MINUTES OF THE RAYNHAM PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION

**Regular Monthly Meeting, February 2, 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 6:00p.m. Josh seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed.

Jim entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January 5, 2021 meeting. Josh made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 5th, 2021 meeting and a unanimous vote followed.

Also, in attendance, the board welcomed President of the Raynham Giants, Gerald Melesky (Jeremy), 328 Finch Rd, MA.

Jeremy who currently holds a Field Use Application for the Raynham Giants who are a part of the Old Colony Youth Football Organization along with 32 towns however, this past fall, due to COVID-19, they do not have a football season. They follow MIAA guidelines who are putting on a spring season and the Raynham Giants would like to do the same. Right now, there are 15 teams all composed of seventh and eighth graders. He can provide a list at a later time if necessary. It would be a 6-game season to which every team is guaranteed in the playoffs. Essentially, they would play 4 regular season games, 1 playoff, and the top two teams in each division will each play in the Super Bowl. Normally, their fields are closed but for March they need practice space. Jeremy further stated that he is here on behalf of his organization to ask for permission under the circumstance to allow them to practice 3 days a week on Mill Street and possibly play 1 game per Sunday, which would total 2 home games, at the Bettencourt Field. Jeremy said that they have spoken to their field manager Ken Bolin and also the President of Yukon Landscaping who is willing to coordinate with the Raynham Giants to make any necessary repairs to the fields if damaged.

Jim asked if they would only be playing 2 home games.

Jeremy clarified they are only guaranteed 2 home games.

Jim asked if they could play 3.

Jeremy said that they could but they said 2 home games.

Jim asked if they already decided where the playoffs and the Super Bowl would be.

Jeremy explained they did not because he is also a part of the board for Girls Lacrosse which the Super Bowl would likely be scheduled around the same time of the start of their season. Alex, their league representative, had already told the league the Raynham Giants would not be able to hold the Super Bowl and that it would be only 2 games.

Jim said he’s assuming that they’re going to want to do the playoffs and Super Bowl on turf fields anyways.

Jeremy confirmed, because of the weather. They did speak to the Legion to get their approval and they approved. Mill Street is important to them for a couple of reasons, the first being that their equipment is there but if the board says they have to practice at another field they will do whatever they need to, provided the kids are able to play. Jeremy further stated that more than 50% of eighth-graders do not go on to play High School football so they’re last year possible to play a game that they love is important.

Chris asked what Jeremy’s plan is if the fields are snow-covered.

Jeremy said that they are currently allowed to practice indoors but they cannot have full practice based on MIAA and COVID restrictions. They can only do conditioning and essentially, would be limited to 10 players at a time, similar to flag football. They haven’t gotten that far yet, they are willing to make changes or do what they need to do. They are aware they cannot paly on the fields while it is snow-covered so they will have to work at it.

Chris asked if they have entertained some type of plan to clear the fields of snow if they wanted to practice on them.

Jeremy replied they can as they have done in the past. Parents have come with snowblowers and shovels so it wouldn’t be a problem. The first 2 weeks they do have indoor space booked and the coaches have fronted that money themselves.

Josh commented that he’d love to see the kids get out and play as long as they are going to assume the cost of repairs.

Tim added in regards to game days, the water is turned off so the bathrooms there are not available until April 1st and suggested that it may be worth discussing the possibility of bringing in a porta potty or other options.

Jeremy said that would be fine. Speaking for the organization, as long as they have practice fields, they don’t care if all of their games are away or if they have to pay refs- their main concern is getting the kids to practice in order to get ready for the games. They’ll travel wherever they need to and clarified again, it’s one team.

Jim asked if Girl’s Youth Lacrosse have referees in place.

Jeremy answered that they are working with Ray Byron, who schedules the games as well as does college games. Ray is asking that there be multiple games per field like a regular Sunday where there will be 3 or 4 games and not traveling all over the place. They are in communication with the High School as well to get B-Rs turf just in case they would prefer to do that.

Chris commented that it would save lining the fields.

Jeremy agreed that it is a lot of work especially in the winter but they can make a difference for these kids.

The commission board agreed.

Josh clarified that he does girls lacrosse as well.

Jeremy said yes, he is not the President, he is the field director and equipment manager.

Jim asked what the MIAA rule in regards to spectators requires.

Jeremy explained that as far as he knows, spectators cannot be in the bleachers, they must bring their own chairs. He said he can highlight them and bring that list over.

Josh asked if Girls Lacrosse plays on Bettencourt Field after football.

