

**TOWN OF NORTH CASTLE
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD ("PRAB")
Minutes of June 8, 2021 Meeting**

In Attendance: Karl Hinrichs, Norma Hill, Brendan Molloy, Jennifer Clark, Matt Trainor, Saleem Hussain, Lisa Larsen, Barbara DiGiacinto, Matt Milim

Absent: Jennifer Giusti

Minutes of the May 4, 2021 meeting were amended, accepted and approved.

OLD BUSINESS

IBM Community Park Restrooms: A staging area has been set up - work has begun. Project should be completed by the end of July.

Wampus Brook Park South: Conversations have resumed with Director of Planning Adam Kaufman. Some permits have expired, some are still valid. We continue to receive requests for events to be held, but the area is still a safety risk. The area is not meant to be used as program space as it exists currently.

Pool 2021 Update: Opening day festivities went very well. Acoustic music played by Bob and Norm was fantastic and everyone enjoyed listening to them. There was a total of 466 participants on Saturday, 950 people in total for the weekend - no more than 265 people in the facility at one time.

Councilman Saleem Hussain reported on status of pool ownership. The mortgage amount left is \$675,000. He will find out what the interest is on the mortgage. The debt owed to remaining bondholders is \$355,000 across total of 249 bondholders. ALE has ordered an appraisal due back in two weeks. They have an intern to help reach out to bondholders, and also have volunteers to make phone calls - progress is being made.

Much discussion continued regarding pool ownership and needed repairs and related costs. Major repairs are needed - pool surface, pool deck, main building, roof, entire plumbing system. Jennifer Clark wants to know what is required to get this work done. Cost to purchase the pool approximately \$1M and an additional \$1M in repairs. Councilman Hussain said if there is work to be done prior to ownership to bring the items forward to town board. Chairman Hinrichs hasn't heard about the pool deck needing repair prior to now. Norma Hill said discussions have repeatedly been had with Steve D'Angelo on numerous occasions regarding bondholders and ownership, and being told that nothing can be done because paperwork is sitting on the Attorney General's desk. Brendan Molloy recommends that the town just purchase the pool as long as the appraisal comes in higher than what is owed. We will not be at zero bondholders for a very long time. Superintendent Matt Trainor will lay out all of the repair costs and will provide list at next PRAB meeting.

Summer Camp 2021 Update: Early bird rates were extended by a week, giving us viable enrollment numbers to work with. Department of Health has just updated their guidelines. In short, no masks are required outdoors or in pods. Masks must always be worn indoors - does not apply to ages 2-4 years. Camp Kick-a-Poo is for ages 3-5 years. No masks are required indoors for ages 3-4 years, but will be required for age 5 years. Parents have the option to withdraw their children from camp - we will have to honor their request. Also, there can be no interaction with the public, even at the pool. We follow Westchester County health department guidelines.

Parks Work Schedule: We don't have the five to six seasonal workers that we normally have. Seasonal salary is \$14 to \$15 per hour and seasonal workers can only be on payroll for four months at a time. Full time staff have been working overtime on Saturdays, primarily on beautification, playground maintenance, and fields. We are doing what we can with the staff that we have. Town Administrator Hay and Superintendent Trainor are discussing the need for more staff.

Rec Subdivision Fees: Superintendent Trainor reported that there is \$465,000 in this subdivision account.

Playgrounds: The playground inspection reports have been received - some are in rough shape. We can make simple repairs in-house, but the bigger components are shot, such as the rubberized coating. We are well past the point of spending money on repairs; the town should think of replacing equipment. There is a 15 to 20-year life on playground equipment. Question raised why the town isn't required to keep up its property the same as homeowners. The larger scale playground units cost in the \$120 - \$140,000 range. The market is flooded with different types of equipment - must consider how dated the equipment would be in five to ten years. It was mentioned that town residents drive to Bedford to use their beautiful playground equipment. Councilman Hussain feels it would be a huge opportunity to engage the community in the process. Member Clark suggests putting out a Survey Monkey and ask residents to weigh in - perhaps bring in a playground designer – the footprint for the equipment is already in place.

Matt Milim: the perception is that North Castle moves slowly by municipality standards. A timeline of improvements that people can see will go a long way to improving confidence. Parks and Recreation Department and the PRAB have a reputation issue with young families.

Lombardi Pavilion / Tennis Courts / Basketball Courts: The Lombardi pavilion needs some concrete work; it does not require a full tear down or renovation. The IBM Community Park pavilion is in fine shape - it could use a new roof. RFP is out for basketball court and tennis court for crack repair, base coat, and repainting. Pickleball lines will be added at this time well. Member Brendan Molloy asked Superintendent Trainor to take inventory and needs of the other courts throughout town.

NEW BUSINESS

Senior Citizen / Active Older Adult Programs: Member Norma Hill's plea to the PRAB - seniors pay taxes just like everyone else and should have stimulating recreation. Senior are different than 10 to 15 years ago; they are intellectually inclined - don't want bingo and bagels. Our current senior population is very mixed, so there is a wide variety of interests, and it's hard to please everyone. Trips were very popular and well attended, but were suspended due to the pandemic. North Castle seniors attend other local municipality programs, including those offered by Pleasantville, Katonah, Mt. Pleasant, and Scarsdale.

Outdoor Sports Complex at NWP Community Center: Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto spoke about the need for more outdoor sports equipment on the fields in North White Plains on Clove Road. The topography does not allow for open space. Many residents feel they are underserved; there is a ball field - asking for consideration for a sports court. If feasible, talk about what that would entail for budget purposes. Brendan Molloy: consider using subdivision fees. NWP has basketball, has library, has sleigh riding hill. Let's look on merits; not that the community is underserved. He has always wanted the Hergenhan Center to be a walk-in center for kids...play ping pong, etc. Jennifer Clark: more inclined to fix broken pavilion than get a basketball court - be careful on the use of the term 'underserved'. Saleem Hussain on PRAB request: important to judge demand from the town. Was basketball specifically the item or was it outdoor space in general? Barbara DiGiacinto said the idea keeps reoccurring. She hears more of a sports court. Brendan Molloy said we have the money to spend.

Matt Milim: what criteria does PRAB use to decide in which order projects get done? What criteria is used to determine needs? Brendan Molloy: difference between new projects and maintenance – we need a maintenance schedule.

Matt Trainor: Wampus Brook South created from a natural phenomenon - months of discussions - engineering, drawings, etc. Ultimately, and in the end, there is a change in philosophy of a change in town leadership.

Jennifer Clark: all comes back to finances. Hopefully North Castle Grounds will have money to do all of this.

Brendan Molloy: should get every opinion, but we don't have to drop everything. We don't have a money issue, but we need ideas. Matt Milim suggests we should be using more data. More data makes it easy to make better decisions. Brendan Molloy replied that data can be misinterpreted.

IBM Community Park / Eagle Ridge Project: An application for mixed use development has been submitted for 32 acres of an undeveloped parcel adjacent to IBM. Saleem Hussain has recused himself from discussions since he is employed by IBM. The developer is required to give money to the town. The money will come to us; question on how the money will be spent. Matt Milim questioned Saleem Hussain about community benefits agreements - these agreements talk about when a developer rezones, separate from a rec fee - usually 6 to 7 figure numbers per project. Matt will send email question to Saleem and wait for response to question. Saleem suggests to allocate time at next PRAB meeting and invite Planning Director Adam Kaufman to join the discussion.

Closing comments by Chairman Karl Hinrichs: The PRAB has about 12 projects in discussion. He wants each PRAB member to prioritize top 5 - time to focus and prioritize.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Next Meeting: TBD