

Parks & Recreation Policy Review Subcommittee	Meeting Minutes
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Date: January 10, 2022

Place: Zoom Webinar

Subcommittee Members Attending: Alex Cassie, Gerry Kelly, Jon Lewitus, Theresa Mooney, Nancy O'Connor, Tyler Radicioni, Wendy Sheridan-Ames, Alexandra Vecchio

Members Absent: Leigh Jackson

TOPIC	KEY POINTS/DISCUSSION
Chairperson's Welcome/Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting commenced @ 11:30 AM • A. Vecchio welcomed all. • Approval of 11/15/2021 minutes with edits W. Sheridan Ames moved to approve, N. O'Connor 2nd. Roll call: T. Mooney, W. Sheridan-Ames, N. O'Connor Approved • Approval of 11/29/2021 minutes with edits N. O'Connor moved to approve, W. Sheridan-Ames 2nd. Roll call: T. Mooney, W. Sheridan-Ames, N. O'Connor Approved
Town Owned Athletic Field and Court Use Allocation Policy Subcommittee Discussion and Vote on Minor General Policy Language Changes & Permit Fee Increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W. Sheridan-Ames: Requested we date and add a "draft" watermark on the future versions of the policy. • A. Cassie: Town Owned Athletic Field and Court Use Allocation Policy presentation – Policy Updates: Priority I: The biggest change was moving our vendor organizations (Viking Sports and others) into this category. Priority II: We introduce a new fee structure - a staged approach of fee increases to reach our cost recovery goals. We are also shifting to a per-game model from per-player model for youth baseball. Also, adding a Use of Lights fee • N. O'Connor: Addressed Holden Hodges (Youth Baseball President) to see if he has heard about these changes. • A. Vecchio: All user groups have been informed. • G. Kelly: Users were invited to come to today's subcommittee meeting though the draft has not been sent out yet. • N. O'Connor: We are trying to get to a "sameness" of charges and reiterated these changes are good for the town. • A. Cassie: Priority III: Non-resident groups - we have an uptick in fees and keeping youth baseball in the same model as Priority II. Priority IV: Is our new priority around special events - other than athletic events. Rates are a bit higher as these are considered premium use of the fields. Synthetic fields would be for athletic events only. It would be at the discretion of staff as to which application is relevant.

If we are to implement these projected fees, the projected revenue for fiscal year 2023 is about \$80,000 to be allocated 60% to Parks & Open Space; 40% to Recreation.

- G. Kelly: The projected revenue is based on prior user group field use.
- W. Sheridan-Ames: Asked what the existing total revenue is (prior to the projected \$80K) and how is that split?
- G. Kelly: The existing revenue is approximately \$225,000 - field permits, Larz Anderson, etc.
- A. Vecchio: Our current projected revenue includes all permit fee revenue as opposed to just athletic fields. The current split does not have a historical breakdown. Total revenue could not be fairly split between Parks and Recreation due to the immense amount of Park Division inputs. We are now moving towards a more balanced approach at the 60/40 split. We will revisit the allocation every 3-5 years.
- W. Sheridan-Ames: How do we come up with a policy that deals only with the projected additional fees. Recommends we look at this comprehensively, so it comes into alignment for the future – not two different policies. We look to raise revenue and field fees for a reason. Need to understand what the fee increase will be used for – what and why - rather be dropped in a pool of funds.
- N. O’Connor: Agrees with W. Sheridan-Ames. In terms of the 60/40 split on the new rates, has there been any thought dealing with fees which have already been collected? As an example, barbeque grills at Larz, those fees go to Recreation. But now it falls under Parks so revenue should go there? It would be nice to have a smooth, clean policy. We need to have a solid foundation.
- A. Cassie: Projected Revenue Allocation slide – where monies would go. **Parks & Open Space** – increase landscape services towards athletic fields, increase associated agricultural supply costs.
- G. Kelly: **Recreation** – offset administrative costs, support re-establishing 2 full-time admin positions, supplement revolving fund to assist CIP/deferred maintenance/financial aid. We lost over \$900,000 in retained earnings due to the pandemic and we need to build up those funds. We are also looking get Elliot done and to put \$150,000 into the Soule courtyard which has been on the agenda for a while.
- A. Vecchio: From the Parks perspective – we have been wise and strategic in our use of funds to get the supplies and maintenance that we need. Additional funds would cover increasing needs and rising costs. Other items include bringing in contractual services for drainage and field improvements as well as items on backlog list.
- W. Sheridan-Ames: Disagrees that Soule courtyard is used an example as Soule Recreation Center has their own operating

budget. I don't see it related to our field user phase and why we are increasing fees. Hope these fees go towards things that are more closely related to the user groups.

- G. Kelly: – While we have this on the docket, it is the town's intention just to try and build up the retained earnings. It is tough to make up \$900,000 when budgets must break even. We have applied for grants and pocket money funds so we may have to restructure allocations if these funds come in. Also,
- N. O'Connor: Good that other cost centers will be contributing but will Recreation be raising fees to meet cost recovery goals better? To get funds into the revolving fund.
- G. Kelly: Yes, we are still waiting to hear back from Melissa Goff about some items we are trying to get into the general fund. Then we'll see what fees we will have to increase.
- N. O'Connor: It is the Parks and Recreation Commission's decision as to how we will help, but we need to determine how much to charge to get the revolving account back where we want it.
- G. Kelly: It may be February or March when we come to the full commission with the fee increases.
- T. Mooney: It seems the \$80,000 is just a portion and will not pay for all the bullet points.
- N. O'Connor: What are all the fees coming in and what is the split? What is the overall number beyond this \$80,000?
- W. Sheridan-Ames: If you do the math $\$225K + 80K = \$305K$ with 40/60 split, we may cover these bullet points – unless you are just looking at the \$80K. Regarding the 53% and 75% portions (referring to the Projected Revenue Allocation slide), where did those numbers come from?
- A. Cassie: I looked at how much of those 2 budget lines - landscaping services and agricultural materials – were allocated to multi-use and ball fields. This provided a number of how much we currently spend, and we came to a 60/40 split (\$48,000/\$32,000).
- A. Vecchio: What I am hearing is what about the existing funds – what is the breakdown between Parks & Rec? I need to work with L. Jackson about what the allocation should be. It will not be brought before this group at this time.
- G. Kelly: Roughly it has been 40% Parks/60% Recreation.
- A. Vecchio: We do have a unique situation where Parks and Open Space (part of DPW) funds come from the general fund. Recreation Dept. funds come from this revolving fund. L. Jackson and I want to make sure the end result is the best possible result for the community. Going forward we want it to be clear what that division will be and how the funds are used.

- N. O'Connor: Fees were created in the best spirit possible. We are headed in the right direction. This process has helped us to clarify why we are doing it and where we hope to go.
- T. Mooney: It would be helpful to see a slide what the \$80,000 is being added to – the \$225,0000.
- N. O'Connor: And what the \$225,000 represents.
- A. Vecchio: Thanked everyone for all the work done on this initiative. If the subcommittee comfortable we can vote on this policy now. This agenda item has been removed from the Parks and Recreation Commission January agenda. Hopefully it will be included on February agenda. Asked for additional questions
- T. Mooney: Have you received any negative comments from folks who pay the fees?
- G. Kelly: There was no response to my outreach emails. During the phone calls to users, I notified them of today's meeting and told them the actual vote may happen at the February Commissioners' Meeting.
- N. O'Connor: Brookline Youth Baseball fees will change more than others. We need to have a conversation with them. In the past, if they were not going to use fields, they were supposed give them back to us. As they were charged per-head, that did not change the field use. We need to get our arms around this.
- G. Kelly: I will reach out to them. Even if it is a one-off, to let us know.
- Jon: As we are getting our full-time staff back on board, they will be monitoring the attendance of the athletic fields - checking who should be there and are they there at the correct hours.
- W. Sheridan-Ames: For years this has been an issue and I realize staff has not been there to monitor. There should be access for the user groups to track what fields are booked, by who and when. When there is a conflict is hard to resolve. Thankful for Jon's statement.
- N. O'Connor: If we can have another meeting before the February Commissioners meeting as I would like to hear from the user groups, that the baseball groups understand the switch from a per capita to field basis system and be on board.
- W. Sheridan-Ames: I feel OK to vote. Users can come to our Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. We have many other commissioners have not yet seen this and may have questions so vote may not occur in February.
- T. Mooney: It seems we have notified baseball already. Feel we can vote and not meet again.
- G. Kelly: L. Jackson reached out to Holden Hodges (BYB) to discuss the fees, but that conversation did not happen.
- N. O'Connor: We have a fee attached and policy, so we can vote. Then we can meet with BYB and discuss it with them. We