Jeremy said they do, they started last year. The sport allowed them to because they are combined teams. Bridgewater Lacrosse gets the turf.

Josh asked, in the event that the field does get damaged, if the Girls Lacrosse team will have a place to play.

Jeremy said if that does happen they can apply for B-R’s turf and try to move to away games.

Chris added that it can be costly.

Jeremy confirmed that it can be.

Jim asked if there has been any communication with Raynham Youth Cheerleading.

Jeremy said no because they are a separate organization and as far as he knows there is no cheerleaders.

Josh commented as long as one league isn’t going to interfere with the other then he supports it.

Jeremy responded the only thing he might be concerned about is in regards to Girls Lacrosse is Mill Street because that’s where the girls practice as well. He mentioned he may have to make an amendment to the permit that has been applied to additionally practice at the upper field behind RMS. RYL are minimal in numbers but the A team said they would work with them with practice so he can make that all work internally.

Josh said in agreeance that grass is fixable but kids only get eighth grade once.

Chris asked about the succession plan.

Jeremy responded by going over some of the board members.

Chris asked who is in charge of concessions.

Jeremy said Anthony Mcaully but next up is Dana Grenan is the concession director for RYBSA.

Tim mentioned that he is familiar with the family.

Jeremy commented that he has done a great job with the concession stand.

Chris made a motion to approve the Raynham Giants Youth Football request for the usage of Bettencourt Field and the Legion Field as outlined by Mr. Melesky with an agreement of assistance with repair, if needed, and also that all COVID protocols are followed, to which they are already following.

Josh seconded, provided that the field assistance would not be the Highway Departments responsibility. A unanimous vote followed.

Jeremy added that they designated a COVID coach who has already been certified through the National Highschool Federation completed certification in COVID-19 training.

Chris commented that they’re ahead of the game.

Tim mentioned that there was also an application from Raynham Girl’s Lacrosse.

Jeremy asked if, while he was present, they could make an amendment to practice adding the upper field to RMS.

Tim approved and also mentioned last year they charged $550.00 because the roster is split.

Chris asked Jeremy if his roster is split 50/50.

Jeremy responded that each team is different, the U15s and U13s are Raynham heavy and the biggest teams but it is split.

Chris said that if in fact the roster follows the standards they would waive that fee.

Tim said to just send a copy of the roster over. He also mentioned that they have a check currently paid in full in our safe waiting to go through so that is all set as well.

Chris made a motion to approve the Bridgewater-Raynham Youth Girls Lacrosse with a fee of $600.00, pending a roster. Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

Tim told Jeremy that he can give him the check back until they see if everything works out with the roster if he prefers.

Jim proceeded to ask if the commission would like to continue through all of the permits while they were on the topic.

The commission agreed.

Jim proceeded to the next field permit application from the Raynham Masters.

Tim confirmed they are just looking for their annual Spring season from April 4 through the end of June playing an over-the-hill soccer league.

He said he thinks they are going to put them on the Arruda Field because the all-purpose field will be shut down for the spring.

Chris made a motion to approve Raynham Master Soccer’s Spring permit with a $600 fee and COVID protocols. Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

Jim called for the next permit, Sunday morning softball.

Tim said they are looking to start at the end of April all the way through the end of October. This year they’re asking for three fields. They’re asking for Borden Colony softball, Reed, and they also want to add on RMS softball, which is how it was last summer. Last year they were charged $1100 but that fee was reduced due to a shortened season down to $800 but originally the 2 fields were an $1100 dollar charge last year.

Chris asked if this league has a new President.

Tim said yes and complimented his dedicated work, there were some issues in the past he had no control over what he couldn’t see going on. If they’re going to be on school grounds, there will have to be a reinforcement of protocols because in the past there have been violations in regards to alcohol.

Jim agreed and commented that if it happens once continually reinforcing is necessary.

Chris mentioned that punishing everybody for the actions of individuals is unfortunate but necessary.

Tim said the team came up with an in-house suspension plan that lasted a few weeks though the team was also shut down for 3 weeks from the fields until they communicated that suspension.

Chris made a motion to approve Sunday morning softball $1800 for three fields in accordance to COVID-19 protocols.

Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

Tim extended an option to Jeremy that after his business items have been reviewed, he is more than welcome to stay or if he is all set then he’s free to go.

Jeremy said that he is all set and thanked the commission board.

Chris said he can watch the meeting on YouTube if he’s interested.

Jeremy again, expressed his thanks and exited the meeting.

Jim called for a follow up on old business items starting with Program Updates.

