



TOWN OF MENDON
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

20 Main Street
Mendon, Massachusetts 01756
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Meeting Date: 2/25/2021
Meeting Location: Remote Zoom Meeting
Minutes Approved: 1/11/2022

Members Present: Tom Belland, Dan Byer, AJ Byrne

Members Absent:

Parks Director: Dan Byer

Others: Scott Hruzd (Nipmuc Youth Softball)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 with Dan Tom, and AJ in attendance. The meeting was held by Zoom conference due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency and pursuant to the revisions to the Open Meeting Laws. All votes will be taken by roll call.

The commission met with Scott Hruzd, President of Nipmuc Youth Softball. They commission discussed installing an outfield fence on Lowell Field. This was discussed previously in 2015 but never completed. Scott shared specs. They are looking at a galvanized steel fence, similar to the baseball fence. The commission discussed future plans for the field. Steve Bodio (Nipmuc Youth Baseball) had reached out with concerns over spacing for future light installations. Dan got a rough proposal from Musco and the smaller fields would all use 4 poles, 2 off the foul lines and 2 by the foul poles with no posts needed in the center field areas. There will be 10-20' between the new fence and existing Pezzella outfield fence. Baseball has also expressed interest in expanding Pezzella field as the current fence is short. Even with their ideal distances there would be 10' between the fences. Softball also expressed interest in completely enclosing Lowell field in the future. They got a quote of \$8,500 for that project.

The commission discussed issues with future events. All agree that the primary use of these fields are ballfields. There are 3 other baseball fields with fences so softball should also be permitted to have their own fence/field. Tom said it would be a benefit to have a home field with a fence for softball. The commission discussed the color of the fencing. Softball is proposing a silver/galvanized fence. The existing Pezzella fence is black vinyl coated. Tom is in favor of the fences matching. The galvanized material is stronger and heavier gauge. Scott explained there is a major cost difference, \$7,500 vs \$9,245 for the galvanized vs vinyl coated with the black vinyl being more expensive. The commission discussed the possibility of signs on the fence. Softball plans to install sponsor signs same as baseball. Dan reviewed the by-law, and it has an exemption for the athletic fields (Zoning Sec 2.06 (h) (ii)).

The commission discussed a gate opening. Dan recommended stronger hinges as he has had to replace the ones on the Pezzella fence already. All are in agreement with the fence plans. Scott said they did get several quotes but Mr. Fence was the most responsive.

Tom made a motion to approve Nipmuc Youth Softball's request to install a home run fence on Lowell Field, AJ seconded, and all approved.

The commission clarified the material shall be the silver galvanized color as it is cheaper and will last longer.

The commission discussed the timeframe. Softball is looking to get the fence done as soon as the materials come in. Dan discussed possible concerns with the rec program. Scott will coordinate with Parks on the timing.

The commission discussed opening day. Tom said in the past there could be as many as 900 people. AJ suggested they do separate events. There will be no parade this year. Scott said they are looking at doing individual times for each age grouping.

The commission discussed a proposal to install irrigation on the infields of Lowell and Pezzella. Dan had talked to Chris Collins about this. They are looking to install 3 heads to irrigate the infields and keep dust down. Dan needs to confirm with White Water that this will be allowed on the Public Water Supply well. He things as long as the daily use is under the approved limit, we should be ok.

Tom made a motion to approve the installation of irrigation on the Lowell and Pezzella dirt infields, Dan seconded, and all approved.

Scott asked about WiFi at the Lowell concession stand for their card reader. Dan will test and share the password if it reaches from the classroom building.

Scott asked about relocating the Pezzella field rock from Wagner field. Currently it is right on the third base line and is somewhat of a tripping hazard. They'd like to move it closer to Pezzella field. They have someone with a machine who can help move it. Dan will work with Baseball to find a location closer to Pezzella.

Softball is also looking into some ideas for drainage improvements by Lowell. They asked about conservation. Dan said we would likely need approval if there is any excavation. Softball will come back with more plans.

The commission discussed field lighting. Dan got a rough proposal from Musco (\$125-135K for Lowell, 110-120K for Pezzella and Grant, and 270-290K for Tetreault). The smaller fields would all use 4 poles, 2 off the foul lines and 2 by the foul poles with no posts needed in the center field areas. Dan said he had a conversation with the Planning Board a few years back and thinks they would be in favor of it. The commission discussed pricing. Baseball had shared some info on available grants. They discussed possible fundraisers like 24 hour games, etc.

