

Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes December 2009
12/3/09
6:30 pm

Attendance: Jeremy Griffus, Chairman
Sue Laroche
Rupert Cote
Mick Regan
Eric Horton
Dave Yates
Selectman Roger Coutu
Keith Bowen
Bob Iannaco

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm with Pledge of Allegiance.

October Minutes

Selectman Coutu made a motion to accept minutes with no changes. Keith Bowen seconded the motion. Minutes were accepted 7-0.

Public Input

None.

Report of Officers

Nothing to report.

Report of Sub Committees

None.

Director's Report

Movie Night Dec 4th.

Comedy Night Dec 5th.

5th and 6th grade dance will be December 11th. Chaperones are needed. ROTC will provide the concessions.

Basketball is underway, instructional and teen league begins Dec 5th.

Between all leagues there are over 1,000 participants.

No cuts to the proposed budget during budget committee presentation.

Correspondence

None received.

Old Business

A) Eayrs Pond Project

Michelle Moore – 4 Elder St

Opposes the Eayrs Pond project. Primary concerns are loitering by youth, use of facilities by Massachusetts residents and size of the streets in the area. Michelle Moore would like to see the neighborhood remain quiet.

Laura Lockhart – 14 Walnut St

Not opposed to proposed park. Believes a volleyball court would not be a good use of space. Recommends a basketball court instead. Additionally, tennis courts are proposed for Bensons. Laura likes the idea of a conservation area. Ultimately, Laura desires a park over additional houses.

Jeremy Griffus reviewed concerns brought up during the Board of Selectman meeting in November.

Selectman Coutu informed the committee on the direction received from the Board. He expressed disappointment regarding the turn out from the local residents. Further, he reiterated his desire to have a park in the south end of town. He continues to be baffled by the belief that Mass residents will use a 5-acre park in Hudson when Tyngsboro has numerous parks. The Board of Selectman was hoping the committee would receive more input from the residents. Currently there are three votes on the board to sell the property which would generate an additional \$20,000-\$25,000 per year in revenue. Selectman Coutu again advised the committee that he would fight tooth and nail to ensure the recreation committee funds remain solely for recreation use.

Jeremy Griffus opened the floor for general discussion.

Bob Iannaco asked for clarification on Kevin Burns estimates for park construction. Dave Yates updated the committee on how the estimate was derived. Selectman Coutu further clarified that the park plan would be modified to provide for a turn-around and other road improvements that could be absorbed by eliminating the tennis court cost.

Rupert Cote believes the opposition was primarily against the plan proposed six years ago and feels the committee needs to make a decision to proceed or stop the discussion for a park in this end of town.

Eric Horton commented on what would be required to win the votes from the Board of Selectman and the Planning Board. With what appears to be more questions and concerns than answers, Eric found it difficult to see how the Board would vote for the project without an overwhelming show of support from the local residents. Further, with the potential for additional revenue for the town by selling the property Eric felt it would be unlikely the Board would go for a less than popular plan.

Sue Laroche stated that she is passionate about placing a park in a south end of town. Sue believes the committee needs to decide if a park is needed in the south end of town.

Bob Iannaco believes that it will be extremely difficult to gain Board approval without overwhelming support from the neighborhood.

Selectman Coutu proposed that if a sub-committee route was taken he would contact the Hudson Fish & Game for use of their hall to hold a public meeting to hear their thoughts on the plan. Additionally, it was emphasized that overwhelming support was needed to gain the support of the Board.

Mick Regan believes the committee needs to proceed with the efforts to provide recreation facilities in the south end of town and would like to get more resident input.

Keith Bowen proposed moving the park plan into sub-committee to receive more public input.

Keith Bowen entered a motion to move the park into sub-committee, Sue Laroche seconded, further discussion ensued...

Eric Horton asked what timeframe would be placed on moving the plan through the sub-committee and expressed concern that the park would be reduced to a point where limited value would be derived from a watered down version of the plan.

Rupert Cote does not see the value in creating a sub-committee as this park has been on the agenda for 3 years.

Jeremy Griffus believes the sub-committee would work with the residents to gain their support.

Sue Laroche emphasized that the park is not just for the Eayrs neighborhood; it is for all residents in the south end.

Bob Iannaco recommends a public input session similar to the session held for the basketball rule change session.

Eric Horton suggested a more informal session that would allow for open dialogue between committee members and town residents.

Selectman Coutu recommend the public session should be handled as an informal workshop setting.

Keith Bowen withdrew his previous motion to establish a sub-committee.

Keith Bowen entered a motion to make the January 7th meeting a workshop at the Hudson Fish & Game. Rupert Cote seconds. Discussion ensued...

Dave Yates expressed his concern with going through with a workshop knowing there was limited support from the Board of Selectman for a park.

Selectman Coutu indicated that in his conversations with fellow board members it was clear that they were not impressed with the plan. Further, the potential for revenue from selling the land is hard to ignore.

Eric Horton indicated there were numerous comments by the Board that indicated an uphill battle to gain their support.

Motion carried 4-3 (Sue Laroche, Eric Horton, Bob Iannaco dissenting) with 1 abstention (Selectman Coutu)

B) Bensons Involvement

Jeremy Griffus is awaiting for a response from the Bensons chairman.

Selectman Coutu indicated that the Bensons committee is excited about Recreation committee involvement.

New Business

Bob Iannaco provided an update on the recreation basketball league. He indicated that kids who have never scored have scored, the gyms are full of enthusiasm and the competition is excellent.

Dave Yates indicated that he has seen an increase in confidence levels and believes the changes to the program have provided significant opportunities to less talented players.

Rupert Cote indicated that the committee is short 1 member.

Closing Remarks

Eric Horton requested that any documentation provided during meetings be provided in a word or pdf format for inclusion on the Recreation Department website.

Rupert Cote moved to adjourn the meeting, Sue Laroche seconded, motion passed 7-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Horton