MINUTES OF THE RAYNHAM PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION

**Regular Monthly Meeting, April 6, 2021 6:00 p.m.**

# Raynham Senior Center, 2215 King Phillip St, Raynham, MA

**In attendance:** Chairman Jim Brow, Commissioner Chris Shaw, Commissioner Josh Daisy, Director Tim McRae, and Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary Samantha Sturtevant.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:01p.m. Chris seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed.

Chris made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2nd meeting. Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

The Chairman opened the floor to Selectman Richard Schiavo.

Mr. Schiavo expressed his thanks for inviting him to the meeting as it is his first meeting for Park and Rec Commission that he has attended. Mr. Schiavo introduced Mr. Andrade who is the chair of both the Public Safety building committee and the Animal Control Office building committee. He further addressed his interest in the Gymkhana building. He began by addressing several needs and opportunities.

First, Raynham is in serious need of an A.C.O. building. It could not be emphasized more. The current A.C.O. activity is housed temporarily in the old North School which is also in a residential area. It has been an ongoing challenge to find a permanent location. He shared an experience he had during a Saturday adoption event to which he witnessed the street lined with cars in the neighborhood which doesn’t seem convenient for those residents.

Second, the committee feels the location of the Gymkhana building is very ideal. It’s structurally sound and minimal renovations are necessary to make it usable for an A.C.O.

Third, it fits a “community complex” to which Raynham is getting more accustom to in addition to the new Public Safety building, Park and Recreation, the Lions Club, Senior Center, sports fields, tennis courts, and baseball. The perspective on this is that this is a change to create a community center where we can build a sense of community and this location fits that vision.

Fourth, the specific location in proximity to the incoming Public Safety building is beneficial because the police department supports the interconnectedness between themselves and the A.C.O. For example, if there is a deer in the street, the police call the A.C.O. and if the A.C.O. goes out there and there is a problem, they call the police. There is a strong interconnectedness between the police and the A.C.O. and this geographic proximity lends itself to supporting that.

Fifth, the town derives increased benefit from the full-time use of the Gymkhana building. This would allow the A.C.O. to move into a full-time space as well as get the full value out of the Gymkhana building.

Mr. Schiavo concluded by thanking the commission for their time listening to his points to lead into a more detailed discussion. He mentioned that the previous week he was going to make a motion to move the location from the public safety building complex but postponed that out of respect of the group and have a discussion with Park and Rec. He proceeded by opening the floor to Mr. Andrade to provide the technical information about the building. He opened the floor to a Q and A.

Chris first expressed his disappointment, after being commissioner for over fifteen years, having not being involved in the conversation in regards to the expansion of town buildings on the Park and Recreation property. He was made aware however, of the Public Safety complex prospect of being put on the agricultural land next to the Lions Club. It was his understanding that Park and Recreation and the commission were the stewards for these facilities. Over the past several years permitting, expansion, adding and changing facilities has all been done by the Park and Recreation Commission and the Department. To his understanding, until Tim had an opportunity to have a last-minute site visit with the new building committee. There wasn’t much conversation as to the intentions between committees and the commission. Chris addressed his concern about the Gymkhana building, first being that it was built for the purposes of its name. Gymkhana means horse events and races. To take the meaning out of the building is damage to the complex that the town is fortunate to have. He asked his first question which was if the building would have some kind of shared rental or occupancy? Mass Rough Riders is their biggest occupant of that land, so if something were to be cut out, would that building be able to still meet their needs whether it be storage or the ability to use the building for the purposes of electricity use such as announcements and scoring?

Mr. Schiavo first stated that there is no intent to push the horse groups out of the space. Mr. Andrade is the master builder and will be able to explains some creative ideas that will lend itself to sharing the building and at the same time, the bigger picture is to provide more support of Park and Rec. Secondly, they have spoken to the building commissioner about sharing the use of the building which doesn’t appear to be very practical because one, it’s not very large and the second point that works about that is once the A.C.O. activity is there, there’s no place for the animals to go once the horse shows begin. Overall, there is no intent to systematically or objectively eliminate the horse groups. Mr. Schiavo then turned it over to Mr. Andrade.

Mr. Andrade introduced himself. He has lived in Raynham since 1963. As a kid they used to bring his father here as one of the farm hands who farmed the property. The property has been here for a long time. He apologized if there was any offense. He has been on the building committee for over two years. He explained that the Gymkhana building, as a discussion, had just come up within the last few months. It wasn’t something that was being considered at first. Through the evolvement of this idea, he was asked to get involved with the land transfer to which they could only act on if they had land to swap. He mentioned John Noblin and Frank Campbell own from south main street to Thrasher Street to which he drew multiple plans to get john and frank not to dig into their good piece with the 10 acres. They hired an engineer that drew it all out. They learned about the state requirement which took over 6 months to acquire all of the paperwork which would allow them to submit the paperwork to Mark Pacheco’s office to get it drawn out. Mr. Andrade made the point that it was not the first choice, there were other considerations. Other options ranged from 60 acres which were over budget. Designers drew plans at the public safety building which wasn’t ideal or modern for a public safety building. They resorted to studies of all the different locations all through Raynham. Borden Colony was consistent with what they have today. That’s when they got involved with Mark Pacheco’s office and learned that the deed does allow the Town of Raynham to make changes, Mary the office secretary, was very helpful. They learned that any building that is standing at the time of transfer can be used for agricultural, recreation, or anything else that the town feels can go there as long as it doesn’t interfere with agricultural or recreation. It’s a great piece of land to expand on because it’s not agricultural, it’s not being used for hay, or growing. It was drawn out. The state requires the transfer to be done prior to submitting the bill. The plans were deeded over to the town of Raynham before we could start working with Mr. Pacheco’s office. They started with 44 million for a public safety building. They learned about the high need for an A.C.O. building and wanted to incorporate that in to the new building. It was considered to be put between Park and Recreation and the Lions Club but they could not add a building on the recreational land. That’s when we considered the Gymkhana building. They budgeted two hundred thousand for a brand-new structure frame for an A.C.O. building. It has a cement floor, a small basement that can be filled in, water, a sewer, and it doesn’t need many additional properties. With their current budget, they wouldn’t have to spend all of that money. The windows have been replaced a few years ago.

Chris commented that we invested a lot of money into refreshing different aspects of the building.

Mr. Andrade recalled the town voting on putting ten thousand into the building.

Tim made the correction that it was twenty-five thousand and did not pass at town meeting.

Chris commented that Park and Rec took it out of their own budget.

Mr. Andrade said they have two hundred thousand to spend. They do not want to turn the horse groups away. This would become a community facility. It has seven thousand square feet. It would become the downtown of Raynham. It’s a great facility. Mr. Andrade mentioned he had helped build a field a long time ago on the facility.

Chris said it may have been the multipurpose field.

Mr. Andrade mentioned the selectman stopped electronic debris being dumped years ago and it’s been a very well looked over facility. Today, it’s a use that the town of Raynham needs. Rozena’s Farm has twice the amount of people come through there than they do here and they function out of a trailer. Mr. Andrade mentioned they would be willing, through Park and Rec, to look at a trailer for the horse groups. While they’re doing the building, they could get porta potty for public bathroom use during those events.

Chris said the water is turned on at that point; they used to run a concession stand out of there.

Mr. Andrade also mentioned that part of the project across the street is the fire and police department. They gave up a million and a half dollars for back storage facility which started out to be 4 million. Right now, it’s a million and a half dollars they are willing to allow to be used to finish the public safety building. The goal is to make sure if it all gets approved at town meeting, that it all gets used, which would total thirty million six hundred thousand. If that’s the case, the fire station has the metal building that they use for a warehouse. Mr. Andrade had asked if it could be moved for Park and Rec use. Bringing the A.C.O. building over to Borden Colony would benefit the years to come. Twenty years from now, it will be the center of Raynham between Raynham Pride Day and Fire and Police demonstrations. Mr. Andrade said since this all came up over the last six or seven weeks ago said that he put in a grant to bring sidewalks from South Main Street. The other aspect that hasn’t been openly discussed is to improve the road. A possibility would be an island so that its more or less straight for the Public Safety building and left to the soccer fields. It would separate police and fire and traffic. There’s a lot of things up for discussion. The only way that they were able to get the building down to thirty million dollars is for the people of Raynham to take over a lot of responsibility. They turned around, saved over four million dollars, and took all of the site work off of the original proposal. Mr. Andrade himself and John Noblin were strong about it. There are a lot of good people in town that can bid out that job. As an overall picture, there’s a lot of good things. This building was originally in the midst of the discussion plans.

Mr. Schiavo added that there are a lot of dimensions, that being just one of them, whether it’s an island in the middle of the road, helping with storage, or a trailer placement. The overall goal is to get the maximum value, the maximum use, and the maximum utility possible out of whatever property on this complex is available, consistent with Park and Rec work. As far as the horse groups go, they will do everything to accommodate them but the A.C.O. comes first. If there is extra money, help will go towards the trailer. The fact is, they are part-time and the goal is full-time utility where it serves a genuine need. What they pay a year is known, the town has done a lot for them such as installing the corral, but the primary goal is to work to support the activity that takes place within the town, not with renters.

Chris said, sticking to the Gymkhana building, there is a lot more to be discussed aside from the meeting. He is personally not in favor of a temporary building or a trailer being on the property but that could be a topic of further discussion. Chris asked what other towns that are continuous to Raynham, have a building dedicated to an A.C.O.

Mr. Schiavo answered, virtually, everyone. He mentioned that when there is a dog found in Raynham. Currently when there is a dog found on the street, Raynham has to make a run to Lakeville, which is a smaller town than Raynham which is embarrassing.

Chris pointed out that is what a shelter is used for, not a town shelter.

Mr. Schiavo said that it’s a place that we would put dogs here as a shelter instead of running them to other towns.

Chris asked if that means we would take other animals from other towns and shelter them as Lakeville does to Raynham.

Mr. Schiavo answered no we are going to keep them here instead of running them to other towns. The data is available for the budget per year. It has become a public issue over social media. The town spent twenty-eight thousand dollars a year and seven thousand dollars on expenses. There is nothing right now for people out twenty-four seven. So as a town we need to accommodate them with more support.

Chris said he doesn’t disagree but he is at odds with some of the intentions. He is very familiar with Animal Control Officers and what their responsibilities are. He would like better knowledge of how they intertwine with Public Safety agencies etc. There is a lot to talk about still.

Mr. Andrade apologized for the time limit but felt the background history was necessary.

Chris said he understands.

Jim commented that it seems like a lot for Animal Control. He said that he has heard of an office but not a building where they shelter animals.

Mr. Schiavo noted that North Attleboro built a million-dollar facility and offered to visit. Now, there is a modest budget, using a product that is not utilized to it’s maximum by any stretch. The town derived six-hundred thousand a year on a lease with the horse show which he thinks the town can get more value out of.

Chris clarified that it is not only used for horse shows. It’s used for community groups such as the boy scouts, girl scouts, Christmas events, and Easter events.

Mr. Schiavo said there is a lot of land there that can be used which they are not looking to take over.

Chris said it’s not so much the land that is used as much as it is the shelter itself.

Mr. Schiavo said that the building itself needs a little bit of work.

Chris agreed and further noted that that’s why Park and Rec goes to the town and asks for budgeting for improvements so that it can be used for more things. Chris said he is not against an Animal Control Office. The North School was in his backyard for twenty-five years until he recently moved. He is familiar with what it was, is, and has been along with the struggles that N.O.A.H. has had during those animal adoptions but it is not a storage facility. He wasn’t aware it was an Animal Control Office.

