

**Amherst Leisure Services Commission Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2019**

Present Ken Johnston, Sarah Marshall, Nate Budington, Youssef Fadel, Victor Nunez-Ortiz and Meg Rosa (chair)

Absent Becky Demling

Guests Cris Brestrup, Town of Amherst Planning Director

Staff Barb Bilz, LSSE Director

Call to Order Meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Minutes

- The minutes of the April 30, 2019 meeting were approved as amended by unanimous vote.

Public Comment

None

Kendrick Park Playground

Chris Brestrup, Town of Amherst Planning Director, presented a proposal to install a playground at Kendrick Park. The Town is applying for a PARC Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to secure the majority of funding for the purchase of equipment, installation, etc.

She reviewed the design for Kendrick Park with the Commission that was completed by The Cecil Group, on March 10, 2011.

The Town would be applying for up to \$400,000 from the Commonwealth to complete this project. The remainder of necessary funds would most likely come for a request from CPAC. The total cost of the project would be approximately \$550,000 (70% would be covered by the PARC Grant).

Chris Brestrup noted that she would like to schedule at least one public meeting that addressed the following questions:

- What age group should this serve?
- Should it be a regional draw or just Amherst focused?
- What type of playground equipment should be purchased? Natural? Typical?

In addition to a public meeting, surveys would be distributed to the public.

A designer will be retained to develop a preliminary design for the playground.

Sarah Marshall suggested that the playground be fenced-in and that whatever elements are selected and purchased, they should be substantial and vandal proof.

Nate Budington asked if there was a way to find additional grant funding so that the playground is more inclusive to children with handicaps.

Victor Nunez-Ortiz suggested that he would like to see the playground as an attraction.

Ken Johnston stated that he would like to see a four season park.

Meg Rosa agreed to help coordinate the distribution of surveys at the Taste of Amherst, June 14-16. Meg Rosa and Barb Bilz agreed to adapt the Groff Park survey and formulate the new questions for the survey.

Chris Brestrup and Barb Bilz will work on the public meeting date.

By a unanimous vote, the LSSE Commission enthusiastically agreed to support the application of a PARC Grant for funds to be used to construct a playground at Kendrick Park.

CPAC Update

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

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

Funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the Valley CDC Enhanced SRO's (Homeless to Independent Housing) project has been met with strong opposition.

Director's Report

Facilities and Fields

- Construction work at Groff Park continues. The construction company has completed grading, retaining wall/rocks are being put into place.
- The Town is pursuing funding from a PARC grant to install a playground and other amenities at Kendrick Park.

Golf Course

- With improving weather play has increased.
- Women's Clinic participation ends on May 23. 12 women enrolled this year.
- Women's League participation continues to stay strong. We have 37 women signed up for the league. First outing was scheduled on May 22.
- Men's League enrollment is up this year. We have 20 members this year.

Aquatics

- Recruitment, interviews and hiring continues for the summer season. Hiring adequate numbers of lifeguards continues to be challenging but we are fortunate this year as we have a good number of returning staff.
- Middle School 8th Grade Field Day is scheduled for June 11. Pools open to public on June 22.

Special Events

- July 4th planning and preparations are continue. Another meeting was held with multiple representatives from UMass on May 17 to discuss the event and set-up. Another meeting will be scheduled that will include all safety departments involved: Amherst Police, Hadley Fire, UMass Police, Hadley Police, etc. Hadley Police is working with the State to close Rt. 116 for approximately one hour due to two serious accidents last year.

Program Outreach

- Shalini Bahl-Milne, Town Council District 5, attended an outreach program at Butternut on May 9.
- LSSE's program outreach activities scheduled June:
 - Olympia Oaks 6/8 Summer Fest
 - Butternut Farms 6/1 Summer Fest

Afterschool and Camps

- Enrollment in summer camps is strong. Recruitment and interview efforts of potential counselors are winding down. Camps are about 90% staffed.

Adult and Youth Education

- Donna Roy will take over coordination of adult/youth education classes and handle contract, invoicing, etc. Stacey Lecuire will oversee and coordinate week-long youth summer programs.

Sports

- Field conditions continue to be dismal due to an extraordinarily wet spring. We had to delay all start times for softball and other sports.
- Summer sports programs – enrollment is strong again this year.

Marketing and Registration

- 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.
- Finishing projections for end of fiscal year.

LSSE Commission Vacancies

- Two Commission appointments have been made. Victor Nunez-Ortiz and Stephanie Jackson will be joining the Commission in June.

Staffing

- Application submissions/recruitment for the new Marketing and Registration Coordinator closed on May 17. Interview team will consist of Barb Bilz, Donna Roy, Jen Moyston and Brianna Sunryd. Interviews will be scheduled for early June.

- Interviews for the new Senior Center Director have been scheduled and will begin the last week of May.

Next Meeting

The next LSSE Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 26, 6:30 p.m. It will be held at the LSSE office.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.