

HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of the March 20, 2001 BOS/Recreation Department Workshop

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Vice Chairman Shawn N. Jasper at 7:32 p.m.

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2. **ATTENDANCE**

Selectmen: Shawn N. Jasper, Rhona Charbonneau, Ann Seabury & Terry Stewart. (E. Lorraine Madison was absent.)

Staff/Others: Paul D. Sharon, Town Administrator; Priscilla Boisvert, Executive Assistant; David Yates, Recreation Director; Recreation Department members Jennifer Richtarek, Michael Regan and Ed Caban

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3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Selectman Ann Seabury.

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4. **Discussion with the Recreation Department**

Vice Chairman Jasper asked the Recreation Department what they'd like the Selectmen to do in terms of help. Jennifer said they've been working on a number of projects, things that have been brought to their attention that people in Town would like to see done or needs that are arising. They've talked about ball fields, a skate park, restoration of Robinson Pond, the Benson property, and the summer program indoor facility. They want to find solutions, but they are stuck at this point. They brainstormed where the best location of the skate park would be, but feel they may be taking the wrong approach and were seeking guidance from the Board of Selectmen on where to go from here. Vice Chairman Jasper said the Board wants to be supportive, but they shouldn't be looking to them for direction. The Recreation Committee members should be making recommendations to the Board, at which time they will offer feedback and input. He asked the Board how they felt.

Selectman Charbonneau thought the Recreation Committee was trying to get some direction on what they should do first--fields, a skate park or Robinson Pond. The Selectmen should set a priority and do one thing at a time. Jennifer said they had three things to present to the Board that they wanted to look into--the Melendy Road location, building new softball fields at Jette Park and the Benson's property--they didn't have the opportunity to present. They want to go about doing things in the right way. Selectman Charbonneau thought the least expensive project would be a ball field, then they could consider a skate park. She didn't think Melendy Road was the best place because of the neighbors and Melendy Pond there may cause a problem with small kids. Incentive funds are available, as well. Dave thought they needed to have a location first. Selectman Charbonneau said they might not get the skate park the first year, but they could get something else. If they start doing things, like a ball field, then they can come in for funds because that is keeping kids off the streets. In order to get incentive funds from the State, they've got to do something to help keep teenagers out of trouble. Last year, Litchfield ended up with about \$38,000.

Selectman Stewart asked if Dave talked to the School Department about Jette Field. Dave said he and Bernie Manor walked through there and looked at it. Mike Granger, the engineer, is going to survey it. There is a piece of land right beside Jette Field that Reggie has been maintaining for years and they thought about putting a softball field there. Bernie asked why they were looking at one little spot when there is all of the woods there they could work with. They will get it surveyed and maybe they can put in some multi-purpose fields, or some other things. He talked to Sean Sullivan about getting a map, which he will turn over to Mike Granger. Manny Sousa has also promised to put in a field, so that's the land they were going to give him to work with. The School has given them the o.k. to go ahead. Parking wouldn't be a problem because there would be the Nottingham parking and they have the parking lot for Jette, so there would be two areas to feed that one location.

Selectman Charbonneau thought multi-purpose fields, or more fields in one area would be the best. Dave said the Rec Committee wasn't sure what projects the Selectmen really wanted, or if they even wanted a skate board park in Hudson. Selectman Charbonneau said a skate park is essential for the kids. Vice Chairman Jasper said they've got to consider the liability and what it will cost the Town for extra insurance. These are the things they will need to look at realistically because there are a lot of injuries associated with skate board parks. Selectman Charbonneau said last year, some kind of legislation was passed on that. She will look into it. Mr. Sharon said it's not the issue it once was. Vice Chairman Jasper said while that may be true, they need to know those things going in.

Selectman Stewart thought the Melendy location was good because it is central. They could put a fence around it and have a curfew. The neighbor has lived there for 20 years and has listened to dumptrucks all hours of the night. Selectman Jasper agreed, saying he didn't think that was such a concern, either. Mr. Sharon said as there are also the aerial electric lines. Dave said they've looked at that. Vice Chairman Jasper said they could put in some fast-growing deciduous trees to create a buffer with the neighbors, if it is planned right.

Selectman Stewart asked if Kevin was going to dismantle the green building and move it. Vice Chairman Jasper said no, he wanted to leave that one there. Dave said the parking would be over near the building. Selectman Charbonneau asked if they were going to keep those buildings. Mr. Sharon said just steel one. Vice Chairman Jasper and Selectman Charbonneau weren't crazy about that because it looks lousy. Vice Chairman Jasper would rather move that one up to the landfill. Selectmen Stewart and Charbonneau agreed. Selectman

Charbonneau said they won't be able to disturb that land. Vice Chairman Jasper said it could be loamed, paved or cemented over.

