

Kent Park and Recreation
Minutes Jan. 25, 2021 Meeting

Present: Blythe Everett, John Grant, Lynn Harrington, Diane Impastato, Julia Neff, Michael Perkins, Abigail Smith Hanby, Kate Symonds, director Lesly Ferris

Public & Invited Guests: None

Lynn Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Alternates: Mrs. Everett made a motion to elevate alternates Diane Impastato and Julia Neff. Mr. Grant seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Election of Chairman: Mrs. Ferris called for nominations for commission chairman. Mr. Grant made a motion to nominate Lynn Harrington as commission chairman for 2021. Mrs. Everett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Acceptance of Agenda: Ms. Ferris asked to add item 10b. Playing Field Subcommittee vacancy. Mr. Perkins made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Grant seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Acceptance of Minutes of Dec. 21, 2020 monthly meeting: Mr. Grant made a motion to approve the minutes of the Dec. 21, 2020 meeting. Mrs. Everett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence: None.

Public and Invited Guests: There were no public or invited guests present.

Director's Report: In addition to the written report sent to the commission prior to the meeting (attached), Ms. Ferris shared that Ms. Neff has asked if Park and Recreation would consider offering ski lesson packages at Mohawk Mountain next winter. Ms. Ferris said she has made a note on her calendar to put this topic on the August meeting agenda.

Old Business: After-School Program: age eligibility: Ms. Ferris shared the monthly attendance report and a report on revenue and expenditures through Dec. 31, 2020 (attached). Currently the program expenditures exceed the revenue by about \$2,800. Ms. Ferris added there have been other years where this happened. The most recent maximum gap was some \$7,000. Ms. Ferris also shared with the commission that she would be responsible for making the decision to close the program in the event of inclement weather following a full day of school. Ms. Ferris reported a parent of a child currently enrolled in the program verbally asked if the ASP would be available to a pre-K student. Commissioners discussed whether or not to open the After-School Program to pre-K and/or all KCS students. Some considerations would be staffing needs, activities, gauging interest, potential for additional revenue. Ms. Ferris will gather specific information about the Pre-K program and put this item on the February meeting agenda.

Parks: projects, seasonal worker: Mr. Grant reported the town highway department has lined the causeway into Kent Common Park in preparation for replacement of the culvert. Ms. Ferris said

she spoke with Connie Manes, Kent Land Trust, about sharing a seasonal worker. Ms. Ferris is working on the application to remove the beaver lodge. The application process is detailed.

Parks' Master Plan: Ms. Ferris said that she spoke with the town treasurer about establishing a "Friends" group account whereby the commission could accept funds for specific projects. Park and Rec could establish an activity account for this purpose as long as a specific project(s) is designated. Contributions would be tax-exempt and donor cards should be sent out as soon as funds are received. Ms. Ferris will ask the treasurer for specific language that should be used in a motion to create such an account. Mr. Grant will share information about STEAP grant.

Five-Year Capital Plan: Ms. Ferris said she has asked the treasurer to confirm if Park and Recreation has funds in the capital plan for the Emery Park pool floor and if these funds are specific in use. Ms. Ferris shared also the questions and responses from the 2006 survey about swimming in Kent. Ms. Smith Hanby suggested it would be good to resubmit the survey with more specific questions, including a demographic question. Mr. Grant reiterated that he feels the commission should look at a timber harvest at Emery Park which could make additional trail(s) that would be easier to climb. Mrs. Everett said Marvelwood School probably could help make signage for the park. Ms. Ferris suggested the commissioners continue to think about projects that could be put in the plan next budget season.

Sports Programs: Ms. Ferris said the regional rec directors plan to meet in mid-February to discuss what baseball season might look like. Ms. Ferris confirmed that typically Park and Recreation uses the KCS gym for basketball programs, but the school building isn't open for such use this year due to COVID.

2020-21 Budget Monthly Report: Mrs. Ferris said Park and Recreation did not receive a monthly budget report.

2021-22 Budget Proposal: Ms. Ferris provided the commission with a budget draft prior to the meeting (attached). She also explained in writing the two components of the budget (revenue and operating). The commission consensus is that there are a lot of unknowns about the coming year. Mrs. Harrington recommended keeping the budget flat except for wages. There was discussion about compensation for the director. Ms. Smith Hanby said from her perspective any increase in compensation is always a range and based on performance. Mrs. Harrington said in her experience on the commission it is an average that's given across the board except on special occasions. Ms. Ferris said the Town does not give performance-based increases. The commission discussed adding funding for a seasonal maintenance worker. The commission voiced consensus that volunteers used to do a lot more projects in the parks. Mr. Grant noted he solicited help from the private schools in 2016 which isn't available now. Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the 2021-22 budget numbers of the 2020-21 budget with an increase to the hourly employee line to include \$7,000 for a seasonal maintenance worker at \$19/hour and a 3% increase for the director salary. Mrs. Everett, Mr. Grant, Mrs. Harrington, Ms. Impastato, Ms. Neff, Mr. Perkins, Ms. Symonds voted yes; Ms. Smith Hanby voted no. The motion carried 7-1.

Easter Egg Hunt: Ms. Ferris noted last year's egg hunt was a drive-thru where families could pick-up bagged egg hunt goodies. She asked the commission how they envision this year's event.

Ms. Impastato suggested painting rocks to look like Easter Eggs and leave them around town and use as a scavenger hunt. Mrs. Harrington said the event could be two different things and could help the businesses in Town. Mrs. Everett said Park and Rec could have an event to paint the rocks, then hide them around Town businesses and have a scavenger hunt for people to find them. The commission consensus is to form a subcommittee. Ms. Smith Hanby said she would not be available to help as her baby is due the week after Easter. The commission expressed its congratulations. Mr. Grant made a motion to create a subcommittee comprised of Ms. Ferris, Mrs. Harrington, Ms. Impastato, Ms. Neff and Ms. Symonds to formulate and execute an Easter activity and bring back a report to the board next month. Ms. Symonds seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Ms. Ferris will send out an email to the subcommittee to schedule a meeting the first week in February.

2021 Concert Series: Ms. Ferris has emailed last year's bands who were excited to hear from Park and Recreation and would be interested in returning this year. The director said she also has spoken with Ms. Manes about working with the Kent Land Trust again this year on the concert series. Ms. Smith Hanby asked if the director could send the commission a list of questions that need to be considered before the next meeting.

New Business: Plan of Conservation and Development: Ms. Ferris shared with the commission prior to the meeting the email from the Land Use Officer about the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Ms. Ferris said she would email the commission the pages in the plan that relate specifically to Park and Recreation.

Playing Field Subcommittee Vacancy: Ms. Ferris reiterated that she emailed KCS families about the opening on the subcommittee. She hasn't had any replies from that email. She did receive an email from Miranda Lovato who expressed interest in serving on the subcommittee (attached). Mr. Grant made a motion to accept Ms. Lovato's application to serve on the playing field subcommittee. Ms. Symonds seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The next Kent Park and Recreation Commission meeting is Feb. 22, 2021 at 7 p.m. Mrs. Harrington made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Lesly Ferris
Director

Minutes are not considered final until approved. Refer to the minutes from ensuing meeting for any changes and/or corrections.