The commission and Scott discussed the general COVID-19 protocols for this season. Softball will share their plans as the state releases more info.

Scott left the meeting at 8:08pm.

AJ made a motion to approve the minutes of the 1/13/21 meeting, Tom seconded and all approved.

The commission reviewed the draft annual report for 2020. **(Exhibit A)** All approve.

The commission discussed maintenance. We received 1 response to the RFQ for a total of \$276,000. \$98K for the Parks Complex, \$34K for Grover Field, \$18k for islands, \$76K for cemeteries, and \$49K for buildings. The commission discussed full time staffing again. These numbers would help as they are much more expensive than hiring a full time person. The cost for insurance is a max of \$20K for a family plan. The commission agreed to post the seasonal positions again. Dan said Joe Carlson and Brian St. John have expressed interest in returning. He hasn't heard back from John Schiloski yet.

The commission discussed the beach project and reviewed the preliminary plans from the engineer. Dan updated the commission on a survey of the lake by Conservation. They discussed asking for funds to start the drainage work at the spring annual town meeting. They are doing an environmental study on the lake that is being funded by the fines due to a settlement with DEP and an applicant on a nearby project. The results should be available in the fall of 2021.

The commission discussed field use. Dan said he was getting requests from outside groups looking for space. COVID is impacting scheduling and availability of facilities. They discussed the priority and agreed we need to wait for the local leagues to settle their schedules first. They discussed reviewing requests at the end of March.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm

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PARKS & RECREATION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2020 season presented a number of unique challenges to the Parks and Recreation Department. The COVID-19 Pandemic severely impacted this year's programming. Despite the challenges we managed to make the best of things. We were able to run some of our programming and provide some much needed recreational opportunities to the residents of Mendon. Despite the pandemic, there was still a high demand for our facilities. Throughout the year, our facilities saw a large number of users. Individuals and families looking to get outside in a safe and socially distant manner utilized our fields, and trails in record numbers. This serves to highlight the critical role parks and open space play in our community. Once things were permitted to re-open in the late spring many requests for facility use came in. Although off to a late start the spring youth sports season was able to resume in June. The annual election in May saw the re-election of Commissioner Daniel Byer. The Department continues to work towards expanding programming and increasing services offered to the community. This year several capital projects were completed and several more are in the works.

Another issue that impacted the Department was the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) outbreak in the fall of 2019. This was left off the 2019 annual report. As a result of this outbreak many fall activities were re-scheduled or cancelled. Fields and facilities were closed at dusk when mosquitoes were at their peak activity. A large summer festival scheduled for the end of August at the park (Mendonfest 2019, organized by the Brothers of the Brush and Mendon Festival Committee) was cancelled. Thankfully EEE did not present an issue in Mendon in the 2020 season.

As discussed starting in the 2016 report, the Department is still in need of a more permanent solution for storage and workshop space for the Maintenance Crew. Several options are still being explored. Additionally there is still a need for space for community programming and fitness classes. The Parks Commission remains focused on maintaining and improving our existing parks facilities in addition to seeking new opportunities for recreation in Mendon.

The Parks Department would like to extend a special thanks to all those who helped contribute to our efforts to run safe programming this summer. Our own administrative team and staff, as well as the countless volunteers for the youth sports programs. We would also like to thank the Board of Health and Select Board for their support of our programming this year.

Keep up to date with activities and events offered by the Parks & Recreation Dept.

mendonma.gov/parks

Parks Department Annual Report

As always the Parks Department would like to thank Alan Tetreault and the Highway Department for their continued help and support.

