

Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
Thursday, February 8, 2024 (8:00pm)
James Harmon Community Center

In Attendance:

Joanne Baecher-DiSalvo, Gene Calamari, Aaron Drahushuk, Mike Jacobs, Angela Reeve. Absent are Josh Dean, Amy Listerman. A quorum is in order.

Also in Attendance: Aaron Podhurst (Superintendent).

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order

2. Public Comment

3. Old Business

- Approve January meeting minutes - approved

-Zinsser Gardens - update

6 more garden plots have been assigned. Brooks Ballard (gardener) has been working with Nicole Higgins to coordinate. The compost pile has been addressed. Volunteers cleaned out a large area of phragmites. We're looking to add a pollinator pathway garden. Some trenching strategies they've been working on seem to be going well (some of the middle garden plots have historically had an issue with flooding . If everything goes as well as expected, all plots should be assigned by this spring. Brooks has created a map of the gardens and has been working with Nicole to update this.

Brooks mentioned that volunteers could work together to create/build gates (about \$50 each) and asked if the P&R department might be able to help fund. The crafted garden gates would help to create a unified look (instead of the current assortment of mix/match repurposed doors people are using). Aaron will look into this.

Aaron P and Joanne thanked Brooks for all his efforts to coordinate with the gardeners and the Rec staff.

-Hillside Woods - update

The S-gate signs have been installed. Aaron P is working with the engineer to tweak the design of the S gates (to prevent smaller deer from getting through).

- Deer Drive... March 16th! (rain date is March 17th)
There will be two community Zoom trainings... Feb 15th and Mar 13th. Publicity will be going out shortly. We'll be looking for lots of volunteers.

4. New Business

- Upcoming/New Programs/Special Events

For complete details on current Recreation Department program offerings, visit:
<https://www.hastingsgov.org/parks-and-recreation-department>

There was some discussion amongst the Commissioners as to the cost of some of the P&R enrichment programs. Aaron P pointed out that programs offered in partnership with a third party / outside vendor are always more expensive than the programs the P&R staff run (ie. After School programs). After further discussion, it was noted that as a Commission we want to be sensitive to the cost of our programs.

- Superintendent's report

Uniontown - Aaron P is still working with Veola trying to get them on-site to address the water main issue (we have a raised road leading to the back of the park with road plates covering the area of the water main discovered this past fall).

Seniors - today's Valentine party was a big success. Planning is underway for spring and summer programming.

Staffing - at the last meeting we discussed how to grow the depth of the parks department. We talked about the grant-funded position for a specialist/arborist (shared among the Villages). In Aaron's query with the other Villages, we have the fewest parks staff, yet the 2nd largest amount of parkland.

Joanne will reach out to the Conservation Commission to see if we can collectively get going on creating a priority list of what this new position/arborist will be tasked to help us with. Joanne encouraged Commissioners to start visiting their assigned parks and so can start noting what parks are in need of attention. Joanne pointed out that we do not want this grant-funded position to be solely focused on Hillside Woods. Mike wants us to think about an area in the Village where this person could help us make an impact.

- Use of 9A Parcel -

Joanne did speak to Nikki and the 9A parcel has been dedicated parkland and it is our Village land. (we cannot sell it back to the developer). We were reminded that David Downs looked into the possibility of creating a small playing field at the

9A location, however it was determined that the configuration of the available space there would be limiting (a small playing field for young children, and noting that drainage was determined to be poor –(in fact part of the land was in the river bed).

Joanne noted that the Board of Trustees is not really thinking about the 9A parcel. Gene suggested bird houses, bee boxes, pollinators, a couple of benches... something like Lenoir...

- Conservation Commission - liaison's report

Although Amy is absent tonight, we can find out specifics of the Commission's initiatives on the Village website,

<https://www.hastingsgov.org/conservation-commission>

5. Adjournment

Next P&R Commission Meeting: March 14, 2024 (8:00pm) @ JHCC

February Meeting Minutes prepared by A. Reeve

February Meeting Minutes approved on: March 14, 2024