**Old Business (1):**

Tim proceeded to announce that at the last meeting it was mentioned the possibility of a February Vacation Club and we were able to put one together. It’s a miniature one which consists of 3 days at the Lions Club on February 16th, 17th, and 18th. It will be a half-day program so we can only let in 25 kids with staff. The sign-up is filled already for the week. We’re going to bring in a couple of shows and the video game truck. It should be a good couple of hours to keep the kids occupied.

We also just restarted a new session of Drama Kids and we’re starting a Mad Science Program tomorrow. With a lack of space and weather we are doing the best we can to keep people occupied.

Jim called for new business items moving onto the annual reports after the Spring Field Use Applications were reviewed earlier.

**New Business Items (2):**

*Annual Reports*

Tim said that as long as he has been here SJ has written the annual report, but would like to make the recommendation with the commission’s approval that Sammi writes the Annual Report for 2020.

Chris said she’s been doing a fantastic job with the minutes so he’s certain she’ll do a great job with the Annual Report but she’ll have to do a little studying.

Tim mentioned that it’s already in motion and it’s starting to coming together. We’ll get that done by the end of the month to submit that to the town. Sammi’s already been here now almost 5 months. She came right around when the town increase came.

Chris said that’s right everybody got a raise and asked how much minimum wage went up to.

Tim answered it went up to $13.50 but it’s going to go up to $15.00 in a couple of years.

Chris nominated Sammi to write the 2021 Annual Report. Josh seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

Jim moved onto Commissioners’ Reports.

**Commissioners’ Reported the following:**

**Josh:** Has nothing to report at this time.

**Chris:** Said that he mentioned to Jeremy that it’s really important that we understand these local Youth Programs and what their succession plans are. Not in a controlled sense but he’s seen organizations that don’t have a plan like that so when people take over positions, with no experience with the league, they don’t know what to fall back on from the past. That being said thinks we should invite the leaders of every organization on a particular month and have an open meeting with them on the basis of succession plans.

Jim agreed and thinks it’s a good idea that when somebody new steps into a position that we invite them to one of the meetings and get to know them.

Tim agreed.

It’s more efficient in the decision-making process when we can build a trust between each other and build a relationship with them. It would enhance things like deciding on additional field space, capital improvement projects, and things like that. The leadership in these organizations over the past 15 years that he remembers, has been phenomenal. Before that there were some known issues in the sense of ownership and free-range ability. It affects everybody.

Tim agreed and said he’s sure they’d love to come in and talk every few weeks just to check-in.

Chris said it’s nice to know who is coming, when, and if we don’t know them can we meet them. We don’t want to see a new leader of an organization come in with all kinds of thoughts and ideas of doing things without going through the proper process not knowing that when they do those kinds of things they affect all other organizations whether it’s something such as improvements to the concession stands, capital field improvements and projects, no matter what it is it can affect everybody. Chris closed by saying it’s something he has been thinking about for the last couple of months and Jeremy being here made him consider it more in regards to Youth Organizations.

**Jim:** Said that he had a question about Raynham Youth Baseball looking to do some alterations to the field and whether or not that is currently on hold or if it had gotten delayed because of COVID-19.

Tim answered that it was delayed because of COVID-19. They did do the upgrade on the infield last year that turned into the 50/70 diamond and did a wonderful job. Other groups tried to jump on it last summer but after speaking with the President we want to keep that off just for Raynham right now in the first year. There is talk about possibly raising the fence in the outfield so they can host these tournaments after this upcoming summer. That’s something they may consider in the fall but Chad can answer those questions for us.

Chris commented that he thinks it’s good that they’re all here at the same time so if they don’t know each other they can introduce each other regardless the majority of soccer is down here at Borden Colony. Sometimes football, baseball, lacrosse needs certain fields or need access to the multipurpose field so if they know each other and have an opportunity to get to know each other, should some kind of conflict like that occur, there can be some good open lines of communication without having to come to anything serious.

Tim responded by saying he absolutely agreed and it’s not a problem.

Jim moved on to staff reports.

**Staff Reports:**

**Sammi:** Has nothing to report at this time.

Jim asked how the Facebook group is doing.

Sammi mentioned it’s doing good and that they’ve gotten up to 250 likes this month.

Chris recognized that it increased 50 in the past month.

Sammi replied the goal is 2000 eventually.

**Tim announced the following:**

The dog park has been delayed due to COVID-19 so they’re hasn’t been any recent updated however, once things calm down, we’ll get that meeting going. He already updated his report and presentation so when the time comes, it’s good to go but well cross that bridge when we get there.