The Parks Department would like to thank all of our employees for the 2020 season:

Director of Parks & Recreation – Daniel Byer

Lifeguards – Shannon Dowd, Jacob Fernandes, Jack Henderson, Molly Lashley, Michael Palinkas, Luke Rosa, and Rachel Thibodeau

Snack Shack Staff – Katelyn Bottoms, Ellen Dixon, Jack McCarthy

Recreation Director – Alan DeAngelis

Assistant Recreation Directors – Jennifer St. John

Recreation Manager – Jon Hilton

Recreation Program Office Assistant – Lindsey Spindel

Senior Counselors – Jaclyn Bianchi, Rachel Dunlavey, Samuel Hilton, and Diana Richard

Recreation Staff – Abby Behrikis, Abby Benoit, Kayla Chaplin, Isabella DeFrancesco, Rachel Goodwin, Nicole Guzinski, Emily Iacovelli, Kaylee Lukasek, Matthew McCarthy, Julia Orff, Lindsey Plumb, Allison Prew, Timothy Reed, and Lucy Wiklund

Maintenance Forman – John Schiloski

Maintenance Crew – Justin Ball, Ryan Braun, Joseph Carlson, Drew Nelson, Brian St. John,

Projects Completed in 2020:

Staff Manual and Onboarding Software

In 2020 the Commission made several changes to our onboarding process. We signed on with WorkBright, a cloud based onboarding solution. This system will expedite the collection and processing of employee paperwork. Our timing turned out to be ideal with all the restrictions imposed in the spring due to the coronavirus. This program saved countless hours of manually processing paperwork and meeting one-on-one with employees.

The Commission also completed a complete re-write of our employee manuals. Previously there were separate documents for each position requiring a large amount of work to update each summer. The new document is a single packet that includes general items as well as items specific to each position. We plan to continue this effort to modernize and update our operations.

LED Lighting Upgrades

The LED upgrade project continues into 2020. This work is ongoing and plans are in the works to upgrade the lights in the Classroom building in 2021 as well as add several exterior flood lights.

The project to re-wire the basketball and tennis court lights is still in progress. In 2019 BVT completed installation of all the buried conduit and wiring. New outlets were installed at each pole. Due to COVID-19 this project was delayed in 2020. We hope to complete this project in the Spring of 2021 and will also include the replacement of the 8 1kW metal halide lights with efficient LED fixtures.

Thanks to a generous donation, we were able to secure a vending machine for the basketball court. This will be installed in the spring of 2021 and will hopefully generate some revenue towards the upkeep of these facilities.

Parks Department Annual Report (*continued*)

Town Beach

Unfortunately this year saw the loss of most of the trees at the Town Beach. These Ash trees were diseased and dying due to Emerald Ash Borer infestation. Falling branches posed a serious safety concern and the trees were taken down in the spring. The Commission began exploring options to replace these trees as well as address some drainage issues at the beach. At the Annual Town Meeting we were able to secure \$10,000 in Community Preservation Funds for engineering to begin this re-design process. This will be a multi-year project including drainage, landscaping, and improvements.

Snack Shack

In 2020 we undertook several improvements to the Snack Shack building. First the roof was replaced and several rotting boards underneath were repaired. Second, with the increases in enrollment for the Rec Program we were in need of some updates to the interior fixtures. A new commercial sink was installed in place of the old undersized sink and counters. (Thanks to Nipmuc Youth Baseball for their donation). The plumbing and drain system was rebuilt and brought up to code with a new floor drain and grease trap. New cabinets were installed in place of the open shelving that will help keep things clean and well organized. Finally some additional shelving was purchased for chemical storage.

Several safety improvements were also made to address the COVID-19 Pandemic. The front window screen was replaced with a plastic window. An intercom system was added to better facilitate customer orders and new ventilation systems are in the works for 2021.

In 2021 we plan to finish the Shack floor with a poured-in-place epoxy surface to replace the cracked, bare concrete floor and to purchase replacement tables for the Fryer and prep areas to address storage and safety concerns.

2020 Parks Department Program Updates:

Snack Shack:

The Snack Shack was also open daily, 10am-7pm Mon-Sat, and 12pm-7pm Sun. Due to limited attendance at the beach food sales were down in 2020. Overall things went well. A new cherry slush flavor was added along with several more healthy options (fruit cups and juice boxes). This summer we also transitioned to a set menu for the rec program lunches. A crew of three served this summer with shifts mostly cut back to 1 per shift due to COVID-19. A protective shield was installed with an intercom system to minimize cross contamination between the public and staff. All food was served in sealed boxes or wrapped in foil to also protect against contamination.

Despite the challenges of 2020 the Shack was able to just break even with a loss of just \$59 dollars.

