



**Walpole Recreation Committee
Meeting Held on October 9, 2019
Blackburn Hall - 6:00 p.m.
30 Stone Street - Walpole, MA 02081**

Recreation Committee Present

Regular Members

Present

- Joe Grant, *Chairman*
- Bill Buckley, *Vice-Chairman*
- Annelise Fair

Not Present

Richard McCarthy
Michael McGrath

Associate Members

Present

- Brian Hickey
- Doug Shea
- Jeff Hutnick
- Lorraine Dundon

Not Present

Umesh Kumar

Staff Present

- Brendan Croak, *Director*
- Arielle Carney, *Assistant Director*

Call to Order

Chairman Grant called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Director's Report

Programming Update

- Director Croak updated the Committee that Fall Session 2 programming begins on October 28th. The deadline for registrations is the week prior.

The Winter Brochure is scheduled to be dropped off at the Post Office around November 15th, arriving in mailboxes that weekend, and registrations opening up on Monday, November 18th.

Field Maintenance Update

- Director Croak updated the Committee on some notes about field maintenance that is taking place at numerous locations throughout town. The Parks Department recently "skinned" one of the baseball fields at Jarvis Farm, which means they tore out the infield grass and replaced it with stone dust. This will help with maintenance and to keep the field playable, as various restrictions limit the type and amount of maintenance that can be done at that specific location. There are plans to do the same to the other diamond located at that location.

The Parks Department is also considering "skinning" the infield at Morgan Field, as well, for similar maintenance-related reasons as the diamonds located at Jarvis Farm. Director Croak mentioned that there are no plans to install stone dust at this particular location. Chairman Grant is not in favor of this plan. There was some discussion by the Committee of their opposition to the idea of skinning Morgan Field. This is the last "town-owned" Little League field with a grass infield, and while a skinned infield *is* easier to maintain, the restrictions present at some fields are not factors for this particular location. Ms. Fair stated that she is not in favor of skinning Morgan Field. As the mother of a "baseball" family, she stated that teams don't enjoy playing on the stone dust material once the field is skinned. Ms. Dundon prefers the aesthetic look of the current field with grass, especially given its proximity to the center of Town, Town Hall, the Center Pool facilities, and the playground.

- Director Croak gave the Committee a brief update on the paving project taking place at the Memorial Playground parking lot. The paving was supposed to begin in late August, but there were some delays with the contractor that pushed that project back until just recently.

In addition to the paving taking place, the exterior fencing wrapping from the left field foul pole, around the backstop, and continuing to the right field foul pole is being replaced. The "center field" fencing will not be replaced at this time. It remains to be seen what, if any, work will be done with the dugout areas.

A guardrail will be installed between the fencing and the parking lot. This will provide an additional safety barrier between spectators and cars in the lot.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Community Forum

- Director Croak let the Committee know that Conservation Agent, Landis Hershey is holding a Community Forum to update the Town of Walpole's Open Space & Recreation Plan. This will take place on Tuesday, October 29th from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Jarvis Harvest

- Assistant Director Carney gave an update on the annual Jarvis Harvest event taking place this Saturday from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Jarvis Farm. With the poor weather for the third consecutive year, the Department will be exploring the idea of potentially changing the date to September in order to avoid the cold and rainy weather that typically occurs as the fall season progresses.

New Business

Field Permit Application

- Director Croak stated that he would like to make some changes to the Field Permit Application form. He notes that if the Route 1A Field Project is approved at Town Meeting later this month, the fee schedule will also most likely need to be adjusted at a future date. After some discussion of the proposed changes, it was decided that Director Croak will work on adjusting the form. Discussion to finalize will continue at a future meeting.

On a related note, Director Croak mentioned that, despite multiple requests, Walpole Girls Softball has yet to pay their permit fee for the summer 2019 season. He stated that some of the proposed changes, including a table of important dates and deadlines, in addition to a potential required deposit may avoid such instances in the future. There was some discussion that specific penalties must be written out and included in the *Field Permit Policies*. One idea was including, but not limited to, that future permits will not be issued until previous permits were paid for and settled. Director Croak wanted it noted that the Recreation Department does not retain any of the field permit fees that are collected - 80% of the collected fees go to offset field maintenance costs for the Parks Department, while the remaining 20% is put into the *Turco Field Replacement* account. Vice-Chairman Buckley suggested contacted the School Department to see what their policy is for permits and reservations that go unpaid.

Summer Program Planning

- Chairman Grant implored the Committee to start brainstorming ideas to address program-growth, due to both the Walpole Woods and Little Rec'ers programs filling up during this previous summer. Director Croak stated that while this is a good problem to have, the Department needs to make sure that they are doing their best to accommodate the needs of the community. The Department will explore options for expansion accordingly.

Old Business

Route 1A Fields Project

- Chairman Grant gave the Committee an update on the Route 1A Fields Project that is being present before Town Meeting later this month. The final bid was received and presented before the Finance Committee on September 16th. The vote unanimously passed 15-0-0 to fund Article 3, in the amount of \$7,985,079.
 - **Base bid** \$ 5,967,000
 - **Alternate 1** - *Lights for Artificial Fields* \$ 500,000
 - **Alternate 2** - *Lights for Natural Turf Fields* \$ 675,000
 - **Contingency** \$ 843,079

The money will come through miscellaneous accounts, with the remaining amount (\$3 - \$4 million) to come from borrowing. Mr. Shea, who is a member of the Finance Committee, spoke further about the 15-0-0 vote. He mentioned that he, personally, saw more user group and private groups doing work to help get this project off the ground, specifically with regard to future fundraising to offset costs. Vice-Chairman

On a motion made by Vice-Chairman Buckley, seconded by Ms. Fair, the Committee voted 3-0-0 to support the funding of Article 3.

Minutes

- On a motion made by Vice-Chairman Buckley, seconded by Ms. Fair, the Committee voted 3-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes from the September 11th 2019 meeting.

Public Comment

- Mr. Hutnick had a question about the Capital Budget request of \$160,000 listed under the Building Maintenance Department for "Blackburn Hall Improvements". Director Croak mentioned that he *believes* that it has to do with repairs to the columns at Blackburn Hall. Director Croak said that he will confirm with Don Anderson, the Superintendent of Building Maintenance, and will let Mr. Hutnick know.

Adjournment

- On a motion made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Vice-Chairman Buckley, the Committee voted 3-0-0 to adjourn at 7:16 p.m.