

**Town of Auburn
Board of Selectmen
Workshop Meeting
September 13, 2018**

Selectmen Present: James Headd, Richard Eaton and Keith Leclair

Also Present: Parks & Recreation Commission Members David Nye, Margie McEvoy, Lisa Canavan, Zach Eaton, Pat Kelly and Dave Oliveira; Parks & Recreation Coordinator Amy Lachance, Maintenance Director Mike Dobmeier and Town Administrator William Herman.

Mr. Headd called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Commission – Operations and Structure

Mr. Headd opened the meeting noting the Board set a goal for 2018 to determine what the expectations for Parks & Recreation is within the community, and then to examine the structure and operations to determine how best to achieve the results and direction that would best suit the community. He indicated the Board was looking for input from the Parks & Recreation Commission as to what their expectations and priorities were.

Parks & Recreation Commission Chair David Nye indicated the highest priority for the Parks & Recreation is the establishment of a maintenance and storage facility to support the current operations. He indicated they lost approximately 2,000 square feet of space when the former Fire Station was sold and since then, equipment, supplies, and materials have been stored as various personal properties including Ms. McEvoy's, Mr. Dobmeier and Mr. Nye's, in addition to a storage unit at the Castle Rock Self Storage facility.

Mike Dobmeier indicated he didn't see a problem with how things have been run to date with a volunteer commission supported by part-time staff that has been in place. He felt the Town has been growing which has placed a greater demand on Parks & Recreation than in the past. He indicated he doesn't know about the administrative end of things, and also noted he is asked to do things for the Police Department, Fire Department, Town Hall and Library including snow shoveling, replacement of light bulbs, batteries in emergency lights; lowering of flags, etc. He further noted he utilizes his personal truck and, up until this year, trailer to perform this work which, despite being paid mileage, ends up being costly to him. He felt there have been some problems, but felt Parks & Recreation gets things done as needed.

Zach Eaton suggested in listening to Mr. Dobmeier, he wondered if potentially Parks & Recreation is doing things that are not really Parks & Recreation. He was not sure where the Commission should be going with all of this.

Keith Leclair indicated he felt the biggest concern was there was no definition of what are the duties and responsibilities for Parks & Recreation. What is the mission? He said that was part of the concern expressed by the Budget Committee last year. He felt there needs to be a set of defined responsibilities in order to know whether we are adequately budgeting and operating to achieve those responsibilities.

Zach Eaton was in agreement indicating we all need to know what is in the box before we begin looking outside the box for additional efforts or projects. He also felt we need to separate the general Town building and maintenance items from the Parks & Recreation function in order to have a clear understanding. He felt it is likely folks assumed things over time that are not really their responsibilities, and moving forward it is important for the Commission and the Board of Selectmen to know the actual duties and responsibilities in order to adequately communicate them for others to understand the totality of the work being done.

Mr. Leclair agreed, stressing some form of management has to be put in place to ensure what is supposed to happen, happens. He felt that started with defining what the duties and responsibilities are, and then establishing the structure to ensure they are met.

Mr. Dobmeier asked if anyone had checked with neighboring towns about how they operate their parks & recreation facilities and programs. Richard Eaton and Mr. Leclair both indicated they are all operated slightly different to meet those communities' individual needs or interests. Mr. Leclair felt the end result here should be structuring parks & recreation that meets Auburn's needs. He felt the needs have to be accomplished in as responsibly a manner as possible whether that meant contracting out for services, handling them with employees or a mix of the two.

Mr. Nye indicated he felt there would be no problem with having the Parks & Recreation Coordinator be the point person to coordinate and assign the work flow based on the Commission's direction and the budget constraints. Mr. Leclair added we need to track all of the work efforts and to track the costs to ensure of the value returned.

Mr. Headd, Mr. Eaton and Mr. Leclair were all in agreement that we need to define and clearly spell out what the mission and responsibilities of Parks & Recreation, and then tasking the Parks & Recreation Coordinator to actually assign the respective work duties to individuals to ensure responsibilities and expectations are met and the budget was adhered to. Mr. Leclair stressed that determining the mission and responsibilities should ultimately lead to a chain of command and structure.

Richard Eaton indicated he would like to have 90% of the work done internally by local employees as opposed to contracting out for services.