Josh asked if there are any updates on the Forge River Parkway Basketball Court.

Tim said the town does have it but the town still does not have possession of the deed. From what he understands, after speaking to the town, that the deed was supposedly signed back in 2006 or about 15 years ago. Technically the town owns in but it does not have complete ownership until they acquire that piece of paper. Once we have that, we can have the meeting with the neighborhood and businesses down there, in regards to what we are going to do with that space. We’ve had ideas about moving the tennis courts over there but whatever we do, it’s a nice plot of land but parking is definitely an issue.

Josh commented if it’s a tennis court there will be a limit on how many people at a time.

Tim said that’s true and pickleball is another possible consideration being that we will do that eventually. The ideas are out there, they have a small playground out there. He said it definitely needs to be updated but again, we’ll cross that bridge when we get the deed. He’ll get the list from the assessor’s office, send out a letter, find a location for a meeting, and well go from there.

Josh shared his thoughts about considering doing a dog park on Borden Colony that way those in the neighborhood who don’t want a dog park will have something quieter or put it behind South School.

Tim said when we eventually look at South School and that it’s prime real estate but he’s up for anything.

Tim added that he did receive another update on the South School and there has been no movement as to how they are going to repair that building. They’re waiting on solicitors from businesses but no one has bid anything so far. That space is a priority for us.

Josh asked what the cause of delay is.

Tim responded by saying it needs electrical and water repairs. The town put it out to bid to scope out the work but no one has come back with an actual bid to go in so right now they are looking at other options of how they can get that building repaired.

Tim further announced that last week he submitted the first copy of their budget for next year. Everybody’s salaries are all set. He is just waiting on the Union contract to which they are currently in negotiations for whether or not there will be an increase. In terms of our wages it has all zeroed out so there is no increase from last year. They did ask for capitol improvements and the top capitol improvement he has right now that he put in for is to replace the fence at Griffith’s. Hopefully there will be enough free cash at town meeting so we can repair that hopefully sooner rather than later.

Tim proceeded to update in regards to summer. He has spoken to the schools and right now they’re not sure what things are going to look like due to COVID-19. Summer may end up on Borden Colony. Unfortunately, that would cause the program day schedule to be shortened because we cannot have the kids out in the sun for that long. We are still waiting on a location. If we can get into the schools we will go there but we are also preparing to have camp here just in case as well. We need to know by April 1st because that’s when all of the planning really comes into play.

Lastly, he has spoken to Tony Arruda. He has been out working on trenches on Borden Colony to try to reduce all of the water that we have had recently. He’s been doing really well. He’s going to do another cut come early spring and then reseed so we will be all set and looking good for the spring and summer.

Tim concluded.

Chris asked if they had seen the post on Facebook regarding the dog park at Reed Field. As a result, there was a lot of misinformation posted in response. Chris said that he took the time to make a post about what is actually happening to update those in question about what the process is looking like for the dog park as well as confirm and denied current plans. He also noted that they will be speaking to the majority of the neighborhood before anything is set in stone. He clarified that there will be no tax money spent so far towards the park and that if we have a majority in favor, we can apply for a grant if necessary. The sooner we can get that neighborhood meeting the better but we have to wait until the restrictions are up for a safe location to meet that amount of people. He asked what the restrictions entail.

Tim answered 25%.

Chris asked what the capacity is.

Tim answered its about 120 at the Lions Club.

Chris said maybe they could get RMS’s auditorium.

Tim said he can get that letter sent out and find a date that works for everyone.

Chris asked if Tim would accompany him to meet with the Superintendent to see if the auditorium would be available for that to go over concerns of bringing people into the school in regards to COVID-19 regulations.

Tim said that he would email Derek.

Chris suggested possibly a Zoom meeting in case the school is not available.

Tim said he is against a Zoom meeting for this particular subject because we don’t want anyone to get confused.

Jim added it might be complicated to keep an open floor for questions via Zoom.

Chris agreed.

Tim said worst comes to worst we wait until the weather gets nice and get a projector screen for an outdoor presentation at the gazebo. Tim added that he agrees with Chris in clarifying the false narratives.

Chris said that its necessary to address it or else the misinformation such as taxes and location will grow.

Jim said that there’s a lot of misinformation of what a dog park actually is or what the process is and they saw a lot of that when they first tried to establish a dog park.

Chris said there were a lot of confusion about liabilities as well.

Tim added that some people think they can leave the dogs there.

The commission agreed.

Jim asked if there was anything else.

Josh made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chris seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:44p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sammi Sturtevant

Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary