

**Amherst Leisure Services Commission Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2019**

Present Becky Demling, Ken Johnston, Sarah Marshall, Nate Budington, and Meg Rosa (chair)

Absent Youssef Fadel

Guests Cathy Schoen, Town Council
James Capistran, Resident
Cole Vissicchio, Will Longquist, Cameron Clark – Amherst College

Staff Barb Bilz, Director

Call to Order Meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes

- The minutes of the February 26, 2019 were approved as amended.
- The minutes of the March 19, 2019 were approved as amended.

Public Comment

The gentlemen from Amherst College introduced themselves and stated they were attending the Commission meeting as part of a class assignment.

Cherry Hill

James Capistran discussed the need for more collaborations with UMass. He stated that his goal was to engage the University to work with the Town to improve Cherry Hill. He pointed out that the clubhouse at Cherry Hill was in serious need of renovations. There were also improvements that could be made to the clubhouse for less than \$25,000 such as new chairs and tables, new outdoor furniture, and new carpet.

Mr. Capistran also suggested improvements be made to the kitchen and possible collaborations with The Harp, Atkins and/or UMass Dining would enhance and improve food service operations.

He stated that he would like to bring in an architect to look at alternative designs for the clubhouse. The possibility of moving the proshop downstairs and adding big picture windows might be a better functional design than the current one.

Mr. Capistran also suggested that the Town should look at hosting different events and activities at Cherry Hill such as concerts.

Cathy Schoen, speaking as a “resident”, suggested that the Clubhouse could be used as a meeting space that could bring in additional revenue for the course and provide North Amherst with a

year round community meeting space. She also recommended large discounts on golf for children.

Mr. Capistran reported that Cinda Jones is still interested in building a 55 year old+ condominium complex behind Cherry Hill.

Nate Budington suggested we might have the Health Commissioner look at the existing facility and make recommendations as to what might be possible.

Becky Demling suggested that UMass Business majors might be engaged to create a business plan for the course and that perhaps a UMass Isenberg graduate student could be assigned to this project.

With the closing of Hickory Ridge Golf Club, Cherry Hill has an opportunity to bring in more daily fee players and members and increase revenues but it must improve the clubhouse.

There was general concern that the Town has multiple infrastructure needs at the present and that timing and prioritization would be critical.

Cathy Schoen stated that the Town should look at Public/Private collaborations and keep all options open.

CPAC Update

Nate Budington reported that CPAC approved funding for three projects put forth by LSSE:

- Mill River Recreation Area – Design funding
- Groff Park – Renovation funding
- Downtown Recreation Area – Design funds

Funding is contingent on the bonding of \$500,000 for the Valley CDC Enhanced SRO's (Homeless to Independent Housing) project. If this project is not bonded, CPAC will need to go back and appropriate funding of the other projects. CPAC recommendations go to Town Council on May 28, 2019.

Director's Report

Facilities and Fields

- Work is in progress at Groff Park. All equipment has been delivered and is being stored by DPW at the barn on Station Road. The construction company has completed grading and work has started to install the recycling water tank. Estimated completion is sometime in July, 2019.

Golf Course

- Course clean-up of debris and prep completed.
- Course opened on April 11.
- New member special implemented (20% discount on membership rate).
- Partial greens aeration (due to wet conditions) completed on April 19.

- Creek on #1 and #7 has flooded on multiple occasions this spring. Bridge on #1 continues to hold.
- Storm damaged tree limbs have removed.
- Entrance sign rotted and fell down. One of our crew members rebuilt the mounting structure and we are awaiting help from DPW to attach the sign.
- DPW has agreed to roll the parking lot and patch potholes when their schedule permits.
- Working with UMass Stockbridge School to provide tree work, tree inventory, and other projects.

Aquatics

- Spring season indoor lessons at the Amherst Regional Middle School Pool started on April 4 and run until April 30. A total of 142 children have been enrolled in spring season lessons. There are 3 children on the wait list.
- Recruitment, interviews and hiring have started for the late spring and summer seasons. Hiring adequate numbers of lifeguards continues to be challenging but we are fortunate this year as we have a good number of returning staff.

Special Events

- July 4th planning and preparations are continue. A meeting was held with representatives from UMass on April 18 to discuss site changes. Separate meeting are scheduled with the UMass Physical Plant, UMass Police Department, Hadley Fire Department and Atlas Fireworks to finalize plans.

Program Outreach

- LSSE's program outreach occurred or are scheduled for April and May:
 - Olympia Oaks 4/25 Family Movie and Game Night
 - Butternut Farms 5/9 Garden Planting Community Service Project
 - Olympia Oaks 5/16 Garden Planting Community Service Project

Afterschool and Camps

- End of the year parent ice cream social for the Primetime Afterschool Program will take place on May 2. Staff will perform skits for the parents and children.
- April vacation camp was fully enrolled at 52 children.
- Enrollment in summer camps is strong. Recruitment and interviews of potential counselors is in process.

Adult and Youth Education

- New instructors are being interviewed for fall classes. Potential classes include: new youth drama program, cooking classes, STEM enhancement program and self-improvement.

Sports

- Field conditions have been extremely wet this spring which has resulted in delayed start times for soccer and other sports.
- LSSE hosted the APD vs. UMass Fraternities softball on Community Field. Games took place under the lights at Community Field on April 24.
- Flag Football started on April 8 and has 33 children enrolled;

- Other spring sports that started in April include: Youth Volleyball which has 40 children enrolled and the Spring Ultimate Clinic which has 12 children enrolled.
- Adult softball begins in mid-May. Enrollment is up by two teams over last season.
- Multiple other youth and adult sports programs will start in May/June.

Marketing and Registration

- Discussions are underway with IT to move the Cherry Hill web site to the Town website as part of Civic Plus.
- Email campaigns are being implemented to publicized specific types of programs including visual arts and improve utilizing Mail Chimp.
- Facebook advertising and other promotions continue.
- Barb Bilz working with the Planning Department on compatible sign design for our parks. In addition, looking to have two signs park arrival signs installed with available funds from CPAC (2007 CPA approved funds).

Operations

- Compiling projections for end of fiscal year.
- Completed third quarter balancing.
- FY20 budget presentations to the Finance Committee are scheduled for May 7.
- Utilizing new registration software systems for Afterschool Program.
- Evaluating registration procedures for the summer.

Community Collaborations and Visibility

- LSSE provided programming and distributed marketing materials at the following community events in April:
 - Sustainability Fair (on-site strawberry planting)
 - Big Brothers Big Sisters Daffodil Fun Run (face painting)

LSSE Commission Vacancies

- There will be two Commission vacancies as of June 30, 2019. There are currently two potential candidates. The first interview has been scheduled for May 2.

Staffing

- Nicholas Damren has resigned to take a marketing position in Boston. Recruitment for his replacement should begin within two weeks.
- Work study students working at front desk will be leaving at the end of the UMass semester. Eliana Soleil has been hired as a part-time seasonal employee to assist at front desk from late spring-summer.
- Barb Bilz will be part of the search committee for the new Senior Center Director who will replace Nancy Pagano who is retiring.

Next Meeting

The next LSSE Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28, at 6:30 p.m. It will be held at the LSSE office.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.