current location. At that time, the current location was the fire station, as that was the location that the Select Board had approved at their May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting; however, this issue is now before the Parks Commission for consideration of placement at Hanlon Field.

The School Committee is the policy-making body for the Medway Public Schools. As such, we work diligently to ensure that no decisions are made that either intentionally or inadvertently favor or appear to favor any one group of students over another. In order to uphold this commitment, the Committee feels that placement of a statue of the high school mascot belongs in a central location so that all students feel represented by it, rather than placing it on an athletic field that is used only by a specific segment of the student body. Thank you.

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Susan Dietrich

Chair, Medway School Committee