

**TOWN OF BEDFORD  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING – September 30, 2019**

Present were: Chairman Michelle Casale, Christine Donati, Shelia Quick, David Gilbert (TC Rep), Melissa Stevens (TC Alt), Steve Grocott (Alt) and Spencer Hawkes (Alt).

Absent: Diane Phelps

Chairman Casale opened the meeting at 7 PM and stated we have a short agenda this evening. This is a special meeting not our typical second Tuesday of the month. Let me introduce the committee. Thank you to Sue Fahey who Spencer replaced.

**NEW BUSINESS – Cyclocross Racing Proposal – (Jeff Kerr)**

Chairman Casale asked if Jeff was in the audience, as he is not we will hold on that agenda item for now and go on to agenda item #2.

**NEW BUSINESS – Bedford Little League Proposal – Swenson Field (Mike Ferrari)**

Chairman Casale asked if someone from Little League was here. Mike Ferrari came forward, okay so we will start with the Bedford Little League Proposal.

Mike Ferrari (BLL Field Manager) said I am here tonight at the request of the Little League president, Gary Gilbert. The main reason is that at the Swenson North Field we have a temporary pitcher mound and we would like to hire a landscaper to build a permanent pitching mound for safety reasons.

Chairman Casale said I saw a whole proposal in our packet with the layout and design of the field. Mike stated he had brought the landscaping quotes with him this evening.

Chairman Casale asked so you are trying to convert it from pure Little League field to Intermediate field, am I correct? Mike said yes we will make it a dual mound to help with two age groups young kids and the older kids. So we will convert a standard Little League field to a Little League Intermediate (50/70) baseball field. Chairman Casale asked which is North field. Mike stated it is the field with just a dirt infield. We have talked to Girls softball and Bedford high school and they are okay with this proposal.

Councilor Dave Gilbert said so those leagues don't use that field and they do not intend to use those fields. Mike stated that the Athletic Director, Corey Parker is on the Little League Board and he said that the high school would not be using it this field.

Chairman Casale said I don't know anything about baseball, but can you tell me the need for the changes in the configuration.

Mike said typically the 8 and 9 year olds play there and they can get hit in the face. The second thing is as the kid's get older it is 13 year olds go to a 50 foot mound. We would like to make it for both. Chairman Casale asked and the cost? Mike said the Little League will be paying for this and the estimate is \$4,000 and we will clean up the area and bringing in some dirt.

Steve Grocott said yes that field needs some work. The rubber pitcher's mound is more like fiberglass. It seems like you would be able to double the usage of the field allowing both groups in there. I have seen the work that Dutton Landscaping has done. Mike said for the past 3 years we have used Dutton landscaping.

Spencer Hawkes asked, when will this work take place in the spring? Mike said in the fall so it would be ready for spring. If we do the work in May we would lose part of the season.

Chairman Casale asked again and you got permission from the other leagues. Mike said I wish I bought the emails, but yes we did. Jeff Foote told me who to talk to and Jeff thought maybe the high school would need to use the field because they may lose Sportsman's if that field gets fixed this year. Corey is on the board so it was easy to get that answer.

Mike Therrien – Bedford Athletic Club was in the audience and said we do use that field till the end of October and that is my issue, but we do not use the infield. As long as there is a leave of respect for the families to sit at the side lines. Mike said we checked with soccer and we knew they used the just the outfield, but we were told it wasn't the infield.

Chairman Casale asked does anyone else have questions.

Spencer Hawkes asked how long it would take to do the work. Mike said not much more than a week somewhere in that timeframe.

Chairman Casale said seeing no other questions I will ask for a motion

**MOTION made by Steve Grocott for the Bedford Little League proposal approval as presented this evening. Christine Donati seconded. Vote taken all in favor. Motion passes.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS – Parks & Recreation Naming Policy (Jane O'Brien)**

Ms. O'Brien said we have not had one and we have been looking at one for a while so while we are here I decided to add this on. There were a couple of changes Michelle had in #2 Procedure: The Parks & Recreation Commission will consider any such request at a public meeting, and make a recommendation to the Bedford Town Council. Chairman Casale said basically changing may to will and we were missing the word to in one of the other sentences.

Chairman Casale said and also #5 I felt it wasn't needed at all because we were setting down the criteria. As we were already going to be naming something, it just didn't flow or fit. So we just deleted that those were my only comments.

Christine Donati asked so are we going to move #5 in its entirety. Chairman Casale said yes.

Steve Grocott asked is there a grandfather clause? As there are a number of field that are named right now. Chairman Casale said there are and most of them are named. Steve Grocott asked do they have to be unnamed or do they get to keep their names. Chairman Casale said they should keep their names. I am not sure if it is written in here that they should, but I understood that they would be keeping their names.

Steve Grocott said as I know some of them are not deceased who have fields named after them now. Ms. O'Brien said, but that was prior to us having the policy so they would remain as is. Chairman Casale said do you think we should put in a specific comment about anything currently named will remain so. Ms. O'Brien said okay. Chairman Casale said grandfathered in. I think that is a good point.

Christine Donati asked does that follow for the parks, playgrounds, picnic shelters and the smaller places within the parks that have to be deceased for that to be named, #7. So if you have a park and then a playground within the park you are saying anyone who is named after that playground has to be deceased? Chairman Casale asked what your thinking was. Christine Donati said I don't see that as important as the naming of the entire park if someone donates a playground within a park can they have the playground named after their business or their name for the subset. I am just throwing that out as a question that might play into part of the policy if it comes to us. Well I want to give \$10K so that the concession stand and this field will be named after my business or my son or whatever. What would be our answer?

Councilor Gilbert said we don't control concession stands. Chairman Casale said but that was just an example. Christine said the naming of it. Chairman Casale said like a trail portion of Legacy. Christine said I used that as an example as it says picnic, shelters, playgrounds, so I am saying a subset within a named park. Councilor Gilbert commented I guess that could happen. I don't know of any that are named right now. Chairman Casale asked unnamed. Councilor Gilbert said that are named.

Chairman Casale said so we have the Earl Legacy Park, but the trails are not named. The warming hut is not named. Christine said I can see that becoming part in the future were we have little things that can be named right now I can see where that may come to us in the future. I am only saying this because we are presenting a proposal now to create this as our policy going forward it behooves us to be clear on that. Chairman Casale said I agree that is a good point.

Steve Grocott said how about appropriateness. Yes, and I am thinking about the place in Keene that serves Spa and they named it? It was a café or a restaurant? Steve said they

named it Phi and then the name of the town. So it was a curse word. Chairman Casale said okay so it was inappropriate. Christine said that there should be some approval for the name. Well that goes with the appropriateness of the name. It has to go to the Town Council before it is even considered. Chairman Casale said it comes to us first and we do the recommendation.

Chairman Casale said #2 consider any request that is made and certainly the appropriateness of the name would come under us discussing it. If you feel we should specify we will consider and we can put that in. Therefore the process shall be careful and deliberate and involve evaluation and appropriateness. It doesn't have to be finalized tonight right Jane, you can bring this back again. Christine Donati said it does say that whether it is appropriate or not, so your question falls under that. Chairman Casale asked which number? Christine Donati said under #2 the appropriateness. Chairman Casale said it can certainly fit in there. We can consider a place to put appropriateness of name.

Chairman Casale said yes, under #3 Guidelines for Selection of Names. Steve Grocott said family friendly. Chairman Casale said we will add an appropriate bullet somewhere under #3. We can work on that.

Chairman Casale said so the subset portion we didn't resolve. You are saying if they were alive. Christine Donati said it doesn't say on that last line it doesn't say if a playground or picnic shelter or something within an existing named park. Are we setting forth a rule that they have to be deceased or can they be alive for the subset. Chairman Casale said under #7. Christine Donati said yes, can I name the playground after my child if I give you \$20K and we put a playground in. Steve Grocott said the way it is written now they cannot. Councilor Gilbert said it says subject to the criteria in section #4 of the policy which says no park will be named to memorialize a living person. Chairman Casale said yes, #4 A. Councilor Gilbert said if you read #7 you have to read to the end of it and it refers back to #4 which is fairly specific. So I think the answer is no. Chairman Casale said yes the answer is no. Christine Donati said okay that works.

Councilor Stevens said if you go to #4 C though is kind of confusing because if you go to #4 C-3 it would then read that a living person may be honored in extraordinary cases by the naming of a field or recreation facility. So that contradicts. Christine Donati said, but it says with installation of a field or marker, not naming the field itself. Chairman Casale said it is a small subset a plaque or marker at the field, or recreation facility or in extraordinary cases the naming of the recreation field.

Ms. O'Brien commented like the Bedford Village Common we have the Anagnost pond. Chairman Casale asked is it labeled as such. Ms. O'Brien said yes there is a sign. Steve Grocott said I always thought it was the no skating pond. Chairman Casale said that is the bigger sign.

Chairman Casale said I see your point Councilor Stevens it does contradict it. Steve Grocott said that would come under organizations right. Chairman Casale said because like the Market Basket Gazebo isn't that. Ms. O'Brien said that naming right is over that

was 10 years. It is now just the Bedford Village Common Gazebo. Steve Grocott said it may be named to honor an organization and/or a deceased person.

Chairman Casale said what do we want or not want. Do we not want an organization named? I think we need to go over this with a fine tooth comb as it is a little confusing in parts.

