**MINUTES OF THE RAYNHAM PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Regular Monthly Meeting, September 5, 2023 6:00 p.m.**

**Gymkhana Building, King Phillip St, Raynham, MA**

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

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:04p.m. Riley made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 1st meeting. Chris seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

Jim called for old business.

**Old Business (3):**

1. *McKenney Field Fence*

The McKenney Field fence went out to bid in earl August. There was a sealed bid opening on Thursday. The winning company was City Works out of Attleboro. Tim saw their reviews and references which were great. There were eleven bidders and they came in with a winning low bid of $63,202. They will be getting that contract finalized. The town will be taking down the fence, then they’re going to come in, and replace it with a nice black chain-link fence which will be nice to have after all of these years.

1. *Raynham Giants/Jay Messler*

The Raynham Giants are moving forward with the bleachers. It’s going to be a nice project. they did request the funding that was reviewed the last meeting of $9,500. Tim received the bill/invoice this past week so they should be receiving the check hopefully within the next week or two and they can move forward with that project. They still have to go through the engineering stamp as was mentioned at the last meeting so all of that is starting to come together for them. Tim made sure that he mentioned the bollards as Chris mentioned.

1. *Shared Walking Path*

Tim still has not met but he did get an update from the engineering company. They said due to funding deadlines and restraints, they are going to do a smaller design with short segments from South Main Street up to the Senior Center. There is a meeting on the 20th which Tim will attend. It looks like they have shortened it down compared to the last time they discussed. Tim said that they will be keeping Tim in the loop and once he hears anything then he will let the commission know.

The chairman called for new business.

**New Business (4):**

1. *West Nile Virus Update*

Currently at a moderate level for West Nile Virus. Low for E.E.E. Tim has been keeping all of the leagues informed. Tim would just like to remind and encourage players and families to wear bug spray especially around Borden Colony where it gets rather buggy. If anything changes he will keep the leagues and the commission informed.

1. *Before and After School Program Update*

Tim announced it was the first day of the school year program. It was a busy day but Bethany and her staff did a great job. Everything went as smooth as it could go. There were the usual questions from parents which happens every year but he is very happy with how day one went. They’ll get there, everything will smooth out over the next couple of days, and then they’ll be back into the regular routine going forward. The program is completely full with a couple of spots open at Merrill but those will fill up really fast, so they have a full boat this year.

1. *Fall Field Use Permit Applications (3)*

*Fearless One Sports Academy*

Looking for their annual fall permit. Tuesday – Friday 5:00p.m. – 8:00p.m. and Sunday mornings – afternoons. They would have to stop around 2:00p.m. – 2:30p.m. because the Special Olympics will be coming in at that point to take over the complex for flag football. There are no conflicts. Tim did however, let them know that they cannot start until R.M.S. soccer is done because they will have tryouts and games. Besides that, everything is good over there for the R.M.S. softball field. They charge them $600 in the spring and in the summer for a total of $1,200 but it would be one season so it would come to a total of $600.

Chris made a motion to approve the Fearless One Sports Academy for $600. Riley seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

*Early Childhood Parent Organization*

The Merrill P.T.O. would like to do their Fall Festival on October 14th from 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. on the Merrill blacktop. Tim did speak to football and fall baseball/softball which had no conflicts. Last year, they did not charge for this event.

Chris made a motion to approve the Merrill P.T.O. permit. Riley seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

*Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School Cross-Country*

The Cross-Country team is asking for two dates which will be their two meets of the year. they will be held on September 13th and October 4th. Tim spoke to Bristol Plymouth because they have practices on those days but those end at 4:00p.m. so once they finish, Cross-Country can come in and run their meets. Tim also spoke with soccer to let them know the dates of the meets.

Chris made a motion to approve the Bridgewater-Raynham Cross-Country Permit for no fee. Riley seconded and a unanimous vote followed.

1. *Gazebo Damages*

Tim added an item in regards to the gazebo damages. The fundraiser event over the weekend was very successful but there was major damage to the gazebo field out there. Tim provided a packet of before and after photos for the commission to review what it normally looks like compared to the damages that they are currently dealing with. There is a time-crunch to get this fixed because Raynham Community Day will be a week from Sunday. Tim had Yukon come out today. Mass Rough Riders has a group of landscapers coming out to give an estimate on Thursday. Yukon can start as early as Friday. There is approximately ten days to get this ready. They recommended to start Friday and giving it a couple of more days to dry out. They will need to roll it, bring approximately fifty yards of fill, clean it up by getting rid of excess hay and horse manure, and then they’ll just have to block off that really bad area for Raynham Community Day. Nobody should be driving back there, unfortunately, signs were ignored, and that’s how the real major issues popped up.