Mr. Schiavo said it’s very modest.

Chris said that he is not familiar of any other town that has their own office for Animal Control. Typically, they run out of houses or vans and don’t necessarily get a good wage for what they do. He is not against an office but he doesn’t want to rush into something that needs more time exploring as far as a more shared facility. Things have changed but the horse group does use a small portion of the Gymkhana building for their purposes. They also do a lot of the upkeep of that property along with the boy scouts or it is taken out of the Park and Rec’s own budget. As far as the facility being used for boy scouts, girl scouts, and holiday events, new locations can be sought out to take care of those programs however, they’d like to keep those on this property because Park and Rec likes the idea of community too and those events build community as well as things such as Raynham Pride Day and the parades. There just needs to be more discussion about it.

Mr. Schiavo mentioned that the building itself is not that big. A Christmas party does not fit a lot of people so from that point of view there is not a lot of benefit there. To the other point, he mentioned that the board has looked deciduously throughout the town, everywhere, to find a suitable place. Mr. Andrade has done several outlines.

Chris asked what about the rental property that they rent out.

Mr. Schiavo said maybe it could be used for the Christmas party.

Chris asked if they have looked into it.

Mr. Schiavo answered that they have looked at places they thing is suitable and they have had their building commissioner, John Noblin, and Mr. Andrade look at it. If they didn’t have a consensus that it was a suitable property for what they need to do, they wouldn’t do it.

Jim asked if the majority of the need for the building for the cat adoption.

Mr. Schiavo answered that it is for cats, dogs, picking up deer, and having resources there.

Jim said he wasn’t aware that Raynham does have to go all the way to Lakeville. He mentioned that this same subject came up a few years ago about strictly cat adoption so Jim asked if the majority of the need regarding a facility to conduct cat adoption.

Mr. Schiavo clarified that it’s cat and dogs. Going back to the point that Chris made about N.O.A.H. So much of what Raynham does relies on people to do their time. Currently, the cats go into people’s homes which we need to improve.

Mr. Andrade said that if that property up the street would be available he would be glad to look at it. He wasn’t aware that it was available or if it will be available.

Chris said he just through it out there. There is a lease there currently. He wishes whatever is best for the town.

Mr. Andrade said when the lease is up if that’s an option to let them know. The Gymkhana building is ideal because there’s loads of ground, there’s an office space they can operate in, it’s a concrete floor to which they can hose the entire facility down, and possibly the space to clear a dog park over there as discussed, a few years ago.

Mr. Schiavo said that they will work very diligently to not upset the current deal that Park and Rec has with the horse show. Mr. Andrade has some flexibility with the budges so they will come up with a way to accommodate them in a way that satisfies the program. Park and Rec as had a long-term relationship with them and the attitude is to not push them to the curb, they will do what they can to make it work. Mr. Schiavo concluded.

Mr. Andrade added one last comment that the two hundred thousand dollars that is funded is actual cash that is funded. It will happen even if the Public Safety doesn’t go because it has to go somewhere. That was already voted on and it’s in.

Jim asked what the plan will be for the land where police and fire currently is now.

Mr. Andrade said there will probably be another committee for that. He had suggested moving Park and Rec space there as an area for kids, it’s an awesome building.

Josh asked if they discussed building an A.C.O. building between Park and Rec and the Lions Club and if they couldn’t for the reason being that it’s agricultural or recreational land?

Mr. Andrade said that they drew it but they couldn’t put it there.

Josh asked if there is room over there in case they wanted to move the corral.

Mr. Andrade said there is room all the way to the river.

Josh said a possible option could be placing a dog park and an A.C.O. building next to each other to which the corral could be moved to avoid it being eliminated.

Mr. Andrade said they don’t want to eliminate anything, they’re looking for the two to exist together. He is there to supply information but he wasn’t there in regards to choosing the location. Four hundred thousand has been spent since the town decided to keep it. He’d like to see that go towards Park and Rec or something that they need. Mr. Andrade offered to call if there is anything they need. They just put together a segment going on YouTube for the town. He concluded by apologizing again if Park and Rec felt excluded but it wasn’t the intention.

