

Medfield Parks and Recreation Minutes

Pfaff Center 10/15/08 7:30 PM

Attending: COMMISSIONERS: Toby Burrell, Lisa Louttit, Mel Seibolt, Steve Farrar, and Tom Caragliano.
DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION: Jim Snyder
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Paula Carroll
COMMUNITY MEMBERS: Robert Chin, Mona Chin, Janet DiNapoli, Jeanette Ruyle, Dan Bibel, Cynthia Connelley, Susan Perry, Adam Perry, Steve Cook, Kerry Riggins, Robert Riggins, Linda Scanlon, Edwin Scanlon, Marie DeLuca, Greg Kilcommons, Phil Thompson, Brendan Bodi, Michael Dolan, Andrew Day, Josh Patel, Mike Lyons, Collin O'Sullivan, Maura Marks, Kathy Cook, Beth Buswell, Nancy Coakley, Sarah Hamilton, Laurie LaPlante, Tom LaPlante, Jim Buswell, Nora Buchanan, Mike Rimmel, Rachel Harrison, and Tom Reiling..

1. Motion: Approve 10/01/08 Minutes. Vote: Motion carries (5-0).

2. Hinkley Pond Site for Proposed New Building

WHY HINKLEY POND?

- Parks and Recreation only owns three parcels of land where recreational sites or a new building can be placed: 1) Metacomet Park, 2) McCarthy Park, and 3) Hinkley Pond.
- With regards to Metacomet Park, lack of field space, limited parking, and traffic issues make that site a poor choice for placement of a recreation center.
- With regards to McCarthy Park, there are several drawbacks. Due to its remote location, it is a much greater commuting distance for most residents, utilities would be more difficult to install, an access road would have to be built, etc. During summer camp, a bus and/or vans would have to be leased/acquired to transport the children back and forth to the pond, which is a large additional expense that would make the camps very costly. Yet, McCarthy Park is the alternative, second choice for placement of the new building.
- With regards to the Pfaff Center (located at 124 North Street), Parks and Recreation does not have jurisdiction over the Pfaff Center, or the 124 North Street property. This building was provided *for use* by Parks and Recreation: it was never deeded/designated as a Parks and Recreation property.
 - The Fire and Police Departments are slated to tear down the Pfaff Center and use the parcel as a parking lot as part of their expansion. Thus, Parks and Recreation can't stay at the Pfaff Center.
 - Even if Parks and Recreation could stay at 124 North Street, the Pfaff would have to be torn down as updating and remodeling the Pfaff would cost almost the same price as building a brand new facility that is three times larger. Also, the School Department owns the adjacent field and land next to the Pfaff Center. There would be no way to expand the size of the new proposed community center or parking lot at 124 North Street.
- With regards to commercial space in town that is for sale, the town would have to purchase the property, which would make process not only much more difficult, but also too expensive.
- With regards to the Kingsbury Club, Parks and Recreation cannot partner with the Kingsbury Club. Parks and Recreation was ordered by the town to comply with a non-compete agreement because Kingsbury's bank refused them financing without such an agreement. This is why the original location choice for the new building, in the vicinity of Ice House Road, had to be rejected: Parks and Recreation cannot be located within a certain radius of the Kingsbury Club.
- The Hinkley Pond site has several advantages:

- This site is located near the center of town and many of our schools.
- When summer camp is in session children would be already located at Hinkley Pond and would not have to be walked over busy streets.
- When it rained during summer camp season it would not be a panic trying to get the kids back to the center.
- Hinkley Pond would no longer be dormant 9 months a year; it could be utilized all year round.
- Loitering, partying, and vandalism would substantially decline if the land were occupied and operational all year round.
- Local neighbors would have the advantage of being within walking/short driving distance of all the recreation center has to offer. This can enhance property values.

WHAT ABOUT THE BUILDING?

- The Pfaff Center is too small to accommodate all the demands of the ever expanding Parks and Recreation programming. The Pfaff Center is 8,000 square feet; the proposed new building would be 25,000 square feet.
- The cost of the new, 25,000 square foot building is estimated at \$5,000,000. The building will have a pre-fabricated, no-frills, cost efficient exterior. Inside, the amenities will include two basketball court gyms, various activities rooms, and offices.
- A “Green Grant” of \$175,000 has been awarded by the state of Massachusetts to make environmentally friendly enhancements to the proposed new recreation center. Thus, this grant will decrease the cost of the building for the residents of Medfield by \$175,000. However, the money must be spent by June 30, 2009. If the new recreation center is not approved by the spring meeting, this money will be forfeited forever.
- With regards to future expansion of the new building, that is not a consideration for locating or constructing the building. The Board of Commissioners asserts that the new building will absolutely meet the needs of the community for the 5 years following its completion.

WHY DIDN'T I/WE KNOW ABOUT THIS?

- The planning process for the new building has not been conducted in secret. Toby Burrell attended the Selectmen’s Meeting on September 2nd to seek their input and support before proceeding. Toby explained that a definite locale has not been chosen, but that two sites are in consideration: the first choice is Hinkley Pond and the second choice is McCarthy Park. Toby notified them that BH+A Architects would be conducting a site visit and feasibility study for Hinkley Pond. The Selectmen were not opposed to any proceedings at this juncture.
- BH+A Architects and the construction manager performed a site visit at Hinkley Pond on the morning of October 2, 2008. This was posted on our website, at www.town.medfield.net, a week prior to the visit, on September 26, 2008, and all town citizens were invited to attend.
- All Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners meeting dates and times are announced several weeks in advance on the town web page at www.town.medfield.net.
- The Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners meeting minutes are posted in the Parks and Recreation section at www.town.medfield.net.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- BH+A Architects and the construction manager performed a site visit at Hinkley Pond on the morning of October 2nd, 2008. The Board of Commissioners is awaiting the feasibility study from the October 2nd site visit. This study will determine whether or not the building can be built on the site based on zoning, conservation considerations, soil tests, etc.
- If the building can be built on the Hinkley Pond site, then further studies will be done to estimate the increased Green Street and Brook Street automobile traffic that will be created by the center,

including the estimated traffic impact of additional programming, participants, room rentals, etc. It is at this time the Conservation Commission will assess the consequences to wildlife habituating in the area.

- In order for the project to be approved by the town, two criteria have to be met.
 - At a town meeting, two-thirds of the citizens must vote in favor of the project. In the spring of 2008, this two-thirds majority was missed by only three votes. This indicates that a large portion of Medfield citizens are in favor of constructing a new building and the Board of Commissioners should continue to pursue this project.
 - If two-thirds of the citizens vote in favor of the project at a town meeting, within 90 days the item has to go to a town-wide ballot. If a majority ballot vote (greater than 50%) is achieved in favor of the project it will be funded for its first phase.
- Updates and discussion regarding the proposed new building will occur at all future Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners meetings.

3. Skate Park

WHO IS ORGANIZING THIS?

- A local fifth grader collected over 300 signatures in favor of a skate park last spring. His mother, Jean Bourden, is spearheading the building of a skate park in the town.
- The Board of Commissioners does not know how many adult residents or children are currently involved with Jean Bourden in the advocacy effort and fundraising for the skate park.

WHY METACOMET PARK?

- Jean Bourdon had pursued every avenue for locating the park in various parts of town before she approached Parks and Recreation about providing a location for the skate park.
- Parks and Recreation only owns three parcels of land where recreational sites can be placed: 1) Hinkley Pond 2) McCarthy Park, and 3) Metacomet Park.
- Upon researching skate park operations in various local towns and using the recommended guidelines provided by the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Assn. (MIIA), it was determined it is best to locate the park in a busy, easily visible area. This will prevent vandalism and other problems previously encountered with the prior Medfield skate park because the park will be in easy view of neighboring citizens and police patrols that drive by. Metacomet Park meets these requirements; the isolated McCarthy Park and Hinkley Pond do not.
- The site slated for the skate park is located mid-Metacomet Park, next to the batting cages. This should not interfere with any field usage or negatively impact/displace any teams, leagues, or groups that currently use the field. It should also insulate the surrounding houses from noise as it is located in the middle of the park.

WHO IS PAYING AND WHAT IS THE COST?

- The commission is committed to providing property for and supporting the skate park, with the understanding that **the burden to raise ALL the funds for the building and future maintenance of the skate park is relegated to the interested citizens of Medfield.**
- To reiterate, **neither the town nor the Parks and Recreation Department will be contributing any funds to help create the skate park or maintain the skate park after it is built.** Parks and Recreation will only be providing a suitable location for the park.
- All planning and fundraising will be conducted by a “Friends of the Skate Park” committee that is being established by the interested citizens through MFI, which would make all donations and fundraising earnings tax deductible. The committee will manage all fundraising, collection of

funds, bid collections for building the park, presenting the Parks and Recreation Commission with a written plan of action, etc.

- Jean Bourden informed the commission that estimated cost of a 30' x 70' concrete slab, equipment (jumps, sloops, etc.) that would be placed on the slab, fencing, labor, maintenance, etc. will cost approximately \$90,000 - \$100,000. However, this expense will not be incurred all at once: the park will be completed in phases, using the existing old equipment from the prior Medfield skate park, then upgrading as fundraising progresses.
- With regards to the old equipment in storage, only the pieces that are in excellent/safe condition will be utilized for the new skate park.

WHAT ABOUT PARK OPERATIONS, NOISE, AND USAGE?

- The skaters will use the area “at their own risk”, as they would any other park equipment in Metacomet.
- The skate park does not have to be reserved or require a fee paid for use. The skate park would function just as the public basketball courts do in town.
- It is difficult to predict how much more noise a skate park will create in the park. Sound-reducing equipment will help to decrease the noise levels, as will the mid-park location that has been chosen.
- With regards to Medfield youth usage, it is not possible to estimate how many Medfield youths will use the park on a regular basis. However, years ago when Medfield had a skate park, most of the surrounding towns did not, and this created a heavy volume of out-of-towners usage. Since then, most of the surrounding communities have built their own skate parks and thus, out-of-town usage should be minimal.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Jean Bourden believes that fundraising would progress more efficiently if the Board of Commissioners would publish an article in the local press to publicize the exact location of the proposed skate park.
- The Board of Commissioners will publish a letter to the editor (not an article) announcing that Parks and Recreation supports the skate park. However, it was decided that the Board of Commissioners the letter should not mention a specific site for designation, as it could take many years for the skate park to come to fruition, and in the meantime that land may be needed for another unforeseen purpose. When the time eventually arrives to build the park, if the space in Metacomet next to the batting cages is unavailable, Parks and Recreation will find another suitable location for the park in one of the Parks and Recreation land parcels.
- There is no time-line, deadline, or date established for completion of the park.
 - First, the “Friends of the Skate Park Committee” has to raise all the funds necessary to build the skate park and create a funding plan to maintain the park in perpetuity. This fundraising and planning could require anywhere from several months to a few years.
 - Next, they must present a proposal for implementation to the Board of Commissioners. Once a plan of action is approved, a time-line and date of completion will be established.

4. Budget Meeting

The budget meeting for the town is on Tuesday, November 4 at 7:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Next Meeting: Wednesday morning, October 29th at 7:30 AM.