

**Amherst Leisure Services Commission Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2020**

Present Youssef Fadel, Sarah Marshall, Becky Demling, Stephanie Jackson, and Victor Nunez-Ortiz and Meg Rosa (chair)

Absent None

Staff Barb Bilz, LSSE Director

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

Minutes

- The minutes of the October 29, 2019 meeting were approved by a unanimous vote.
- The minutes of the December 4, 2019 meeting were approved as amended by a unanimous vote.

Public Comment: None

CPAC Report

- Sarah Marshall reported that CPAC is currently hearing from the community about their various proposals. All proposals were required to be submitted by Dec. 6 and applicants were later asked to respond in writing to questions about their proposals. LSSE applied for \$25,000 for pre-development funds to be used for parcel/land surveys, conceptual designs and reliable cost estimates. Barb Bilz reported that the town does not have the expertise nor capacity for this type of work so it must be contracted out. As LSSE applies for future State and private foundation grants it has become apparent that this type of work is now often a requirement as part of grant submissions.

Kendrick Park Playground

- Becky Demling reported that there were 12 public attendees and a number of staff and other town officials at the Kendrick Park Public Forum held at the Bangs Community Center on December 16, 2019. There was a lot of discussion related to: the entire property, natural vs. pre-fabricated playground equipment, security, public restrooms, trees, multi-generational equipment, signage, day lighting Tan Brook, etc. The attendees were mostly over 70 years of age. Becky Demling stated that it would be good to collaborate with the schools and/or the library to get more input from children and their parents.
- Sarah Marshall stated that although CPAC approved funding for this project she would not recommend doing it this way in the future.
- Becky Demling talked about her experience presenting this project for funding to Town Council. She felt that going forward, Town Council would like to see Commission members and other citizens more actively involved in the process, giving updates, and

being part of presentations. Barb Bilz agreed and will work to ensure more participation in the future.

- Victor Nunez-Ortiz stated that he had visited a park in Dallas that provided food (via food trucks), park amenities, and a playground. It even had a parking lot constructed for food trucks to park in.
- Barb Bilz reported that input can still be given to the Planning Director, Chris Brestrup. Her email address is: brestrupc@amherstma.gov

Strategic Plan

- Barb Bilz reported that surveys were distributed from December 4 – 18, 2019. Close to 300 surveys were completed.
- Gap analysis and survey results were to be delivered to LSSE Director by the 15th however they have not been received. The Donahue Institute will incorporate them into the Situation Assessment (a compilation of all the data collection and research findings). Situation Assessment (report) will be provided to LSSE Director by 1/24.
- Next steps are outlined as follows and will take place between January and March:
 - **Phase 3 and 4: Vision/Mission & Identify Possible Future Directions** (*two 2.5-hour meetings or one 5-hour meeting/retreat*) The first meeting will include some time to discuss findings from the Situation Assessment, which will have been distributed to planning members ahead of time. *Meeting will take place Feb. 12, 2020, 3:30-6 pm, Site: TBA.*
 - **Phase 5: Establish Strategic Goals and Objectives** (*one 2.5 hour meeting of the planning committee*) *Meeting will take place March 11, 2020, 4:30-7 pm, Site TBA.*
 - **Presentation of Draft Plan:** (*one 2.5 hour meeting of the planning committee*) Note that one additional meeting might be scheduled, as needed, to refine objectives and outline next steps. *Meeting and Site TBA*

Director's Report

Facilities and Fields

- Construction seems to have ended for the season at Groff Park. Tentative opening is still late spring 2020.
- The first public forum for the Kendrick Park playground was held on January 9, at 5:00 pm. The meeting will be hosted by LSSE and its Commission. The purpose was to seek input from the community regarding the type of equipment they would like to have at the park.

Golf Course

- The golf course closed for the season on November 7, 2019 and will reopen in early April (weather dependent).
- The course continues to see a large number of skiers when conditions allow.

Sports

- The number of participants enrolled in the Amherst Youth Basketball League (AYBL) is at 364. There are 77 children enrolled in Suburban Basketball. The first games were played on January 4th and 5th.
- Discussions with Amherst Youth Lacrosse are underway to transition the program's operation to LSSE this spring.

Aquatics

- Lap swim will start up again at the Amherst Regional Middle School the first week of February.
- Swim lessons begin on January 30, 2020.

Special Events

- WinterFest planning is well underway. See www.winterfestamherst.org for schedule of events. Sponsorship goal is \$9,000.

Community Theater

- *Matilda* performances began January 16th. Ticket sales are very strong with some shows sold out.

Adult and Youth Education

- Most winter classes started last week. New youth classes include: STEM classes, Red Cross Baby Sitter Certification, rock climbing and two pre-school level playgroup and art classes. New adult classes include: Mindful Eating, Naturopathic Solutions for Adult Women, Zumba and Pilates.

After School Program

- The LSSE Director is currently acting as the liaison to the Department of Early Education and Care as we prepare for an inspection by the Licensing Specialist from their Department.

FY21 Budget

- Preliminary capital requests for the Department have been submitted to the Town Manager.
 - Repairs to Mill River Tennis Court - \$25,000
 - Signage at Recreation Areas - \$75,000
 - Feasibility Study for Winter Recreation Expansion at Cherry Hill - \$15,000
 - Rough Mower for Cherry Hill - \$58,500
- In addition, work has started on the FY21 budget. Preliminary meeting with Accounting was held on January 9th.

Strategic Planning

Surveys were distributed from December 4 – 18, 2019. Close to 300 surveys were completed. Gap analysis and survey results will be delivered to LSSE Director by the 15th, at which point Donahue Institute will incorporate them into the Situation Assessment (a compilation of all the data collection and research findings). Situation Assessment (report) will be provided to LSSE Director by 1/24.

Next steps are outlined as follows and will take place between January and March:

- **Phase 3 and 4: Vision/Mission & Identify Possible Future Directions** (*two 2.5-hour meetings or one 5-hour meeting/retreat*) The first meeting will include some time to discuss findings from the Situation Assessment, which will have been distributed to planning members ahead of time.
- **Phase 5: Establish Strategic Goals and Objectives** (*one 2.5 hour meeting of the planning committee*)

- **Presentation of Draft Plan:** *(one 2.5 hour meeting of the planning committee)* Note that one additional meeting might be scheduled, as needed, to refine objectives and outline next steps.

Position Vacancy

- The job description for vacant Program Director position has been revised and submitted to HR for posting.

Marketing

- Increased social media presence and direct emails have been utilized to boost enrollment in various programs over the past few weeks.
- WinterFest marketing in progress. Includes: print, social media, email, downtown banner and cross business/agency promotion.

Next Meeting

- Wednesday, February 19, 6:30 p.m. at the Amherst Leisure Services Office

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.