

**Amherst Leisure Services Commission Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2018**

Present Jim Brissette Nate Budington, Becky Demling, Youssef Fadel,
Sarah Marshall, and Meg Rosa (chair)

Absent None

Staff: Barb Bilz, Director,

Call to Order Meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m.

Introduction of new Commission member – Youssef Fadel

Minutes

- The minutes of the December 5, 2017 meeting were approved as amended by a unanimous vote.

CPA Requests

- **Resurfacing and Refurbishment of the Mill River Basketball Courts**
 - Barb Bilz reported that she presented the proposal for the Resurfacing and Refurbishment of the Mill River Basketball Courts to the CPAC on Thursday, January 11, 2018. She reported that the proposal seemed to be well received and is hopeful it will be funded.
- **Dog Park**
 - The Commission reiterated their position that they could not support the purchase of private land for this project and that passive recreation land on Town owned Conservation Areas should be considered for this purpose.
- **Mill River Baseball Fields**
 - Barb Bilz reported that the Mill River Baseball Field proposal also seemed to be well received and she is hopeful it will also be funded.
 - Youssef Fadel asked why the work was not completed with the original funding. Nate Budington stated it was a prevailing wage issue and that original budget was not sufficient.

FY19 Budget

- Barb Bilz reported that the Town Manager recommended that the \$105,000 for fee subsidies be included in the FY19 budget. The Commission was appreciative of this funding and stated they were hopeful it would continue in the future.
- Barb Bilz also reported that the Joint Capital Planning Committee hearing was scheduled for Feb 1, 2018.
 - The Commission voted unanimously that the priority order for LSSE capital projects in FY19 should be as follows:
 1. Comfort Station at Plum Brook Playing Field

2. Strategic Planning Facilitation
3. Signage at all Recreation Areas
4. Plow for LSSE Truck

Director's Report

Staff and Commission

- On-going training of Program Coordinators Nicholas Damren and Nikki Abelli.
- Recruited second member to fill last vacancy on LSSE Commission. Recruited one of two member positions that will be vacant next year and working on second.

Program and Facilities

Facilities and Fields

- 2nd touring of Weston and Sampson representatives around to all Town and School District recreation area and facilities as part of their assessment and inventory process.

Golf Course

- Nordic Ski trails being groomed and are receiving heavy utilization.
- Amherst High School Nordic Ski team have started practices at Cherry Hill.
- Revenues through December 1, 2017 are up 13% or \$11,541.00 over FY17 during the same time period.

Aquatics

- Indoor lessons at the UMass Totman Pool begin January 23, 2017. Lap swimming and open swim resume at the Middle School Pool on February 3, 2017.

Special Events

- Expansion of Winterfest continues (hand-out). There are now over 45 events at over 25 different venues.
- WinterFest
 - Time.ly calendar is up on Facebook and LSSE website.
 - Solicitation \$ letters out on Dec. 29th (handout). Follow-up calls and visits in process.
 - Secured \$1,500 Presenting Sponsorship from Integrity Development and Construction. To date we have received \$8,100 in sponsorship commitments.
 - Print, radio, TV and social media calendar created and being implemented.
 - WinterFest Snow Person artistic display in distribution process.
 - Grand Finale event – programs being finalized
 - Collaborations with outside local agencies and businesses who are putting on events being finalized.
 - Logistics being finalized – fireworks, APD, AFD. Wine and Malt Lic., Prizes, Signage, etc.

Afterschool

- Continuing to work on requirements for obtaining Level 2 QRIS (Quality, Rating Improvement System) accreditation from State. Currently we are at Level 1. Areas to be completed:
 - Professional development plan
 - Program updates
 - Evaluation

Adult and Youth Education

- Finalizing new classes for the spring/summer brochure. Most winter programs start in January and February.

Sports

- Youth Basketball Program (AYBL) has 409 children enrolled. This is a 10% increase in participation over last year. There are 65 children currently enrolled in the Suburban Basketball Travel Program in the AYBL Recreational Program. The annual Jamboree event was held on December 9, 2017. Over 300 children participated in the Jamboree.
- Ski program enrollment at 47 participants (over max enrollment is 45).

Community Theater

- Beauty and the Beast first performances started on January 11, 2018 at UMass Bowker Auditorium. All reserved seating performances are basically sold out.

Other

Marketing

- Spring/Summer combo brochure is in process of development.
 - Consolidation of two seasons – Spring/Summer.
 - Created marketing plan for WinterFest.
 - Redesign of layout including: cover graphics, table of contents, body (print and web versions).
- Working on consistent voice for WinterFest social media as well as LSSE. Syncing time.ly events to Facebook events.
- Creating various ads for specific publications (both print and web).

Community Visibility

- LSSE has had a presence at the following community events in December:
 - Lighting of the Merry Maple – promotion of WinterFest event.
 - Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce holiday gathering.

FY19 Budget

- FY19 Budget and Capital Budget materials submitted.

Professional Development

- All members of the leadership team for the department continue participating in a study group to take their Certified Parks and Recreation Professional examination.
- The team participated in the annual December luncheon meeting of the Pioneer Valley Recreation and Parks Association to be held in Florence, MA.

- Leadership team registered for Massachusetts Parks and Recreation Conference in March.
- On-going all-staff and one-on-one staff meetings continue.

Commission Member Comments and Updates

- Meg Rosa suggested that a line be added to the registration form requesting donations for financial assistance.
- There were also questions related to next steps for Cherry Hill Golf Course. Barb Bilz reported that a blue ribbon committee will be appointed in FY19 to analyze operations and make recommendations regarding future operations and usage of the course.

Next Meeting

- The next LSSE Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 15, 2018.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.