



**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 27, 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/99372012756?pwd=MDZuM1Q0K2g2ZGU2RlZnaEo5ZENUdz09>

Meeting ID: 993 7201 2756

Password: 018164

One tap mobile

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1. Call Meeting to Order

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

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 – May 20, 2020

Mr. Bowen motioned to pass on approving the minutes from May 20th until the next meeting.

Seconded by Mr. Roan and carried...

Vote: 3 – 0, in favor of passing over until next meeting

3. Citizens Issues / Special Interest Groups:

A. None

4. Personnel:

A. None

5. Director's Report:

A. None

6. New Business:

A. None

7. Old Business:

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

Mr. Santos explained to the park commission what had occurred since the last meeting; the skate park had been reopened to residents and signs went up on picnic tables in English and Portuguese for patrons to use at their own risk as the tables are not being sanitized by the Town of Hudson.

Mr. Santos reviewed the recreation department's recommendations on facilities and programs due to Covid-19. These included not having any concerts prior to July 5th; Opening the splash pad sometime during phase three of the state's reopening plan; closing the beach for the duration of 2020 allowing for an earlier start of the beach renovation project; no summer programs offered prior to July 5th as we are awaiting more guidelines to be released by the state; and reopening of the riverside tennis courts to play tennis only, with members of the same household, and not allowing Pickleball until further notice, starting June 1st.

With regard to permitted field and facility use the recreation department recommended not authorizing non-municipal permitted use of any park commission properties prior to the start of phase three of the state's reopening plan; further that no exact start date for permitted use has been set and restrictions will most likely apply when allowed.

The park commissioners commented on each item individually as follows:

Concerts:

Mr. Bowen agreed with the recreation department that no concerts should take place prior to July 5th. Mr. Roan agreed and Mr. Chaves asked why we don't cancel the entire concert season. Mr. Santos replied that he was awaiting additional guidelines and did not want to cancel all summer concerts just yet. Mr. Chaves agreed saying, "that sounds like a good plan".

Splash Pad:

Mr. Chaves asked how we decided on an opening for the splash pad during phase three? Mr. Santos explained that the earliest date they had recommended to the commission was 3 weeks after the proposed authorized start date the state had published, allowing for more time to ensure patron safety measures can be met given the small foot print of the pad. All three park commissioners agreed that was a good plan.

Summer Programs:

Mr. Santos explained that it would be very difficult to run programs prior to July 5th as we needed more time to prepare. Mr. Roan, Mr. Bowen and Mr. Chaves all agreed with Mr. Santos.

Riverside Tennis Courts:

Mr. Santos explained that he and some others had concerns that if Pickleball were allowed to be played yet not managed properly, people from other communities would come to Hudson to play Pickleball as many of the surrounding courts are still currently closed for this activity. And while they expected a decent amount of use from tennis players they felt that pickleball being so popular could attract larger crowds, presenting concerns related to appropriate distancing and group gatherings.

Mr. Santos expressed that the staff thought it would be best to start with just tennis to see how it goes before considering adding pickleball. Mr. Santos explained to the park commission that the pickleball court is much smaller than the tennis court which may cause individuals to play closer together and further that the sports is often played in a doubles format as well. Ending his explanation Mr. Santos stated that they have to figure out how to manage pickleball before allowing play. Mr. Bowen stated that when other communities start to open their pickleball courts it could ease the concern of non-residents coming to Hudson to play. Mr. Chaves believes communicating with the Hudson pickleball group is good and makes sense to talk with them.

Mr. Santos replied saying he had spoken to the Hudson MA Pickleball group and he felt they would support their decision to not allow pickleball until further notice.

Mr. Aponte explained that with the current guideline of players having to be from the same household it could be problematic for both tennis and pickleball. Mr. Hannon added that pickleball is also a social gathering for the groups who play. Mr. Chaves questioned if there was any way to ensure only residents use the facility? Mr. Santos replied saying they could monitor the facility and ask for proof of residency of those there. Mr. Santos also explained that the gates would be locked open so people do not have to touch them when going in and out of the facility. Mr. Chaves said consulting with the Hudson MA Pickleball group is a great benefit and that the recreation staff should continue to work with them on this issue.

Permitted facility use:

Mr. Santos expressed that the earliest the commission should consider permitted use of field and facilities is June 29th, regardless of state issued guidelines which suggest an earlier date was acceptable. Mr. Chaves suggested changing the date to July 5th so it was in line with other offerings and facility openings discussed earlier that evening. Mr. Santos told the park commission that some groups such as HYBS are eager to use facilities due to other communities possibly opening up for similar uses. Mr. Santos said setting a date now will give organizations time to prepare appropriately for an opening. Mr. Hannon then explained that the perspective and feedback from the larger national organizations that govern groups like HYBS created much excitement for many programs and other communities may already have exact return dates set. Mr. Hannon agreed that having a hard date would be good for planning purposes, for all those involved including the preparation of the fields for play. Mr. Bowen stated that June 29th could be a feasible date as it is in line with the governor's orders. Mr. Chaves said it would be a good idea to get permit applications in now so that we are aware of what groups may be asking for. Mr. Santos replied that the staff would continue to handle all of these requests internally and that due to Covid-19 he would be sure to include the Board of Health on every request. Mr. Bowen agreed that the Board of Health should sign off on everything. Mr. Santos stated that he had had some concerns about how much money they may need to spend on field preparation for a shortened summer season, given the looming budget cuts and that when considering approving the use of facilities, the park commission should determine if they want to allow non-residents access to town facilities or keep use limited to Hudson residents only. Mr. Bowen stated that all play that is to resume may have to be in town only, with no traveling teams for this year. Mr. Santos stated that the BOH may support limiting use of facilities to residents only. Mr. Hannon explained that HYBS would have to figure out their softball and Babe Ruth league programs as those play other towns. Mr. Chaves asked for guidance and an opinion from the Board of Health regarding allowing non-residents onto town fields and facilities via permitted use during the upcoming months. The park commissioners agreed that it would be good to wait and hear from the board of health, prior to making any decisions on the matter.

Centennial Beach:

Mr. Santos explained some of the challenges with running a beach during the upcoming summer given all the state issued requirements and guidelines that involve protecting staff, distancing guidelines for patrons, facial covering/mask requirements, bathroom patron use and cleaning procedures and contact-less beach parking pass sales. Mr. Santos said he felt that it would be extremely difficult to continually and properly ensure the safety the patrons and staff, stating further that the beach renovation project could start earlier than planned should the beach remain closed for the summer. Mr. Santos informed the commission that the lake commission was going to work with the recreation department to ensure we had the appropriate buoys in the water for safety reasons, regardless of their decision on opening the beach. Mr. Santos stated if a decision was made to close the beach for the season, he would have temporary construction fence installed at the main entrance and move forward with the installation of a permanent fence, with gate/pedestrian access along the lakeshore side of the beach property in order to allow for better control in limiting patron access to the facility both during times of closure and during the construction project. Additionally, that the recreation department could hire staff to sit at the beach to monitor the facility until the fence is placed. Mr. Chaves agreed with the recommendation and said timing could be good to start the renovation project sooner rather than later. Mr. Chaves asked how the this decision on the beach would be announced. Mr. Santos said via mass email, rec and town websites and social media platforms as available. Mr. Santos stated that at some point he we could reach out to the local paper to see if they'd be interested in doing a write up on the closure and beach renovation plans. Additionally Mr. Santos said that he'd notify the Board of Selectman with a decision once made. Mr. Chaves agreed that was a good plan and was ok with hiring staff, if we chose to manage locations to ensure safety.

Each item discussed was then voted on separately:

- No concerts until July 5th the earliest. Mr. Chaves motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Bowen, and carried. Vote 3-0 in favor
- Splash Pad to remain closed until at least June 29th. Mr. Chaves motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Bowen, and carried. Vote 3-0 in favor.
- Centennial beach to close for the season and begin renovation project ASAP. Mr. Chaves motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Bowen, and carried. Vote 3-0 in favor.
- No summer programs prior to July 5th. Mr. Chaves motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Bowen, and carried. Vote 3-0 in favor.
- Riverside Tennis Courts to open June 1st, with restrictions and with no pickleball until further notice. Mr. Chaves motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried. Vote 3-0 in favor.
- Permitted facility use. No action taken until the Board of Health provides input.

B. Potential FY21 Budget Cuts

Mr. Santos explained the budget cut scenarios (2%, 5%, and 8% reductions) he had prepared as directed by the Town's EA. Stating further that by pushing out program start dates to July 5th the town funded payroll for day programs would be reduced by \$8-9K, and with closing the beach a further reduction in the same budget line would equate to an additional \$20-25k in savings. This plan would subsequently not force any immediate reduction in the operating budget and only affect town funded seasonal payroll. All three park commissioners said that they supported these strategies used to identify areas to reduce the FY21 budget. Mr. Chaves asked if the town would be receiveing and state or federal financial assistance related to Covid-19. Mr. Santos answered that the town is utilizing all assistance programs available to them but as a rec department had not made any purchases to date that would qualify for reimbursement. Mr. Chaves motioned to approve the FY21 budget reductions strategies as presented, seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried...
Vote 3-0, in favor

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

A. None

9. Announcements/Adjournment

A. Next Meeting scheduled for 7:00pm. June 1st 2020.

Items for discussion at the next meeting: Pickleball, Hiring temporary staff to manage the Beach or other facilities, feedback From the Board of Health on facility use and summer 2020 programming

Mr. Chaves motioned to adjourn at 8:24pm, seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried...

Vote: 3 – 0, in favor

Motion to Approve: Mr. Chaves

Second: Mr. Bowen

Vote: 2 – 0, in favor

Date: June 3, 2020