

**Dover Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting of January 7, 2009
Minutes**

P&R Commissioners In Attendance: John Budd, Barry Cullen, Peter Davies, Rich Oasis, Nancy Simms
P&R Employees In Attendance: Jessica Cooney, David MacTavish
Others In Attendance: Scott Seidman, Jim Kinder – Warrant Committee

Prior Meeting Minutes

Minutes from September, October, November, and two from December were accepted as amended.

P&R Write-up for Town Report

It was suggested that the P&R write-up for the 2008 Town Report include an Executive Summary of sorts where we could highlight some of the year's events as well as successful new programs.

FY2010 Budget

The Warrant Committee has requested that P&R present its FY2010 operating budget reflecting level services from FY2009. The budget was prepared under these restrictions with the exception of three expenses totaling \$5,300. The first item is an increase in our vehicle maintenance account (5200-403) of \$1,500 to cover anticipated upkeep on the Ford F350 Dump Truck. This truck was purchased in 2000 and is due for replacement this year; however, given the economic situation facing the town, it was agreed to defer this capital expense until FY2011. Keeping this vehicle online for an additional year will likely require the additional maintenance budgeted.

The second item amounts to \$1,200 in the Computer Basic System account (5200-530) for the installation and twelve-month maintenance of a dedicated computer cable hook-up. With its office currently located in the Caryl Building, P&R's computer cable hook up has been via a branch Comcast cable out of the Town House. The connection has proven very unreliable as P&R frequently experiences several "crashes" a day. The problem seems to be most acute during bad weather which has proven most frustrating as it is in these situations that communication with clients is often required to notify them of program cancellations. Despite efforts by Comcast and the town's computer technician over the past 24 months, the problem remains. It was agreed that P&R can no longer wait for the Comcast service to be corrected.

The third expense is in the Meetings and Dues account (5700-396) in the amount of \$2,600. This expense is for Jess Cooney, the P&R Assistant Director, to travel to and attend a one-week continuing education program in August in West Virginia. The program is called The Director's School and is intended for upcoming professionals in recreation. It was agreed that it is important to provide Jess with appropriate training for her professional benefit as well as for the Town's benefit.

The FY2010 operating budget totals \$356,114, up 5.7% or \$20,165 from FY2009. \$5,300 of this increase is from the above three detailed expense increases, and the remaining \$14,865 is from contractual salaries and wages increases. The salaries and wages increase represents 74% of the total increase.

Dave will mail to each of the commissioners a copy of the FY2010 budget as well as actual expense numbers for FY2008 and FY2009 to date.

Open Space Committee

Rich attended the most recent OSC meeting on 1/6/09. OSC is interested in identifying open properties in Dover which could possibly be developed into walking trails. Their primary interest is in promoting passive recreation through walking trails and horse trails, neither of which require much change to the Town's

topography. OSC wants to make sure that all interest groups in town are involved and consulted when decisions claiming open spaces are being considered. Rich emphasized that P&R had no concrete plans at the moment regarding new field space and therefore had nothing to share with them or any other interest group constituency. OSC asked that the Board of Health be consulted in any decision involving turf fields to make sure that materials used are “approved” by them. Rich reminded OSC that the P&R meetings are open meetings and that anybody who is interested or concerned about an issue is welcome to attend.

OSC raised the topic of the Medfield State Property land that was converted to fields for athletic purposes in 2001. This was the most recent development of active recreation space in Dover and the first since 1993 when the Chickering fields were developed. OSC questioned the current need for new field space given former commissioner Wade Kennedy’s promise at the 2006 Town Meeting that Dover would never need additional fields if appropriations for these fields were approved. OSC claimed that recent demographic data suggest that Dover’s new resident number is changing.

Public opinion holds that there is insufficient field space in Dover (and Sherborn). Dover citizens involved in sports programs are interested in having facilities comparable to other towns in our area. These are high quality playing fields. Participation in youth sports programs has grown dramatically over the past decade. Because of the limited field space in Dover and Sherborn, all spring sports have had to enforce a maximum enrollment limit. Interested players have had to be turned away. In the last two years, the growth in youth sports has translated to higher numbers at the high school level. Freshman sports teams have been added at DSHS to accommodate the increase in the number of athletes interested in participating. Although the addition of freshman teams allows more athletes to continue playing their sport, the down side is that these teams need field space for practicing and for games. With more fields being used by the DSHS teams, there are that many fewer fields available for youth sports. Jess will look into collecting data on the growth of youth sports over the past few years so we can see the trend. Rich can bring these data to the next OSC meeting.

Gym Floor Waxing

The wear and tear on the gym floor is taking its toll. Boot camp has used the space every day for the last few months. The grit from street shoes wears down the polyurethane finish of the floor. In the future, users will be asked to not come in to the gym with street shoes. Rental fees from gym users will be used to cover the cost of the re-finishing. Buffing is not an option. Dave and Jess will get an estimate cost for stripping and re-waxing the floor. The work will be done over the summer.