Councilor Dave Gilbert said organization is a broad brush do we want to say non-profit organization or what else would we want to name a field for? Steve Grocott said it can be under the organization? Chairman Casale said do we need a blanket statement that says at the discretion of the Parks & Recreation Commission because we can say no to anything. Steve Grocott said it seems like the best way to make it work. Chairman Casale asked do we have it in there. Because there is a lot of questions and what ifs.

Chairman Casale said no it goes to Town Council for final approve. I can work with Jane off line.

Councilor Stevens said I have a question about making a living person different than a deceased person is that because we are looking to insure that who the person who the park is being named for has a clear record and if they are deceased then they can no longer do any wrong. Is that the thinking behind that, because if that is the case then I think we run into trouble with, what if we find out XYZ Corporation is really selling drugs to high school students.

Ms. O'Brien said look at #5 Parks and facilities named after individuals should not be changed unless it is found that the individual's personal character is or was such that the continued use of their name for a park or facility would not be in the best interest of the community.

Councilor Stevens said okay so then is there a reason why we have to say they are deceased. I am just wondering only because like you said we have the pond. Ms. O'Brien said that was named before we had a policy. That was named by the Bedford Village Common Committee and so was the Market Basket Gazebo. That was all named by the Committee then and had nothing to do with Parks & Recreation Commission. Steve Grocott said and the softball field by the Town pool also, the Selvoski Field.

Ms. O'Brien said we can re look at it. Chairman Casale said they are all good points. It is a good place to start. You thought this was going to be easy Jane, but for all good reasons.

### **NEW BUSINESS – Cyclocross Racing Proposal (Jeff Kerr)**

Chairman Casale said it appears that no one has come for Cyclocross so we will move on to Old Business. Ms. O'Brien said you can discuss Jeff's proposal because he did put it in writing to us. Chairman Casale said should we discuss it here and take a vote on it in his absence. Ms. O'Brien said it is up to you. Chairman Casale said we can discuss it. So there was information in your packet about the Cyclocross.

Chairman Casale said yes there was information in the packet and Dave did you speak to him or just Jane. Councilor Gilbert said just Jane.

Chairman Casale said it sounds like they wanted to do extreme bike riding on the Legacy Trails going on the Legacy field and Chubbuck Road Field and then crossing into Riddle Brook School playground area. I expressed concern regarding this to both Town Manager, Rick Sawyer and Jane about damage to the field and we certainly couldn't give permission for anything school related. I communicated to Jane that I felt that the Legacy trails are open to anybody who wants to ride on them. So we cannot say no to riding and he talked about forming a group and hosting competitions etc. I envisioned ruts and damage to the fields, so I was hesitant to accept that. He was also looking for time during the fall when that field isn't available, as it is booked by both soccer and football teams and there was no wiggle time to use the field. Apparently he wanted to come before the commission. Do any commission members have questions or comments? I don't have the answers, but we can talk about it.

Councilor Dave Gilbert said I will make a comment that I think it is a non-starter because he is trying to use school area and that is something we have no control over. The other part of it is that he going through parking lots that we have no idea when that would be and they are used for soccer and other sports activities by those leagues.

Steve Grocott said that would shut down everything up in that area while they are doing it. Councilor Gilbert said yes, and I don't know how you do that. Spencer Hawkes said it is definitely a safety issue.

Steve Grocott said that would shut down everything up in that area as you would have kids walking from the parking lot to the fields. Would he have to get insurance? Chairman Casale said yes as per our Field Use Policy like all the other leagues.

Councilor Dave Gilbert said I don't think it is a good idea with all these problems related to it.

Steve Grocott commented that maybe a better place for it like Muller Park off North Amherst there is a little hiking trail in there. Councilor Dave Gilbert said that is conservation land so I don't know if they would allowed for this purpose.

Steve Grocott said across the street there is the Van Loan Preserve. Councilor Dave Gilbert said I am not sure it could work at this site. Chairman Casale said I agree as well.

Christine Donati said I was concerned when I read about the damage that these bikes with spike shoes etc. and spike wheels really tear up a field. It is not so much just the practice, which is not as bad, but then he talked about wanting to do competitions and at that point how do you now say you can only limit it to 20 riders because of damaging the fields to much. Once you let someone start doing competitions you open up that bag and it is hard

to close it up after you have done that. I just know the damage that these guys can do to fields. It is a fun sport and it is becoming really popular, but it can be really damaging. That is my two cents.

Chairman Casale asked any other comments.

Chairman Casale asked is there any Old Business, I don't have any. We will look for approval of the June minutes, so anyone who was present can make a motion.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 11, 2019**

**MOTION made by Dave Gilbert to approve the Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2019 as presented this evening. Seconded by Steve Grocott. Vote taken - all in favor. Motion passes minutes approved.**

Chairman Casale stated that wraps up our agenda for the evening and our next meeting is planned for Tuesday, December 10, 2019.

Meeting Adjourn 7:35 PM

Submitted by Jane O'Brien