Chris said that the department is trying to fight for the building for a purpose, and one of those purposes was utilized this past weekend by a group the department wants to see here. Regardless of what warnings were there and communication, or how they communicated with the participants is another question. Chris said that he would hate to see them not return. He feels it is necessary that they need to take responsibility for it.

Jim agreed. He added that’s what the Gymkhana is all about.

Chris said regardless of happens with the current damage he would like to discuss the future. He asked where else they could have parked their trailers or let their horses graze during their event.

Tim said that the only place they discussed parking was any of the parking lots around the complex. However, in terms of grazing that is the only area.

Chris said that they aren’t eating, just grazing, moving to keep their joints going.

Tim said yes.

Chris said that the field looks awesome and it has for the past several years. He thinks that one of the reasons that it has looked so good is because it hasn’t been utilized to this extent.

Jim asked if it was really wet.

Tim said that between the rain and the storm that came through in mid-August, nothing has been able to really dry out. It’s incredible how fast the grass was growing on the ball fields to the point where they turned the water off weeks ago because they can’t keep up. No matter what, they have to get this fixed, one way or another. Tim said that he can handle talking to them about how they can improve this going forward but they don’t want to lose this group. This is what the Gymkhana is all about and it’s what we have been fighting for these past few years. They need to make sure that the group has a better understanding of when they are asked to do something, there is a reason. Tim was frustrated that they were warned that this could happen, and unfortunately, it did.

Chris mentioned that the last instance he can remember of unintentional damage done to that field was when they were parking to close to the gazebo and leaving horse manure behind which was killing the grass around where people gather for the Summer Concert Series. He reiterated that it happened years ago and was the last time he can remember having an issue.

Tim recalled another time that damages were done during the October Bike Race a few years ago prior to COVID.

Chris said they knew that they were most likely going to cause the damage and they knew that they were going to repair it.

Tim agreed. It’s just a wet, low-lying area.

Chris mentioned that the leadership of the Rough Riders organization has changed. Some people have unfortunately, passed away, or moved on and other people have taken over so there may be a break in communication or working knowledge of the area. He still thinks that they need to take responsibility somehow whether it’s in-kind services or assisting with the financial support needed to repair the area. As for the future, they’re going to need to physically delineate an area where the horses can be, possibly, that gravel lot for the multi-purpose field parking. Chris noticed that a lot of the damage is under trees for the shade. If shade is necessary, they will be responsible for bringing their own shade.

Tim agreed.

**Commissioners’ Reports:**

**Riley Menconi:** Wished the kids the best of luck going into the school year. He also wished the best of luck to Bethany and her staff for the start of the school year.

**Chris Shaw:** Chris said that the summer has flown by. He has seen a lot of good activity, good things, and huge tournaments in town. It’s nice to see that people are getting the opportunity to utilize the facilities. There has been a lot of good collaboration for the users of the facilities. Chris recognized Sammi on her three-year anniversary.

Sammi thanked Chris.

**Jim Brow:** Jim asked if there was any work done on the Raynham State Forrest. It looked like someone was in there doing some linen and chips on that main path.

Tim said the state must have been in there. Tim has been communicating with them, trying to coordinate, to get them out there for a while now.

**Staff Reports:**

**Sammi:** Sammi wished the kids good luck this school year. It’s nice to see everyone on the first day back. It’s cool to see how the site transitions. Bethany and Heather work together to get everything completely flopped for the before and after school program. It was a busy week preparing but it came out really nice and everything is back to where it needs to be. It’ll be a good school year, it’s worth it.

**Tim reported the following:**

-Tim said that he recently had the fence at the Merrill School playground fixed. It was falling down on two sides. He had some new mesh put up, fixed the bars, and replaced the gate that was falling off on the other side. It made it look a lot better and the Principal was happy.

-Fall Programing is up on the department website. Flyers are going to be going home to the schools really soon. They’ll be doing Madscience, Adult Basketball, Drama Kids, Legos, and more. They have a lot of afterschool activities coming up starting late September, early October.

-The third annual Trunk-Or-Treat will be on Thursday October 25th. The past two years have been a great success so far so they are looking forward to another one this year.

-Tim wished all of the kids a wonderful school year. He also the Raynham Youth Soccer and the Raynham Giants good luck on their upcoming seasons.

Chris made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Riley seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:22p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sammi Sturtevant

Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary