

**SELECT BOARD/PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MINUTES**  
**JANUARY 28, 2023, AT 12:00 PM**  
**TOWN HALL, SELECT BOARD CONFERENCE ROOM**

**CALL TO ORDER/OPENING**

Mr. Phillips called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM. Mr. Pingeton reported that there was a quorum of Parks Committee members present. Chair Allen Phillips, Vice Chair Rick Antanavica, Second Vice Chair Dianna Provencher, Selectman Herb Duggan Jr, Selectman John Bujak, Town Administrator David Genereux, and School Superintendent Brett Kustigian were in attendance. Parks & Recreation Committee members in attendance were Chair Bob Pingeton, Lucky Margadonna, Paul Fontaine, Susan Sears, & Nancy Ortiz.

**1. SCHEDULED ITEMS**

**a. Discussion on Parks & Recreation Operations**

Mr. Phillips asked Mr. Genereux to explain the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Genereux explained that concerns have been raised regarding the purpose of the Parks and Recreation Committee, issues with scheduling fields and facilities, establishing rules, and having common fees for usage.

Mr. Pingeton stated that there are not enough programs in the Town. He stated that the Parks Committee used to have field trips and other activities but has not had the funds to schedule activities for many years. He further stated that he would like to have the Parks and Recreation Committee have that as its primary focus, as opposed to doing field maintenance. Mr. Phillips stated that there should be a single schedule for scheduling, to be enforced by the Select Board and the Parks and Recreation Committee. He further stated that everyone should work together toward this goal.

Mr. Margadonna discussed the "pecking order," which is used to determine priority in scheduling. He stated that the Highway Department's former administrative staff member used to enforce this, but that is no longer happening with the two scheduler's who are working now. He spoke about a conflict between the Legion and a private league that occurred last summer. The private league had rented a field for a day that the Legion had a playoff game. Per the Order, the Legion should have had the field that day, but could not play because the contractor had the field already.

Ms. Sears stated that rules need to be enforced, especially for internal spaces. Mr. Phillips said that were rules already established, and asked Mr. Genereux to locate them. There are also rules on the Town Website. There was also a separate three-page set of rules that someone was aware. Mr. Phillips stated that they need to be located and compared.

Mr. Margadonna stated that groups that are new should be vetted first by the Parks and recreation Committee to determine where they should be playing. He stated that the Committee went all year without knowing what was on the schedule. Mr. Pingeton stated that the Committee has avoided scheduling in the school gyms, because they were not welcome there. Mr. Phillips stated that the under the new Superintendent, that the gyms and fields will be available for activities.

Mr. Phillips Proposed setting up a work group of three people, members of Parks, School, and Select Board. Mr. Philipps further proposed that Mr. Bujak represent the Select Board, to which Mr. Bujak agreed. The purpose of the work group would be to review the user fees, scheduling, and other operational issues, and bring it back to the Board.

Mr. Duggan stated that regarding the schedulers, and the potential reduction of two schedulers to one, the Town should consider that changes to this process may affect someone's livelihood, and that must be kept in mind. He further stated that the Select Board should let go some of its control on things such as this. Mr. Phillips agreed, and that the work group should be able to resolve these issues, as we are not that far away on agreements on many of these issues.

Ms. Ortiz asked is we are the problem solvers, is the group going to look at all of the rules, for booth outdoor and indoor use. Mr. Phillips stated that we are 1 Leicester. We must set rules and policy and should not break them once we set them.

Ms. Ortiz then stated that the Parks and Recreation web page is out of date, and the schedule for field and facility use is not available. Mr. Phillips asked Mr. Genereux what the process is to get an update to a committee page. Mr. Genereux stated that we do not manage Committee pages but will make changes when requested. Mr. Phillips asked that can the committees be given passwords to make their own changes. Mr. Genereux stated that they could not. Mr. Phillips suggested that a form be created for committees to send change requests, which Mr. Genereux agreed to.

Ms. Sears asked if the town and school use different scheduling software. Mr. Bujak replied that there is a shared calendar, and it is available on the Parks and Recreation on the website.

Mr. Margadonna stated that Parks and Recreation should be vetting where new sports play, citing Racquetball as an example.

Paul Landry introduced himself as coach at Leicester High School, who also the Junior Woo Sox for Double Play Sports. Mr. Landry stated that Double Play is willing to come in and maintain Baseball and softball fields, including lining and dragging fields for all games at no cost. Furthermore, they are willing to pay for field time. Mr. Landry stated that they want to work out a lease agreement. Mr. Pingeton asked if they were still using the Abby Kelley field in Worcester. Mr. Landry stated that they were, but it is not suitable for game play.

Mr. Pingeton stated that Double Play had requested a lease last year, for which he referred them to the Town Administrator's Office but did not hear anything back. Mr. Genereux explained that procurement rules would not allow a lease connected to maintenance to be done without a procurement process. However, the Town can accept volunteer work without commitment, so Double Play could do field maintenance as a voluntary service and be scheduled on a per game basis as they are now. Mr. Landry stated that they would not be willing to perform services, even voluntary services, without a contract guaranteeing field time.

Ms. Ortiz stated that Parks and Recreation had not filed an annual report since 2019. She asked what the role/mission of the Parks/Rec Committee. Mr. Phillips stated that the role of Parks and Recreation is to increase activities and programs within the Town.

Meg Bouchard, of the Leicester Tree Lighting Committee asked if only board members are going to be part of the work group, and if the group was going to look at everything? Mr. Phillips stated that people working together can resolve the issues. The Town would be responsible for field maintenance.

Mr. Margadonna asked how are the fees to be seen, and if they are going to be used for maintenance or expansion of programs? Mr. Phillips stated that the fees would be used to cover both.

Lee Dykas of Central Mass Youth League Basketball stated that they are a nonprofit that is made up of Town kids consisting of seven teams and eighty-five families. He stated that he had gotten bumped by out of using a gym by a soccer organization that was preparing teams for spring soccer. He stated that he was curious regarding the fate of the old Middle School. Mr. Phillips stated that the old Middle School will continue to be available for use. Mr. Pingeton stated that Parks and Recreation always booked by the season, with basketball running until March 1. He stated that there should be no usage of gyms for other purposes until basketball season is over. Mr. Bujak stated that year-round practice is required. There is give and take, but we need to work together to make it all happen.

Ms. Ortiz stated that her passion is handball. All of these opportunities are wonderful, and we are hoping in the next five years there will be funding available for rec or leisure. She said that the Town needs to have more opportunities to mediate stress and anxiety.

Mr. Duggan requested that the basketball hoops be put back up at Towtaid. Mr. Pingeton stated that his request would be taken up at the next Parks meeting.

Mr. Margadonna stated that we needed to place additional signage on courts that would have rules that were specific to the use of the courts. Mr. Phillips stated that the Town has a standard sign discussing park rules. There should not be other signs for other areas. Ms. Ortiz passed around a handout showing the composition of other signs for handball and pickleball rules, including the type of ball to be used. She stated that she had paid for part of the new handball wall, and the rules should be posted. Mr. Phillips stated that paying for something does not give you the ability to make demands or rules. Signage should not be sport specific. There was discussion about small signage with QR codes on them.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Bujak, the motion carried (5-0-0) and the meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM.