

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting - February 7, 2024, 7:00 PM

Village Courtroom, 169 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543

Attendees: Dan Margoshes, Tim O'Connor, Randi Robinowitz, Eric Williams, Brittany Ross, Karrie Sergio, Carlo Rea, Kristen Barnard

Present: Jason Pinto, Jeff Ahne, Manny Rawlings (arrived later)

Absent: Jarrett Winchester

Opening:

Dan made a motion to open the meeting, Karrie seconded. There was a brief discussion about how we refer to certain things to be sure we capture the intent of the commission about what we discuss. For example, when we discuss the "Master Plan" it is simply a wishlist. Carlo made a motion to approve the minutes, Tim seconded, all in favor. Minor corrections to the minutes were noted. Agenda items tabled for discussion when our liaison, Trustee Manny Rawling, is present: Review of Village Code, Village Greenway presentation, Community Center update, Parks & Rec "Master Plan".

Sportime Contract Renewal:

Jeff Carpenter, a resident and formerly on the Tennis Committee, inquired about whether the contract is being renewed as it has been dragged along by the Village and he would like for the contract to be done soon so tennis can continue. In response, it was stated that the commission has concerns that the community is not benefitting as much as they should from the contract and we have been asking that there be more give back from Sportime to the community because it feels more like a private club. One of the things missing is data which Sportime is obligated to provide but they have not. The timing of contract negotiations is late year after year and needs to be looked into. In Trustee Rawlings' absence, it was suggested that concerns be communicated to the BOT as we are only an advisory commission.

Florence Park Playground Design Update:

Jeff went over the playground design and the main difference between Florence and Jefferson is they cannot fit ramps due to the size of the playground area itself which will remain the same. There will be play structures for 5-12 yrs. and 3-5 yrs., and an infant play area which will go where the sandpit was. As far as a site plan they will be doing a survey hopefully next week to survey the existing area for basketball and pickleball courts, and the tennis courts which are being refurbished. Once they receive the site plan it will be brought to the Board to vote on. The construction company doing the park won the bid to provide the site plan, which includes drainage, electrical, and all site work. The basketball courts will remain, the blacktop area will be another basketball court, all the green space stays the same, the tennis courts will stay where they are, and the walkways and curbing are getting redone up to the track because the track was recently done. The first basketball court closest to tennis will be the new pickleball courts. The trees near the tennis courts and by the sandpit will be coming out but they will be planting trees elsewhere in the park. Trees by the curbing are coming out but new trees will be planted in their place. Drainage will be added and improved to help prevent flooding.

Members of the public in attendance at the meeting expressed concerns over the following: the addition of pickleball courts citing noise, sleepless nights, shattered nerves, anxiety, and lawsuits, stating that Florence Park is not the right place for pickleball as it is surrounded by homes. Another resident concern was raised about the resolution being passed without the public knowing about it, or the Friends of Florence Park group, and there was no environmental impact statement or going to the HCZMC. Another resident concern was raised about the possibility of having to pay to play and a pickleball league. There is no parking for the park. No due diligence was done before passing the resolution. It was suggested that pickleball be put at Harbor Island Park where most of our recreational activities should be and not impede on our neighbors. Florence Park should remain serene. It was asked where the idea of putting pickleball at Florence Park came from when it was previously proposed to be at Stanley Ave Park. Another resident concern was brought up about monetizing the park. A resident spoke about how there are a lot of people who use the basketball courts now who do not live anywhere near the park, semi-league basketball games are being played, and there's noise as early as 6am. The rules of the park are not being enforced now, if we put pickleball courts there, people will be playing at all hours. On another note, a resident concern was raised about the playground surface material being made of recycled tires, and due to the potential environmental hazard, a request was made to return to a wood chip base.

In response to some of the residents' concerns, it was thought that HCZMC review is not necessary for park improvements if the footprint remains unchanged, any process will have flaws, and these particular concerns should be addressed to the BOT. It was noted that enforcement has been an ongoing concern of this commission and we do advocate for improvement. Pickleball has been a growing interest in the community and something that the Village Manager, Jerry Barberio, and Trustee Rawlings always spoke about putting at Florence Park but it was not communicated to the PRC until recently which is when the commission started raising concerns. It was also pointed out that there is already a temporary pickleball court at Warren Ave Park that no one seems to know about. It was acknowledged that Jerry did state at a board meeting that they were thinking of charging to play at some of the courts at Florence Park but it was explained by Jason that to run that kind of public programming you need certain things i.e. parking, bathrooms, etc. which Florence Park does not have. A question was asked if there was any way to mitigate the noise of pickleball be it balls, paddles, court surface, acoustic panels, etc. Jeff stated that while you may be able to buffer it some, there is no way to fully mitigate the noise.

It is important to understand that the approved resolution is for the funding to redo the park, it is not a resolution to add pickleball. Except for the playground, nothing is happening without the site plan. Once the site plan is complete it all goes to the Board of Trustees and it is then up to them to decide. It was suggested that when a big project is happening a sign be placed at the site so the community is made aware of what is happening so residents can give their input. Dan made a motion that a recommendation be made to the Board and staff that on a project of this scale there should be more community outreach once site plans are complete, Carlo seconded it, the commission agreed, and it should be noted that the majority of the commission expressed that they are not in favor of pickleball at Florence Park.

Fields for Kids Update:

After the January 4th meeting with Fields for Kids (FFK), nothing has been set in stone, it is all just ideas right now. Tina Maresca explained that FFK had asked Jason and Jeff for the needs of the community and what could be done at the Harbor. A walking/athletic track has been suggested as a need for the community and the schools since MHS track is not a regulation size. Per Tina, Dan Sarnoff said an environmental study would need to be done due to the location being close to the water and the condition of the sea wall. In addition, redoing Lanza field, the addition of a basketball court, and utilizing the unused outdoor court that is currently part of Sportime are all being discussed. We need to decide if we want to work with Fields for Kids so we can move ahead. Dan made a recommendation that the Board move with haste to work with Fields for Kids and devote the necessary Village resources to move potential projects forward. Karrie seconded, the commission is all in favor. A resident mentioned that what is really needed at the Harbor is a sidewalk/walking path from the East to West Basin which we agree with and have discussed at prior meetings.

Non-Resident Use of the Bark Park:

We received an email asking for the Bark Park to be opened to non-residents and if the Board is going to consider doing that the PRC should discuss it first to give their recommendation. When the Bark Park was approved by the Board it was decided that it be limited to residents to see how it goes before we consider opening it up. Per Jason, 310 fobs have been sold, they are good for the year and have to be renewed each year. Since May of 2022 revenue has been about \$19,000 including licenses, we were averaging in the \$6000 range so revenue did pick up. One resident did come to speak in favor of allowing non-residents and felt the dog park was not receiving enough positivity. Another resident suggested the dog park issue be put to rest as we have many other Village-wide items that need to be discussed rather than trying to solicit people from other communities to use the dog park. Another resident felt it was a waste of money and space. It was stated as a point of clarification that the PRC was in favor of the dog park, just not the location. It was also stated the Ad-hoc Dog Park Committee agreed to that location because they were put under strict instructions and time constraints by the Board which wanted to push the dog park through in that location. If we are to consider opening the dog park, we should have the data; number of fobs, usage, and how we are enforcing the rules of the dog park. Trustee Rawlings stated that this is not something the Board is even close to thinking about doing, they have so many more important issues to discuss. We will request the data so that if we revisit this at a later date, we have the information.

Outdoor Accessible AED Installation at Harbor Island Park:

Jason said this has to go to the Board hopefully at the next meeting so they can install them in the spring. The governor of NYS recently signed a law that municipalities that cater to youth sports organizations have to have some sort of external defibrillator available to them. They decided to take it a step further to have it available to be able to save the lives of all users of the park. They would be spread out around the park in locations where they would be viable. The state law is not specific about how many we need or the proximity to them so he is suggesting 8 spread out throughout the park. The estimated cost for the AEDs, freight, boxes, and installation provided is the highest possible of what they think they can run off. The commission discussed the number and locations proposed and thought it could be cut back to 6 units.

Britanny made the recommendation for staff to bring this to Board to install 6 AEDs at the Harbor, Dan seconded, the commission was all in favor.

Handicapped Parking at Village Parks:

The idea of having handicapped parking at Village parks came up because of the parking problem at Florence Park and when Jefferson Park was redone it was made ADA-accessible and inclusive to all. It was suggested that the best approach is to have the Traffic Commission propose where the spots should go, bring it to the PRC for their opinion, and then to the BOT for approval. Each park should be assessed separately to see which provides the greater benefit, a handicapped spot for someone that might use it or parking in the area because there is not enough parking, and focus on larger more occupied parks.

Parks and Recreation Update:

Jeff said they are redoing the Goetz Little League field in-house, making it as close to regulation size as possible. They should be good to go by the time the season starts. It was asked if there was any funding from LMLL but Jeff said he cannot request funding from anyone. LMLL has offered but they would have to go to the Board and discuss it with them. Jeff said they are putting down seed as opposed to sod because it will root and grow faster, with sod they would have to shut down the field for a year to allow it to root.

Jason said this month their part-time hiring and day camp information has gone out, they are working on the spring egg hunt, programming, and planning for the summer.

Closing:

Randi made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Dan seconded, meeting adjourned at 9:28pm. The next meeting is on March 6, 2024.