Jennifer said they've visited other skate board parks in the area. (Not discernable.) Dave said they've had meetings with 30-40 parents and kids, so there definitely is an interest and people do want a park. Kids are going across the bridge all the time. If they get that land, then they will go after a grant, so hopefully, it won't cost anything. They would put up a fence and have the ramps brought in. Selectman Charbonneau asked about Litchfield's. Dave said it was two old tennis courts together and they had wooden ramps built. Someone advised them not to let bikes go in there. All of the skate parks have rules posted right inside the gates, outlining that they must have safety equipment, etc. Selectman Stewart wanted to see it located at the Melendy Road site, and it would provide parking for the Fire Fighters' Memorial. Vice Chairman Jasper said that makes sense because it is visible and easily supervised—and close to the ambulance. Selectman Charbonneau thought it would have been cleaned up by now.

Vice Chairman Jasper asked for a consensus of the Board in terms of the steel building, even if they just take it down and store it for now. In the long run, it would be much better to get it out of there. Selectman Charbonneau said it was an eyesore and she would get on the piece of property as soon as possible and start covering up the mess. Mr. Sharon said if they want it out of there, then they should come back to the Board with some options. When Kevin considered dismantling it, it seemed more complicated than originally anticipated. Selectman Stewart didn't know why they would leave the building there if they are going to be turning this area into a skate board park. It's an eyesore. Mr. Sharon said they could sell it and let somebody else take it down. Selectman Charbonneau thought that was the best idea. If the Town dismantles it, it will end up costing more than what it is worth. Vice Chairman Jasper said that might have to be done in phases, in more than one budget year, because it is full of stuff. Mr. Sharon said maybe the kids could put a mural on the side of it. Selectman Stewart said she just wants it gone. The green space makes for a better area and they could put in picnic tables and benches for parents who come to watch their children. Selectman Charbonneau said if they are going to clean it up, clean it up.

Selectman Seabury said David Alukonis was not in favor of the ball fields that is going to be part of the new Middle School. There is quite a bit of property there and once the construction takes place and he sees how far away it is going to be from his property, there might be some negotiations. There is going to be a lot of area on the other side of the parking lot, for another ball field. At a Planning Board meeting people were saying the Town had funding and would be happy to give it to the School District. The primary concern was whether or not it would be shared, if the Town gave the money to them. She wondered if they'd be able to go on that property. Jennifer said a lot of their programs are solely on school property.

Selectman Seabury asked about the Ayers Pond area. Dave said they got away from that idea because the land is long and narrow and right in the middle of a neighborhood. Vice Chairman Jasper said things are tight in that area anyway. Selectman Seabury asked what happened to the field that was supposed to be put in by the builder at Robinson Pond. Jennifer said it wasn't built. Dave asked if the Selectmen had approved that to be built as a field. Vice Chairman Jasper said yes, they did. Dave said he spoke with the new president of Youth Baseball, who is concerned because he is running out of space. It's private, but they depend on Lion's Field and they use Nottingham and Jette. He's turning kids away. Dave told him Robinson Pond was offered to them years ago, but they'd have to put in the money to fix it up. It's not a huge field, but it would be fine for little guys. Mr. Sharon thought most of the hard work was done. Vice Chairman Jasper thought so, too. (Talking over each other.) Vice Chairman Jasper thought one of the things that stopped it was the Conservation Commission, who had concerns about parking and draining into the pond. (Talking over each other.) Dave said the field would be at the top and parking down below.

Selectman Seabury said she was absolutely in favor of the skate board park and the old highway garage is a good place for it. She thought it was important to get this built. Kids are enthused about skateboarding. Vice Chairman Jasper said a drawing or plan is something that should move along fairly rapidly. If Rhona has incentive funds that may be available, they can work on that. Some preliminary engineering will need to be done. The Rec Committee would then present it to the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board, who may bend the rules somewhat in terms of what they want. Selectman Stewart said not to forget what Dave Morin had to go through to get the memorial built. Vice Chairman Jasper said ultimately, the Board of Selectmen can say, "build it!" if they start getting too technical. Mr. Sharon said the skateboarders are a great resource. Among all of them are probably a father or brother that is a landscape architect. They probably ought to be able to get some gratis design work. They are the ones who know how the half pipes should be, etc. Dave said in the HLN, Litchfield was asking for someone to come up with a drawing of something they were planning and wondered if that was something they could do. Vice Chairman Jasper said sure, but before anything goes to the Planning Board, it needs to come back to the Selectmen because ultimately the Selectmen will be the applicant.

Selectman Seabury agreed that the building should be sold. Vice Chairman Jasper said as soon as the storms are over, Kevin should start lining things up to get that taken down and out as near to July 1st as possible. Selectman Charbonneau said the brick one looks terrible.

Dave asked if the first step would be to come back to the Board of Selectmen with a drawing and, if approved, they would then go to the Planning Board. Vice Chairman Jasper said yes. He didn't want to see the incentive funds lapse. Selectman Seabury said as far as the Benson's property is concerned, it's probably going to be more passive recreation than anything else. Jennifer said about a year ago, they had talked about Benson's being the ideal location for fields, but they can understand the reasons why it is not. Selectman Jasper said another location they talked about last year, and the School Board put it on their site plan for the new school, is between 102 and the

driveway. Dave thought there was some reason they couldn't use that. Discussion continued, using a map for visual clarification. Vice Chairman Jasper suggested Dave talk with Sean Sullivan to find out the square footage. He assumed there would be enough to leave a good buffer of trees to the street and put up a fence. There is a lot of land for potential ball fields. Selectman Charbonneau said they need to keep enough to be able to put in the connection to 3A. Vice Chairman Jasper said there was probably enough for that. The road can stay to one side.

Selectman Stewart asked if Dave talked to Gary Rodgers or Dave Morin about the land by Lions Field. They are anxious to do something with that and they have parking available. That is a good area for parents who have combo games because they already have two fields there. Dave said he's heard rumors about that land, too, such as a soccer field and filling in the pool, etc. Selectman Seabury said if something can go in there, she didn't see why it can't go in at Ayers Pond. Selectman Charbonneau said they have to think about combo fields. Vice Chairman Jasper said that's why Alvirne makes so much sense; there are already fields there now.

Selectman Seabury said all of this should give them a lot of food for thought. Vice Chairman Jasper said all of this takes a lot of long-term planning. Selectman Stewart said they have two projects that are doable within a year—ball fields and a skate board park. Mr. Sharon asked if the Rec Committee has interfaced with the Visioning group relative to the River Walk. Maybe they could use the trail for in-line skating, jogging, etc. Selectman Stewart said the River Walk was not going to be paved. Selectman Charbonneau agreed, saying it was going to be gravel.

Jennifer asked "what if" after looking at Ayers Pond and Alvirne, they are not viable solutions, if it would be possible to do a warrant article to establish a fund to purchase land. Vice Chairman Jasper said it's always possible. Jennifer said another concern they have is that on rainy days, there is not enough room in the Rec Center to accommodate all of the children. They've been looking at alternatives for that and one of the things that came up with was to use Lions Hall. Selectman Charbonneau thought that would be a problem. Vice Chairman Jasper preferred they try to work with the school to come up with a plan. If they say no, then the Town won't plow their driveways any more. Dave thought that would be a great solution. They could use the gymnasium, which is all they need. However, he thought that during the summer is when they refinish the floors every year. Vice Chairman Jasper said the floors aren't refinished every summer, they wax them. Selectman Charbonneau thought wet, dirty shoes might ruin the floors. Vice Chairman Jasper said they could at least be asked. Kids track in stuff all winter long. Selectman Stewart said they've got to do something because there are 400-500 kids with no place to go on a rainy day. Someone told her it might upset the 175 Seniors, but her rationale was that 480 kids have two parents. Selectman Charbonneau understood what Selectman Stewart was saying, but the Town took the Seniors' money. Selectman Stewart asked why they can't work together, as it is only six to eight weeks. Dave said it would only be on rainy days. (Talking over each other.) Vice Chairman Jasper said the problem is planning; if you can't plan, it's a nightmare. Library Street School would be the best solution because those floors take a beating. At UNH, when they rent out the gymnasium, they roll out canvases. If that's the issue, the Town can buy one and put it down. Selectman Stewart said they need to come up with a solution. They can't be lucky enough to plan that it will rain only on a Tuesday. Selectman Charbonneau said the Town isn't a babysitting operation. She is willing to do anything for kids, but the parents have a responsibility, too, who leave the kids off, sometimes with nothing to eat.

Selectman Stewart said they need to nail down the kids that come to the Rec Center that don't live in Town. She's seen 'little orange shirts' walking across the bridge, the same ones that go to Library Street School. Dave said when they register, they have to show residency. Vice Chairman Jasper said some of them may be walking to a babysitter's. Selectman Stewart said the easiest way to find out is to ask the kids, who know each other. Selectman Charbonneau said nothing is done about kids who go to school here but don't live in Town. Dave asked who he should approach when he goes to the schools. Vice Chairman Jasper said the best way is to start with the Superintendent.

Mike Regan asked about Robinson Pond. Vice Chairman Jasper said with no swim lessons there, it seems to be fine. Dave said several times last year, there were more than 100 swimmers there. They test for E-coli and the results are posted. Vice Chairman Jasper said the counts have been good since they stopped the swimming lessons, and the geese are gone. Selectman Charbonneau thinks there is sewage seeping into the pond. Vice Chairman Jasper didn't know what could be done out there, but there is a group (Friends of Hudson's Natural Resources) that is working on the Robinson Pond to see what they can do to bring life back. As far as recreation, they can continue with what they are doing. People aren't clamoring to do something out there. Selectman Charbonneau said the YMCA is coming in. Mr. Sharon hopes the Rec Department is on top of coordinating with the Y. (Talking back and forth.)

5. Other Business

- A.. Meeting scheduled for a Step 2 Grievance for April 9 @ 7:00 p.m. in the Planning/Zoning meeting room.
- B. Discussion of possible improvements to 102/Tracy Lane re New England Gymnastics Training Center, including matching funds and CAP fees. No decision was reached, but there was a consensus the Board would participate in the project.
- C. Discussion of the Lowell Road widening project.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Selectman Charbonneau, seconded by Selectman Stewart, at 8:45 p.m. carried unanimously.

Recorded and Transcribed by Priscilla Boisvert
Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Chairman E. Lorraine Madison

Rhona Charbonneau

Shawn N. Jasper

Ann Seabury

Terry Stewart