2020 Snack Shack P&L*	
Income	\$11,206.27
Payroll	\$6,598.46
Expenses	\$5,199.37
Food Costs	46.40%
Loss	(\$59.16)

**These figures are based on
the 2020 calendar year
(1/1/20 – 12/31/20)*

Field and Facility Use:

Despite the pandemic there was a high demand for our facilities in 2020. The coaches and volunteers for all the youth sports leagues worked tirelessly to provide safe recreation opportunities to our community despite all the challenges. Although activities got off to a late start in June, most youth leagues were able to run. Memorial Park, Veteran's Park, Clough Elementary School Field, and Grover Field were all in demand over the course of the season.

The Parks Dept. received and approved 24 permits for facility use representing approximately 11,000 hours of reserved field time, although some of those requests were later cancelled due to COVID-19. Approximately 750 children of all ages participated in the many recreation offerings though the many athletic associations and leagues who call Mendon home. Our facilities were host to countless games and countless practices in the 2020 season.

The Scout Pavilion at Memorial Park was very popular as usual. Especially during these times, it provided an outdoor location for several programs normally held indoors including the Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby. There were 9 permits issued for events there in addition to the frequent use by the general public.

The Mendon Cultural Council funded the annual Blackstone Valley Community Concert Band however due to the pandemic this concert was cancelled. Hopefully they will be able to perform in 2021.

As addressed in the introduction to this report, the 2019 Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) outbreak caused the cancellation of several fall events. This along with COVID-19 in the spring of 2020 resulted in cash flow issues with the FY20 field use fees. Only \$100 was actually collected in FY20. Many of our fees are collected in the spring but due to the uncertainty of COVID-19, those payments were delayed until FY21 and will be reported in the 2021 annual report.

The Parks Commissioners would like to thank all the sports organizations who continue to go above and beyond in their efforts to maintain and improve our parks.

FY2020 Facility Use P&L*	
Permits Issued	24
Facility Use Fees Collected	\$100.00 ¹
<i>Capital Improvement Fee Waivers</i>	<i>\$2,268.00</i>
<i>Value of Capital Improvements</i>	<i>\$10,000.00+</i>
Income	\$100.00
Expenses ²	\$10,568.45
Loss	(\$10,468.45)

**These figures are based on the 2020 Fiscal Year
(7/1/19 – 6/30/20)*

1 – Funds for spring use that would normally be deposited in FY20 were delayed due to COVID-19 and will be deposited in FY21 instead.

2 – These expenses represent funds expended from the Parks Revolving account for field maintenance. Additional funds are provided by the Town towards the fields. These include \$1,700 for fertilization, \$1,600 for electricity, and other related funds.

Kids 'N Us Summer Recreation Program:

2020 was an interesting year for the Kids 'N' Us Rec Program. A ton of planning and prep went into this season trying to figure out how to comply with the ever changing state regulations and we are grateful to our leadership team for all their hard work in figuring out how to safely operate this summer. The Kids 'N' Us Rec Program provides an essential service to the community in the form of childcare and general recreation opportunities and the Commission felt it was important to do what we could to try and operate as long as we did not take too much of a loss. In March we had 20 children registered despite the pandemic with many inquiries. Based on this interest we decided to forge ahead.

Due to COVID-19 we cancelled the first week of the program. Field trips were also cancelled. The program ran for 9 weeks from June 29th to Aug. 28th. We were able to continue many of our usual activities including swimming, games, arts & crafts and more. This year there were a total of 77 children registered and an average of 29 kids per day. A total of 22 staff members were hired this summer. The program generated \$56,338 in revenue, a decrease of \$86,065 from last summer. This was due to COVID-19. We were fortunate to get a grant from the CARES Act funds in the amount of \$6,612.50 to assist with added staffing requirements for cleaning and planning. Additionally we were able to utilize CARES act funds to purchase PPE and cleaning supplies. Unfortunately we did end the year at a slight loss.

There were no field trips in 2020 due to COVID-19. We continued the use of the Clough School as a backup location for rain days. Thankfully we were able to make use of this facility for several days with threats of inclement weather. In 2021, we hope to continue the same positive momentum of the program. Based on our experiences in 2020 we are confident in our ability to safely run our programs in 2021. Hopefully things will look up in 2021 with the widespread availability of the vaccine. Plans for a counselor in training program and programs for older kids are still in the works but on hold as we focus on rebuilding our main programming.

