

**Amherst Leisure Services Commission Meeting Minutes  
December 5, 2017**

**Present** Nate Budington, Sarah Marshall, Becky Demling and  
Meg Rosa

**Absent** Jim Brissette (excused)

Staff: Barb Bilz, Director,  
Visitors: Vince O'Connor, Jonathan Kane, Nikki Abelli, Nick Damren

**Call to Order** Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Minutes**

- The minutes of the November 8, 2017 meeting were approved as amended by a unanimous vote.

**Drivers Education Course**

Vince O'Connor addressed the Commission about the Driver's Education class. He asked the Commission to consider finding someone who is certified to teach the classroom course to teach it for LSSE. He felt the cost of the course is prohibitive to many low income families. LSSE is able to offer financial assistance and this is very important for those families who cannot afford to pay for the full fee for this course.

Barb Bilz stated that both of the companies that offered the course in the past through LSSE have ended their agreements with LSSE because of the lack of profitability. Pioneer Valley Driving School is looking into providing for their own financial assistance for income eligible students. Meg Rosa suggested looking at AAA of Pioneer Valley as a potential vendor for offering the class through LSSE.

Vince O'Connor also suggested that LSSE consider combining an auto mechanics course with the classroom portion of the driver's education class.

**Introduction of staff members Nick Damren and Nikki Abelli**

Nick Damren, Marketing and Registration Coordinator, and Nikky Abelli, Camps, Special Events and Outreach Coordinator, introduced themselves to the Commission and spoke about their various responsibilities for the department.

**CPA Requests**

- **Dog Park Land Purchase**
  - The Commission reviewed the proposal and had several questions and comments. Becky Demling stated that she would like to know what land is being considered for purchase before endorsing the proposal.
  - Nate Budington felt there was open land available at Amethyst Brook and other Town owned parcels in the community. He also suggested that the Hawthorne

property should be considered for this purpose. Another area to consider would be the back corner of Mill River Recreation Area.

- The Commission stated that they strongly support the concept of a Dog Park. However they do not support the purchase of privately owned land for this purpose. Becky Demling also stated that she does not support taking privately owned land off the tax roles for this purpose.
- The Commission would like to invite Dave Ziomek to the next Commission meeting so that he can explain why Town-owned land is not being considered and identify the privately owned parcels of land that are being considered for this project.
- **Mill River Baseball Fields**
  - Jonathan Kane presented the Mill River Baseball Fields CPA proposal to the Commission for endorsement. Amherst Baseball, Inc. (AB) has requested \$44,550 from the CPAC to complete the project that was originally funded in 2015. Additional funds are required to: purchase and install shade structures, remove and replace two batting cages and install an irrigation system.
  - Jonathan Kane stated that the baseball program serves between 160-200 children, 120 of which are Amherst residents and that it is coed.
  - He also stated that Amherst Baseball invests \$5,000-8,000 annually into capital needs for the fields. This is in addition to the \$27,250 they recently invested for upgrades.
  - The Commission unanimously voted to endorse the FY19 Amherst Baseball proposal for CPA funding.
- **Resurfacing and Refurbishment of the Mill River Basketball Courts**
  - Barb Bilz presented the CPA proposal for the Resurfacing and Refurbishment of the Mill River Basketball Courts. Funding was granted for this project in FY18 however due to the severe deterioration of courts, they must be completely resurfaced. This project will now require new work which includes: removal and disposal of existing asphalt surface, addition of 4-6 inches of crushed and compacted bank run gravel, rough and fine grading, and repaving of the court. The additional cost will be \$45,000. The Commission felt that we should ask for \$50,000 in order to cover any further unexpected expenses. The Commission unanimously voted to endorse the FY19 Resurfacing and Refurbishment of the Mill River Basketball Courts proposal with a revised requested amount of \$50,000.

### **FY19 Budget**

- Barb Bilz distributed the FY 19 Service Levels, Accomplishments and Objectives to the Commission. Becky Demling suggested that in the future the number of swim passes distributed to local non-profits be reflected in the Outdoor Pools Service Levels.

### **Director's Report**

#### ***Staff***

- Implemented orientation plan for Program Coordinators Nicholas Damren and Nikki Abelli.

### ***Program and Facilities***

- Toured Weston and Sampson representatives around to all Town and School District recreation area and facilities as part of their assessment and inventory process. The committee held its first face-to-face meeting with the firm on November 20, 2017.
- Repainting of the War Memorial bath house (side facing pool) took place in early November. It was completed by an outside contractor. LSSE and DPW shared the cost of the project.

### ***Golf Course***

- 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***

- WinterFest has expanded to a week-long event with activities happening throughout the Town beginning on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018 and culminating with the main event at Cherry Hill on Saturday, Feb. 10. (hand-outs) There will also be a WinterFest preview scheduled for January 27, 2018 held at and in collaboration with, Atkins Farm Country Market.
- WinterFest time.ly calendar up on LSSE website.

### ***Adult and Youth Education***

- Winter classes begin in January. Work is in progress to identify new classes for the spring. Possibilities include: College Readiness Prep Class, Financial Planning Workshop, and Qui Gong.

### ***Afterschool Program***

- We currently have 99 children enrolled in the Crocker Farm Elementary Afterschool Program.
- Title I started one week ago so we have seen an uptick in registrations. We have a partnership with the school district to provide school facilitated academic help for those children.

### ***Sports***

- The Youth Basketball Program has started. There are 31 children currently enrolled in the Suburban Basketball Travel Program and 240 children enrolled in the AYBL Recreational Program. The annual Jamboree event will be held on December 9, 2017 and games begin on January 6, 2018. Additional enrollments will occur after this event.

### ***Community Theater***

- Rehearsals and set building are in full swing for the production of *Beauty and the Beast*. The first performance is scheduled for January 11, 2018 at UMass Bowker Auditorium.

- Stacey Lecuivre and I had the opportunity to tour the set shop at DPW. The Amherst Leisure Services Community Theater is grateful for the space provided by DPW and the incredible work being done by the volunteers to create amazing sets year after year for these productions.

### ***Marketing***

- Winter brochure is out and includes site mapping/locations for the first time.
- Improvements to the LSSE website have been implemented. They include: Complete upgrade and redesign of the LSSE landing page; integrated calendars; redesigned ticket sales page and made a tutorial; addition of a banner Ad; new and improved web ads; new vector design of the LSSE logo; and redesigned site map on website to ease navigation through the site.
- Established Instagram, SnapChat, and Twitter venues for LSSE programming.

### ***Community Visibility***

- LSSE has had a presence at the following community events so far in December:
  - Lighting of the Merry Maple – promotion of WinterFest event.

### ***FY19 Budget***

- FY19 Budget and Capital recommendations submitted to Town Manager. (handout)

### ***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 will participate in the annual December holiday luncheon meeting of the Pioneer Valley Recreation and Parks Association to be held in Florence, MA.

### ***Commission Member Comments and Updates***

- Several Commission members stated that they really liked the new program site map in the Winter Brochure. They also thanked Commission member Sarah Marshall for her suggestion to add this new feature to the brochure.

### ***Next Meeting***

- The next LSSE Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the LSSE office.

### ***Adjournment***

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.