Mr. Leclair noted there has been some concern expressed for having a contractor who performs work for Parks & Recreation and a part-time employee for Parks & Recreation serve as members of the Parks & Recreation Commission. Whether fair or not, he

indicated there is a perception these individuals would be able to schedule what projects and work affects them. Mr. Nye stated he was willing not to do any contracting work for Parks & Recreation and only serve as a member of the Commission to relieve that concern. He also noted he had been charged by the Board of Selectmen several years ago to assign work to Mike Dobmeier on a weekly basis, which he indicated he currently does. However, there was a general consensus this review and process could lead to expanding the Parks & Recreation Coordinator's role to take in the scheduling of work, managing of schedules, perhaps establish a work order system to track assignments, greater adherence to projects and programs budgeted, etc.

Pat Kelly wondered if the total Town operations were to a point it was large enough to support a property maintenance position and system. Mr. Leclair noted it had been discussed a little and a partnership with the School District has been looked at, but it did not appear Auburn was quite to that level of need yet.

Mr. Nye and Mr. Dobmeier both indicated interest in having Parks & Recreation take over the mowing of Town properties as opposed to contracting out the service. Mr. Dobmeier indicated he and Margie McEvoy each currently work 20 hours per week and they could easily mow the properties within a normal 35 – 40 hour work week. He felt the Town could do the work for less than the current \$27,000 annual contract. Mr. Leclair noted the current contract also includes the Auburn Village School property, paid separately by the School District. He also asked about the potential of including the cemetery properties in the mix, and Richard Eaton indicated we shouldn't be including the cemeteries in this effort. Mr. Leclair and Zach Eaton both noted if not all properties are included, then the Town will still need to contract for some of the mowing work, while having the expense of employees and equipment for other properties. Richard Eaton said people should remember the Town would be employing people from Auburn for this work and he felt Parks & Recreation should only focus on Parks & Recreation property, and no other properties or cemeteries.

Mr. Leclair asked Ms. Lachance if the Town moved in this direction if she was interested in being the point person to coordinate the process and people, and she indicated she would be. He felt strongly the Town needed to be able to track the work performed in order to ultimately know the overall need and cost of maintenance moving forward. He felt at the end of the day, the Board of Selectmen need to balance the needs and costs to the taxpayers. And they had to plug any gaps and be able to understand and defend what is needed to the taxpayers.

Richard Eaton noted the Town needs to address the storage / maintenance building space needs for Parks & Recreation, but they would have to wait to see what the current building committee comes up with in their efforts before knowing what is needed for Parks & Recreation.

Mr. Nye asked if an appropriation for the Auburn Historical Association is in the Town budget. He was advised it was. Richard Eaton indicated the Board is going to have to look at that and potentially not fund it moving forward.

Mr. Oliveira sought to recap action items as a result of today's discussions. The Board of Selectmen agreed the actions items are to:

- Define the mission and responsibilities of Parks & Recreation
- Implement a Structure and Chain of Command to manage within the mission and responsibilities, and
- Perform an analysis of the cost of mowing properties with a contractor versus town employees.

Mr. Leclair noted the potential of employees serving on the Parks & Recreation Commission should be thought about and discussed further.

The Board was asked whether the Parks & Recreation Commission was able to accept donations and run them through the Parks & Recreation Revolving Fund. Mr. Herman indicated that was not appropriate. The revolving fund is supposed to be for fees for service to go through and provide for self-supporting programming. However, the Board of Selectmen are empowered to accept unanticipated revenues and expend them for the purpose for which they were given, so there is a way to accept donations that can be utilized.

Mrs. Canavan left the meeting at 5:05 PM.

Richard Eaton indicated he felt two things absolutely had to be addressed: a storage and maintenance facility and the provision of transportation for Parks and Recreation. He indicated he is going to be pushing for these items and had he known the proposed storage building was not going to be submitted to the voters in 2017, he never would have voted to sell the former Fire Station on Raymond Road.

Ms. McEvoy and Mr. Dobmeier were asked to develop a list of tasks and work they perform to Ms. Lachance by September 20th. This would enable the information to be compiled and provided to the Board of Selectmen for review before meeting again.

Next Meeting

The next workshop meeting will be held on Thursday, September 26th at 4 PM at the Town Hall.

Adjourn

Mr. Eaton moved to adjourn; Mr. Leclair seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM.