



**TOWN OF HUDSON
PARK COMMISSION**
Division of Recreation
Town Hall
78 Main Street
Hudson, MA 01749
978-568-9642

PARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 20, 2020
Via REMOTE ZOOM at 7:00pm

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Hudson Park Commission meeting will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found below. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town of Hudson website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

The Hudson Park Commission meeting will be held via a Zoom Meeting (Internet)
Public Participation via calling in or using your computer is encouraged

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95372132296?pwd=UDlzb3RWN0ZNFEwZko4MUhFhakF6UT09>

Meeting ID: 953 7213 2296

Password: 941940

One tap mobile

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+13017158592,,95372132296#,,1#,941940# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location

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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

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Password: 941940

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/acG0thQXy>

1. Call Meeting to Order

A. Mr. Chaves called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Members present were Mr. Chaves, Mr. Roan and Mr. Bowen. Also present: Mr. Santos, Mr. Hannon and Mr. Aponte and Pam Helinek (Hudson

Conservation Agent)

Mr. Chaves read a statement regarding Zoom virtual meetings and Governor Baker's statement on the Covid-19 virus & Open Meeting Law.

2. Minutes to Approve:

A. Public Session – April 29, 2020

Mr. Chaves motioned to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried

Vote: 3 – 0, in favor

3. Citizens Issues / Special Interest Groups:

A. TBD

4. Personnel:

A. None

5. Director's Report:

A. Budget Cuts

Mr. Santos reviewed request set forth by the town's EA related to developing budget cut scenarios to represent 2%, 5% and 8% budget cuts. Mr. Santos stated that all town departments had been informed that the outlook on State Aid funding for all Massachusetts communities was uncertain. Mr. Santos explained to the park commission that the EA had made it very clear to that personnel cuts should be utilized as a last resort. Mr. Santos stated that as a result, Hudson Recreation may have to take a bigger hit to aid in the effort for other departments can keep their staffing in place. Mr. Santos then explained some areas where budget cuts could potentially be made. Mr. Chaves asked if staff cuts include lifeguards at the beach, to which Mr. Santos replied the town recreation budget covers approximately 50% of lifeguards and 50% of day program staff. Mr. Chaves stated that we run the risk if we go without certain items that we may never be able to get them back. Mr. Roan stated that he agreed with the statement previously made by Mr. Chaves and stated further that if we shut down the beach during this summer, it is fairly certain that we will have it open next year and therefore this is an area where cuts could be made without jeopardizing the program long term. Mr. Santos notified the park commission that we as a department can save the town substantial money if summer programming is cancelled or shortened. Mr. Santos asked the Park Commission to consider meeting again the following week in order to review budget cut proposals to be submitted to the EA/BOS.

6. New Business:

A. Summer 2020 Program and Operations Outlook in response to COVID-19

Mr. Santos explained that with new news coming out daily somedays he feels hopeful for summer programs and others not so much. Mr. Santos then shared the current challenges the staff are facing and preliminary plans on how we are to reopen. Mr. Aponte said we should open parks and facilities such as the skate park as soon as we can as long as the guidelines we set forth mirror those of the State. Mr. Hannon said to start reopening facilities slowly and to put signage up communicating everything with the public. Mr. Bowen agreed on taking it slowly, "using baby steps", when opening up facilities. Mr. Chaves stated that it sounded as if we would need to do a lot of policing at facilities this summer to ensure the public are following the rules. Mr. Bowen said that it is up to the residents to abide by the rules but running programs, while keeping staff and participants safe, falls on the recreation department. Mr. Chaves asked about the board of health hierarchy and their override process. Mr. Santos replied stating given the current situation we would continue to run all of our decisions through the BOH Director, for approval, as well as through the town's EA and Police Chief as needed. Mr. Santos mentioned we will only reopen facilities and run programs when we can ensure the health and safety of all those involved. Mr. Hannon said we have to check with the Board of Health to ensure they can handle any potential extra workload if cases were to increase due to the

reopening of facilities and programs. Mr. Santos then asked the park commission for their guidance on the reopening of the beach and splash pad. Mr. Chaves stated that he felt comfortable at this time publishing a “not to open sooner than” date for Centennial Beach. Mr. Bowen said that date could be June 29th. Mr. Santos then asked the commission to consider who would manage beachgoers and the daily operations should we allow use. Mr. Aponte brought up that capacity may have to be limited at the beach in order to open. Mr. Santos then pointed out that there are multiple entrances to the beach and it would be difficult to monitor people coming in and out of the facility, stating further that Marlborough is in the same situation as Hudson with regard to access. Mr. Santos mentioned that he spoke with Mr. Moses about starting the renovation construction project this summer and questioned if the funds were available for use with budget cuts looming; Mr. Moses informed Mr. Santos that budget cuts would not affect the money earmarked for the beach construction project.

Mr. Santos then brought up the splash pad and if we need to follow the 6 foot distance rules then we would not be able to fit many kids on the pad at the same time. Mr. Bowen stated that as guidelines are now we wouldn’t be able to open the splash pad due to the restrictions. Mr. Chaves questioned his previous statement related to the Park Commission making any official notice that the beach and splash pad could open on or now sooner than a future date. Discussion followed.

Mr. Chaves and Mr. Bowen both agreed that it was best not put an official date on a potential reopening as it will give false hope to the residents. Mr. Santos stated that at this time the options are to open the beach with restrictions at some point this summer or to not open at all and start construction as soon as we can. Mr. Santos advised the park commission to hold off on deciding on any statements related to the Beach and Splash Pad opening until the following meeting; that he and his staff would consider reopening options and also gather more info on how surrounding communities with inland beaches are handling reopening.

Mr. Santos then brought up youth sports and asked the park commission when they would consider permitting field use and suggested perhaps Phase 3 would be the time to start permitted field use again. Mr. Santos also brought up that Hudson High School is considering an outdoor graduation ceremony on the fields around HHS for their seniors. Mr. Bowen said if the Board of Health is OK with their plan than the park commission should support it as well. No further discussion on when the park commission would support permitted use of facilities took place.

B. Future potential sale of Hudson Elks property

Mr. Santos explained that he was contacted by the Hudson-Concord Elks recently who were interested in selling off some of their land to the Town of Hudson. Also that the Elks had also spoke to both the Community Development Department and Conservation Agent, who Mr. Santos asked to join the park commission meeting this evening. Mr. Santos informed the commission that the quickest way to consider purchasing the land would be to have an appraisal completed and seek out CPA funding to acquire the land at November 2020 town meeting.

Mr. Santos informed the commission that he was told by the Elks that front dirt parking lot is off limits and not for sale to the Town as it is being sold to a private developer. Mr. Santos asked the park commission if they were interested in the potential purchase of any of the land and if so what they envision for future use of the land. Mr. Chaves mentioned he was a member of the CPC and the Hudson land trust as well but would hold off on commenting until his fellow commissioners weighed in. Mr. Bowen said it would be a great piece of property to have and worthy to pursue and get the appraisal completed. Mr. Roan agreed and said we have used the property in the past and it would be a great option for us. Mr. Hannon agreed but also stated to be cautious because of the parking issue that may be created should there be no parking available where it’s currently located. Mr. Aponte agreed with Mr. Hannon on the potential parking challenges. Mr. Santos then explained the appraisal process. Mr. Chaves then brought up the front lot being sold to a private developer and if there was any way the Town could potentially buy those lots as well. Mr. Chaves cautioned in how to approach the appraisal stating that it should be performed in the best interest of the town and not done in a way to meet the needs of the Elks. Mr. Santos let Mr. Chaves know that if he wanted to

have a discussion with the Elks about the front lots he could certainly do so as a park commissioner. Mrs. Helinek said the Elks negotiated with their national organization to sell the front lots quickly in order to allow them more time to sell the area in the back. Mr. Chaves stated he would like to have that conversation with the Elks about the front lots on behalf of the park commission. Mr. Santos said the park commission should make a decision tonight on whether or not to move forward on the appraisal. Mr. Bowen motioned to have the appraisal done, seconded by Mr. Roan. Mr. Chaves stated that he would be voting against the motion as he felt we need the front parking lots to support the back field. Motion carried...vote 2-1, which approved proceeding with the appraisal. Mrs. Helinek stated that she would be speaking with her commission the following evening to see if they would support sharing the cost of the appraisal with the park commission, then left the meeting. Mr. Santos stated he would help coordinate a meeting between the Elks and Mr. Chaves. Mr. Chaves then said the entire Elks property would be great for recreation. Mr. Santos explained that although he too supported having the appraisal done that if we were to proceed with requesting CPC funds to purchase the land, it would certainly impact our recreation master plan and other projects that may seek use of similar CPC funds.

7. Old Business:

A. Follow up to meeting with SMILE 2 Play – The Hudson Playground Project

Mr. Santos updated the commission on the meeting he had with Smile 2 Play – The Hudson Playground Project and informed the commission that he would be sending them a formal notification as a follow up, informing them that their project is currently on hold as discussed at their meeting held on May 5, 2020.

8. Communications and/or Correspondence to be noted by Commissioners:

A. None

9. Announcements/Adjournment

A. Next meeting scheduled for May 27, 2020 at 7pm.

B. Mr. Bowen also stated that he spoke with Mrs. Guidotti and she would prefer to wait until next baseball season to do a ceremony on the renaming of the baseball field.

Mr. Bowen motioned to adjourn at 9:02pm, seconded by Mr. Chaves and carried...

Vote: 3 – 0, in favor

Motion to Approve: Mr. Chaves

Second: Mr. Bowen

Vote: 2 – 0, in favor

Date: June 3, 2020