Chris referred back to old business.

**Old Business (1):**

1. *Summer Playground Program*

Tim announced he had met with Derek last week and they are officially approved for the LaLiberte Elementary School for the summer. It will begin June 28th and will run from 8:00a.m.-5:00p.m. We are keeping the same rates as last year which is $200 for full-day, $120 for half day, and the 3-day option of $150.

Chris moved on to new business.

**New Business Items (3):**

1. *Selectman Richard Schiavo: Gymkhana Building*

(Beginning of meeting)

1. *Liquor License Lions Club*

Tim said the Lions Club is hosting a clam bake on Saturday May 15th. They’re looking for a one-day approval for a liquor license. Tim mentioned there may be some soccer games on or some baseball games but nothing that they’ve had a problem with interfering in the past.

Chris made a motion to approve the one-day liquor license for the Lions Club clam bake. Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

1. *Spring Field Use Permit Applications (4)*
2. Raynham Girl Scouts

who are looking for a one-day permit for South School for their annual field day. They originally wanted the Gymkhana building or the gazebo but unfortunately, that is scheduled for the horse groups so it is moved to South School. Chris made a motion to approve the girl scouts one-day permit for the use of South School for their annual field day.

1. Raynham Youth Lacrosse

Tim mentioned their season begins the upcoming weekend and are looking for Tuesday and Thursday nights at Raynham Middle School for 2 fields which have been already boxed off as well as Sundays 1 field for games inside the track. There is softball there on Sunday mornings but they’ll be on the softball field so it won’t interfere. Chris made a motion to approve the Raynham Youth Lacrosse field permit for the Raynham Middle School, 2 fields for Tuesday and Thursday nights as well as 1 field for Sunday games. Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

1. Drama Kids

Tim said they are looking for a one-day pass as a part of the program that they run for a performance at the gazebo on May 22nd. It’s a great program and they do a wonderful job. Chris made a motion to approve the one-day permit for the Drama Kids show on May 22nd at the Gazebo. Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

1. Mass Drifters Softball

Tim said they’re looking for a two-season pass for spring and summer for Monday-Thursday and Saturday mornings at Reed Field. It’s a major youth softball team run through Christina Berardi who he’s known for a couple years now so he thinks it’d be a great opportunity for some other activities to happen at Reed Field.

Chris asked if there have been any baseball teams that intertwine with those days.

Tim said it is clear.

Chris made a motion to approve the Mass Drifters Softball permit for Reed Field.

Chris called for commissioner reports.

**Commissioners’ Reported the following:**

**Chris:** Nothing to report.

**Josh:** Nothing to report.

**Jim:** Mentioned the Locust Street trees have been falling down from the windstorms. Chris asked if they could get someone out there to take out the trees that are falling on others. The fields are looking in good shape. Wished all of the teams’ good luck this season.

**Staff Reports:**

**Sammi:** Sammi mentioned we have reached past 300 likes on Facebook. After the Easter Egg Hunt and jellybean contest there has been very active engagement on the page.

**Tim announced the following:**

-School is back to normal. We are staffed and are looking for additional staff as well to help for the extra day.

-Next week they are meeting with EEC for Merrill School and they’re offering licensing this month.

-Field prep is in great shape. Goodluck to all of the seniors this year.

-Tim is meeting with 3 playground companies over the next week for the Monti playground as discussed in the last meeting.

-Fertilizing is going to take place the week of April 19th. They do not know the official dates yet but it will be while school is not in session.

-Tim congratulated Heather and Sammi for doing a wonderful job for designing the eggs for a successful Egg Hunt.

-Lastly, Tim recognized former Highway Foreman John Cucinotta who passed away last month and want to thank him for all of his ideas and service for the Park Department.

Chris made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sammi Sturtevant

Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary