

**RECREATION MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2020, 7:00 AM**

Pursuant to Gov. Baker's Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 modifying the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee, to ensure the safety of all participants, held its meeting remotely via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89292317916>, Meeting ID: 892 9231 7916.

Members present: Alex Cobb, Trevor MacDonald, Melissa Crocker, Charlie Hipwood, Mark Ferris, Michelle Callanan, Ben Polimer, Mike McGrath, Christopher Fitzgerald, Pete Foley.

Members absent: John Power

Guest: Shirley Small-Rougeau

The meeting began at 7:03 AM.

Resident Comments: None.

Minutes: The minutes from the October 16 meeting were reviewed and approved.

At-Large Position; guest – Shirley Small- Rougeau

Mr. MacDonald welcomed Ms. Small-Rougeau to the meeting, thanked her for applying to the open at-large seat, and asked her to speak to her interest. Ms. Small-Rougeau stated that she has lived in Weston for four-years, has taken advantage of many of the recreational facilities in town and recently walked the newly opened Legacy Trail with a friend. When they reached the end (known as the "Lookout"), her friend had to wait while Ms. Small-Rougeau continued to walk the wooded trails because of the terrain. She wants to join the committee as an advocate for accessible recreation options for seniors in town.

Ms. Small-Rougeau's background includes managing numerous Recreation centers and programs in Maryland and capital planning. She has read the Master Plan but hasn't formed an opinion on it, was interested in attending this meeting and hearing what the Committee is currently discussing and prioritizing.

A general discussion continued amongst the Committee, including brief summaries of applications from two other candidates as well.

Burchard Park Memo update

Mr. Hipwood discussed an updated memo from Weston Little League that was circulated prior to this meeting (Attachment 1) that outlined maintenance budgets and capital projects coming up. WLL would like to apply for CPC funding for the capital projects but needs clarity on the process – they estimate many smaller projects over the next few years and asked if they should apply for specific amounts

annually or apply for a lump sum to be spread out over the years. Also, the application suggests that it should be sponsored by a Town Board or Committee, Mr. Hipwood asked what would be the appropriate committee to sponsor.

After further discussion, the Committee decided to do more research and revisit at the December meeting, knowing that the deadline for submitting CPC requests for the next cycle is in mid-January.

Recent Field Damage from drivers, possible preventative measures

Mr. Polimer reported that someone had driven on the grass surface of the fields at High School (Field 6), Burchard Park (Fields 4 & 5), Cherry Brook and Melone. This happened after the October 30 snowfall and while the grass was frozing, and caused Frost damage. This impacts the grass blades only and they will recover easily, so the damage was minor, but there is a concern with people being able to bring vehicles onto the fields.

There was discussion about mitigation efforts that could be taken at all of the various fields to either block or deter future unauthorized vehicle access.

CPC Request Updates

Ms. Crocker reported that the Recreation Commission presented their request for \$250,000 design fees for pool renovation to the Community Preservation Committee. Though the Committee critiqued portions of the request and presentation, they voted unanimously to support the request at the next Town Meeting.

There was further discussion about whether Recreational interests were taking full advantage of potential CPC funding, and the percieved value of Recreational possibilities among some of the members. Mr. Cobb pointed out that there is no official representation for Recreation interests. Though a Recreation Commissioner currently occupies the "Parkland representative" seat, it is appointed by the Select Board. There is a question for whether Recreation Commission or Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee should be the appointing body instead, to ensure that the appropriate interests are recognized.

Field and Grounds update

See Attachment 2.

Next meeting:

Friday, December 18, 7 AM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 AM.

Attachment 1: Updated memo from Weston Little League regarding field maintenance.

To: Recreation Committee Master Plan Steering Committee
From: Charlie Hipwood
Date: May 15, 2020
Updated: November 15, 2020
Re: Burchard Maintenance and Renovation

The original memo, date May 15, 2020 has been updated to reflect the difference between regular maintenance and restoration repairs.

Burchard Park History

Burchard Park ("Burchard") was created in Phase 1b of the previous Recreation Committee Master Plan. Construction began in September 2007 and was completed in July 2008. The total cost of creating 3 new baseball fields, 2 new softball fields, and the snack shack/bathroom facility, tennis courts, and a basketball court came to approximately \$2.52 million and was funded by private donations. Additionally, private donors purchased lights for Burchard at a cost of \$160,000, but Weston Little League donated them to the high school baseball facility.

In addition to baseball, softball, basketball and tennis, Weston residents use Burchard for hiking, dog walking, biking, and other recreation on a daily basis. Burchard is also a frequent host site for high school cross country meets, regional baseball tournaments, and some private baseball practices (which generate revenues of approximately \$9000 per year).

Burchard is owned by the Town of Weston with a conservation restriction. Burchard is managed as a recreation facility per a memorandum of understanding between the Conservation Commission and the Recreation Commission.

Burchard Construction, Maintenance, Preservation and Restoration

The 7-acre park was created with private funds and is largely maintained by Weston Little League. The Town of Weston maintains the parking lot, the basketball court, the tennis courts, and trash removal. Weston Little League maintains all the grass, playing surfaces (infields), fencing, dugouts, snack pavilion, bathrooms, and other items including the electricity and water costs.

Additionally, the baseball and softball coaches perform daily maintenance to the playing surfaces such as raking, lining, and water removal. Daily maintenance includes repairs caused by residents not affiliated with Weston Little League such as car and bike damage to grass and dog damage to infield surfaces.

1. Approximate annual costs for general maintenance include:

- \$30,000 for mowing and spring/fall cleanup
- \$2500 for watering
- \$2000 for aeration
- \$1200 for electricity

2. Additional preservation and restoration projects and related expenses incurred since 2017 include:

- 2017: \$24,500 restoration of field 3
- 2018: \$11,500 for preservation of infields
- 2019: \$5,500 for preservation of infields
- 2020: \$2,500 for new watering system; \$10,000 in restoration projects put on hold

Little League and Comparable Youth Sports Leagues in Weston

Weston Little League charges registration fees and sells sponsorships to local organizations to fund the maintenance of Burchard. Currently, registration fees are in line with youth Lacrosse and Soccer at approximately \$200-250 per player per season. Baseball is the only youth league in Weston that sells sponsorships.

Primary field usage and expenses:

1. Baseball and softball have a 7-8 week season in the spring, which accounts for approximately 75% of Little League's revenue and use of Burchard. At the older age groups, there are a few baseball teams that use Burchard in the summer and fall. Baseball and softball also use Cherrybrook, Bogle and Burt fields on occasion along with the varsity softball field at the high school in the spring and fall for the older age groups. Expenses incurred by Weston Little League are mostly related to Burchard as described previously.
2. Lacrosse uses the high school fields during an 8-10 week period in the spring. There are also some games in the fall for the older age groups. Lacrosse pays for time and material for lining some fields at the high school and purchases bags of grass seed for traffic recovery.
3. Soccer uses Alphabet field for the younger age groups and the middle school and high school fields for the older age groups. Soccer also uses the Brook School and Field School fields for some practices and games. Soccer has its primary 10-week season in the fall and a secondary 10-week season in the spring with slightly fewer participants. Soccer pays for time and material to line fields (school and recreation), water at Alphabet and Brook School, goal setup/breakdown, irrigation maintenance, and trash removal. Soccer also pays for extra turf work at Alphabet, which can vary from \$7,000-14,000 per year depending on maintenance need.

Recommendation

Weston Little League is the only organization in town that currently maintains one of the public parks. While the model of Weston Little League maintaining Burchard worked in the early years, the model is no longer sustainable. Burchard maintenance was especially problematic in 2020 with registration refunds and loss of sponsorships due to COVID-19. Weston Little League incurred all the costs associated with the annual maintenance of Burchard with limited revenue.

Additionally, costs to preserve and restore fields that are now 12 years old cannot be met without raising registration fees substantially higher than other comparable youth sports. Several preservation and restoration projects scheduled for 2020 and beyond are now indefinitely on hold.

The #1 priority of the 2020 Recreation Committee Master Plan is maintenance of Weston's indoor and outdoor recreation areas. Instead of building new fields, Weston Recreation is focused on preserving and restoring existing assets.

1. It is my recommendation that the Town of Weston take over responsibility for the regular maintenance of Burchard Park in 2022 when the current contract with Brightview expires. The Town can charge Weston Little League for use in a similar manner as soccer and lacrosse.
2. Additionally, the 2020 Master Plan should include approximately \$15,000 per year for preservation and restoration of infields, fences, benches, and other items. As these funds will be used to protect and make assets functional for intended use, Weston Little League should apply for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds with the support of the Recreation Committee.

With regular maintenance by the Town of Weston and annual preservation and restoration repairs, Burchard will continue to be a recreation destination for many years.

Regards,



Charles C. Hipwood
Recreation Committee Master Plan Steering Committee Representative
Weston Little League

Attachment 2: Field and Grounds Report.

Fields and Grounds Coordinator Update- November 20th, 2020

- School and recreation grounds crews mowing fields and lawns as needed, should be finishing in the next 2 weeks.
- Leaf work is a daily task at all facilities.
- Infields on Field 2, 12, 13 have all been edged. 2.5 tons of new infield mix was added to Field 2. Some stone dust added on Field 13. Will continue infield work if weather permits.
- Weekly hand seeding of goal mouths and high traffic areas. This will end as play ends this month.
- 5" snowstorm on October 30th was a plowing event. Temperatures went into the teens the next day. Snow was gone by Nov. 2nd
- Some minor vandalism occurred from vehicles driving on snow covered fields on Field 6, Field 4-5 at Burchard Park and Cherry Brook Field.
- Irrigation systems were winterized at all facilities except for Burchard Park the week of Nov. 1st. Burchard was winterized on November 9th.
- RAD repaired 2 small carpet issues on Field 1 on October 19th.
- All high use fields (35 acres) were treated with lime on October 21. 17,500 pounds were applied
- 40 acres of turfgrass was fertilized for last time in 2020 on Nov. 20th. Includes all playing fields and large turfgrass areas.
- All snow blowers were serviced and delivered to schools.
- Coordinated with DPW on multiple items: replacement of broken directional sign on Case Campus, assisted winterization of DPW irrigation system, lamps out on telephone poles at the High School, and in contact with DPW during snowstorm on Oct. 30th for roadway salt treatments.
- Assisted with traffic control on Nov. 3rd during drop off and pickup of school and elections at the Community Center.
- Working with tree contractor on plant health care options for Beech trees around Case House.
- School Grounds crew cleaning and sanitizing school playgrounds weekly.
- Purchased fertilizer for high use sports fields for 2021. Saved 7% ordering and delivery before December 1.
- Received multiple quotes for tree removals for dying or severely damaged trees at the Case Campus.

- New septic line was installed at Fire Station Headquarters.
- Developed town wide irrigation winterization plan. Now have written procedures for each site.
- Starting to work on FY22 capital expenditures and 5-year outlook.
- Outside consultant working on submitting an NOI for hydroraking HS Pond.
- Installation has been finally completed on new Case Campus buildings and wayfinding signs.
- Worked with GIS Coordinator on new town wide field maps. Old maps from 2012.
- Participated in monthly STMA Board of Directors meeting on Nov. 5th.
- Participated in STMA Best Management Practices subcommittee meeting on Nov.9th.
- Participated in New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation Board of Directors meeting on Nov. 18th.
- Asked to develop 2 webinars for Ohio Turfgrass Foundation's annual conference which will be held remotely on January 6th and 7th. Topics will be using plant growth regulators on sports fields and synthetic turf maintenance.
- School grounds continue to move equipment/setup for custodial staff, IT Department, wastewater treatment plant deliveries, large or heavy interoffice mail, deliveries, scrap metal pickup, etc. Will continue regular moves for the district. COVID supplies moved for the school district regularly.