2020 Summer Recreation Program P&L*	
Participants	77 kids
Daily Avg.	29 kids/day
Income	\$56,338.00
Payroll	\$63,467.85
CARES Act Grant	\$6,612.50
Expenses	\$663.84
Loss	(\$1,181.19)

**These figures are based on the 2020 calendar year (1/1/20 – 12/31/20)*

At the time of printing, registrations for the 2021 season are open!
mendonma.gov/kids

Mendon Town Beach:

The town beach opened full time for the season on June 28th and remained open daily 10am-7pm Mon-Sat and 12pm-7pm on Sun. until August 29th serving 2,194 patrons. The Commission had decided to experiment with expanded hours this summer, changing our start time to 10am on Mon-Sat instead of noon. Swim Lessons were cancelled due to COVID-19 and the Commission decided to stop offering resident pricing to Uxbridge residents.

Initially the Beach saw a lot of traffic in 2020. This was due to many other facilities being closed or over crowded. Partway through the summer in mid-July, as COVID-19 cases began to increase, new travel orders were put in place. After consulting with the Board of Health we began restricting admissions to Massachusetts residents only. Unfortunately this cut off a large number of our out of state customers on weekends. Despite these restrictions we saw the 2nd highest number of non-residents since 2011.

There were no water quality issues in 2020. The Commission continues to work with the Board of Health and Conservation Commission to try and address these issues. The Conservation Commission has been working on a plan for an environmental survey of the Lake to help identify any areas of concern and more permanently address these issues.

The beach was open for 62 days in 2020, closing early 13 days for weather. Admission prices remained the same at \$2/person for Mendon residents, \$3/person for non-residents, and free for children 2 & under and seniors 60 & over. Season passes were \$50 for residents and \$125 for non-residents.

Sadly due to the coronavirus pandemic all summer events were cancelled. It is our hope these events can return in 2021.

Swimming Lessons:

Swim lessons were cancelled for the 2020 season due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. The Commission plans to explore options to outsource or contract out these programs in future years. With declining enrollment they do not appear to be financially viable anymore.

Fitness Programming:

No fitness programs were offered in 2020. Due to declining enrollment and competition from private instructors, it is not likely the Parks Dept. will continue these programs.

2020 Beach Usage*	
Season Length	62 days
Mendon Residents	526
Non-Residents	1,456
Season Pass & Free* *ages 2 & under / 60+	212 (13 passes sold)
Total Usage	2,194
2020 Beach P&L*	
Admissions	\$5,459.00
Passes	\$348.00
Lessons	\$0.00
Total Income	\$5,843.00
Guard Payroll	\$13,753.36
Loss	(\$7,910.36)

**These figures are based on the 2020 calendar year (1/1/20 – 12/31/20)*

2020 Parks Department Financial Report:

Financial Statement for the Parks Dept Revolving Acct (M.G.L. Ch. 44 §53D)
and the Mendon Town Beach Accounts for
Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1st, 2019 – June 30th, 2020)

Parks Revolving Account FY20 P&L	
Opening Balance	\$ 42,624.38
Income	
Kids 'N' Us Rec Program	\$ 153,535.47
Snack Shack	\$ 8,302.18
Field Use Fees	\$ 100.00
Total Income	\$ \$161,937.65
Payroll	
Kids 'N' Us Rec. Prog. Payroll	\$ 71,736.85
Snack Shack Payroll	\$ 7,859.20
Total Payroll	\$ \$79,596.05
Expenses	
Kids 'N' Us Rec. Program	\$ 27,195.57
Snack Shack	\$ 6,931.99
Town Beach	\$ 15,056.80
Field Maintenance & Facilities	\$ 10,568.45
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 1,512.18
Other Expenses*	\$ 7,645.12
(*software fees, credit card fees, office supplies, etc.)	
Total Expenses	\$ \$69,037.64
Closing Balance	\$ 56,055.87
FY20 Revolving Profit/Loss	\$ 13,431.49

Town Beach FY20 P&L	
Income	
Beach Admissions	\$ 5,415.00
Beach Season Passes	\$ 1,500.00
Swim Lesson Fees	\$ 3,275.00
Total Income	\$ 10,190.00
Lifeguard Payroll	\$ 11,837.76
Beach Profit/Loss	\$ (1,647.76)

Respectfully Submitted,

Mendon Board of Parks Commissioners:

Thomas Belland, *Chairman*
AJ Byrne
Dan Byer

Parks Department Annual Report (*continued*)