are all partners and are all trying to service the kids and families. We can make a motion to accept and meet with BYB prior to the February Commission meeting. I feel confident we can explain the policy and fees in February to the Commission and all will be fine.

- A. Cassie: Happy to write a supplement for BYB meeting as to how we landed on the fee structure.
- W. Sheridan-Ames: Why are we just reaching out to baseball? Why not soccer?
- N. O'Connor: We can meet with anyone. Folks have known the fees are going up.
- A. Vecchio: Maybe it can just a memo from A. Vecchio and L. Jackson stating it will be discussed and with a potential vote on at the February meeting.
- G. Kelly: Men's softball may be a conversation as they will be going from a resident rate to non-resident rate plus a light fee. I gave Bruce an update and he is OK but when he speaks to the coaches, he may come back for a conversation.
- N. O'Connor: Baseball has been under a MOU for 12 years and will now be following the formula.
- A. Vecchio: It seems like subcommittee is comfortable to move forward with a vote understanding there will be an official memo from Parks & Recreation to let user groups know this and it be on agenda for the February Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. We will provide our contact info should they have any questions.
- G. Kelly: After we vote, can I send out the draft to user groups and add that this is what the subcommittee recommends?
- A. Vecchio: Yes, but it still needs to be reviewed and voted on by the Parks & Rec Commission. So, it is not yet effective.
- W. Sheridan-Ames: Please copy commissioners so they are aware prior to February meeting.
- A. Vecchio: Yes, and we will include the slide deck.
- N. O'Connor: Moved that this subcommittee accept the policy of 12/22/21 version of the Field and Use Allocation policy and fee structure as presented by A. Cassie on 1/10/22.
- T. Mooney 2nd; Roll call: T. Mooney, N. O'Connor.
- A. Cassie: Next steps are to add the information on the prior numbers. We will then work on drafting a memo to current Priority II & III field users and create PDF of the policy and presentation to be given at February meeting.
- A. Vecchio: The memo to the user groups should come from L. Jackson or G. Kelly but be signed by both Parks Director and Recreation Director
- N. O'Connor: Can G. Kelly reach out to BYB to let them know about the fee change, they may have to give up their fields and tighten up their field allocations, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G. Kelly: Agreed to do so. • Jon: Will there be an effective date – September 2022? • A. Vecchio: This needs to be incorporated in what is presented at the Parks & Rec Commission. • W. Sheridan-Ames: Referred to November 29th minutes a proposed date of July 1st – beginning of fiscal year. • N. O’Connor: Spring baseball registration is open, so it is hard to impose a fee increase after people have signed up. Looking at July start. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. O’Connor moved to adjourn the meeting. W. Sheridan-Ames seconded. 	
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting adjourned @ 12:47 PM 	

Next Meeting: February 28, 2022

Location: Zoom Webinar

A true record

Attest: Laurie Ferrell

Date: January 10, 2022