Program Expansion

Jess spoke with Carl Warnick regarding the costs associated with improving space in the Caryl Building so that P&R could offer more indoor programs, especially for younger kids under 5 years old. Currently, the room next to Erin’s dance studio is rarely used. This space could be converted into a tumbling room that parents could use as a drop in space. The Dover Mothers’ Association has a keen interest in such a space where they could interact with other Dover moms while their children played with other Dover children. The DMA has asked P&R to provide more programs for this age group.

It was agreed that this idea should be explored further. Dave will talk with the town clerk, Barrie Clough, to get demographic data for the under 5 age group; the town census should capture these data. If P&R incurs the cost of upgrading this room, we need to be sure there will continue to be demand for the space. We will consider issuing a survey to determine demand.

It was agreed that the room currently used for the TaeKwonDo program and the wrestling program, which are run through P&R, should be considered a “P&R” space rather than a “selectmen” space. Also, it would facilitate P&R program expansion if the two classrooms across the hall from Erin’s dance studio were freely available to P&R. The question of control came up regarding booking any of the rooms in Caryl. Currently Carl Warnick is responsible for reserving some rooms and Dave and Jess are responsible for reserving others. It

was agreed that one of the P&R commissioners will meet with one of the selectmen to discuss plans going forward.

Spring/Summer Brochure

The spring/summer brochure is being pulled together. Jess asked for input on programs to offer. It was suggested that the brochure include pictures or short summaries of successful events from this year – it can be used for self-promotion. Jess has found a lower cost printer which we will use. The spring/summer brochure is the primary P&R brochure and should be produced on quality paper stock and in color.

Nancy's and Jess's Community Center Findings

Other towns have successfully implemented programs for the middle school ages. In considering options for us to implement, we need to make sure that the programs are self-funding. Jess asked for program ideas for this age group.

Community Groups Programming Meeting

Jess has arranged a meeting to include the more active program groups in town: P&R, COA, Community Ed., Library, and DMA (Dover Mothers' Association). The meeting will be held in the Caryl Building library on Monday, January 12, 2009 at 11:00am. The goal of the meeting is to discuss program offerings in town. Jess asked for comments from P&R that she could bring to the meeting.

Discussion was had on how to structure program offerings across all of these groups. Given that Dover is a small town, there is the risk that all the groups together could saturate the market. Too many offerings could result in low course enrollment which could result in course cancellation. There is also the risk of duplicate courses being offered by different groups. P&R does not want to compete with Com. Ed. or the Library or any other group. P&R does want to coordinate its program offerings with the other groups to avoid the issues mentioned above. P&R is interested in increasing its program offerings across several age groups. If P&R is going to be a significant player in the new community center as is anticipated, increasing our program offerings is necessary.

It seemed logical to the committee that athletic and outdoor activities be the domain of P&R. Townspeople tend to think of P&R when sports-related programs are discussed. It was unclear why Com. Ed. was offering a field hockey class for 3rd – 5th graders but the middle school field hockey program was being run through P&R. There is confusion in town regarding which group is responsible for which activities, especially with regard to sports activities. Ideally, the program offerings could be sorted out in a more logical format so as to capitalize on the resources of the sponsoring organization and to reduce the confusion within the town.

Dave reminded the committee that the P&R budget includes the costs for maintaining the fields around Chickering School. The agreement that was struck between P&R and the local school committee was that P&R would cover the cost of maintaining Chickering's fields (that otherwise would fall within the local school committee budget) in exchange for being at the top of the list for field usage. This agreement has not always been honored. The Com. Ed. field hockey program is a case in point.

At our next meeting, Jess will report to the commission what transpired.

Misc.

- Dave requested \$16,000 to finish the Phase II plan for Caryl Park; this fee would be payable to Camp, Dresser, McGee. The original idea was to fund this sum privately; however, with the downturn in the economy, the interest to do so has disappeared. It was agreed to wait on incurring this expense. As a reminder, Dave informed the committee that the estimate for Phase I alone of \$500,000 included ground work in anticipation of installing grass and irrigation. If we were to go forward with a turf field,

the cost of this ground work would be backed out. Dave estimated that the cost of going with a turf field would be \$1 million or slightly more.

- Dave and Jess provided the commissioners with a copy of George Chickering's will. The will was reviewed, and it was confirmed that using the land deeded by him to the town for active recreation was within the intention of his gift. Dave believes that this is the only land in Dover that does not have restrictions on it.
- Jess reported that March 28, 2009 is Dover Clean-Up Day. Chris Revliotti has approached Jess to ask if there are any P&R lands we would like to have cleaned up as a part of the day's efforts. The commission is not aware of any P&R lands requiring dedicated volunteer clean up.
- After some discussion, it was agreed to remove entirely the beverage vending machines at the Caryl Park tennis courts. It was concluded that providing soda and sugary juices in the vending machines was contradictory to the purpose of recreation and that providing bottled water not environmentally friendly. The past income earned by P&R from the vending machine sales was less than \$500, and therefore considered too small to override the negatives identified above.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Simms, P&R Secretary