



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

PARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 3, 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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Meeting ID: 993 7201 2756

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1. Call Meeting to Order

A. Mr. Chaves called the meeting to order at 7:06pm. Members present were Mr. Chaves and Mr. Bowen. Also present: Mr. Santos, Mr. Hannon, and Mr. Rich Lenox (12 Philips Street, Hudson)

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. Chaves motioned to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried
Vote: 2 – 0, in favor

B. Public Session – May 27, 2020

Mr. Chaves motioned to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried
Vote: 2 – 0, in favor

3. Citizens Issues / Special Interest Groups:

A. Mr. Lenox was present and expressed he was interested in listening to the discussion about Summer Programs, which he saw on the posted agenda.

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

Pickleball Update – Mr. Santos informed the Park Commission that on Friday, May 29th, an announcement was pushed out informing members of the community that the Riverside Courts would be open on Monday, June 1st, but restricted to Tennis only. Pickleball would not be allowed until a later date. As of this meeting, no one has contacted the Recreation Office either via phone or email to express concerns or complain about the Tennis-only restriction. Through some personal contacts, Mr. Santos has learned some pickleball players in Town don't agree with the restriction, but are understanding. Overall the response has been "better than expected". Since the Courts opened on Monday, the Recreation Department staff has been monitoring use of the courts. On 16 different occasions over a 3 day period, the number of players on the courts has been tracked. The highest number recorded so far at any one time has been 4. Those 4 were playing pickle ball and were asked to leave the courts. Mr. Santos asked the Park Commission if they would be ok authorizing the Recreation Department staff to use their best judgement when it comes to opening up the courts for pickleball use. The belief now is that pickleball could be allowed during Phase 2 with the same guidelines and restrictions in place for Tennis. Mr. Chaves asked for clarification on whose nets would be used for pickleball (the Recreation department's or individual players). Mr. Santos responded and said that most likely players would be required to bring their own net, but still not certain. After clarification, Mr. Chaves agreed with allowing the Recreation staff to use their best judgement with regard to opening the court to pickleball, as long as the Health Department gives its blessing. Mr. Bowen agreed with Mr. Chaves and expressed his "complete trust" in the Recreation Department staff and requested that the Health Department approves any plan to allow pickle ball.

Summer Staff Update – Mr. Santos informed the commission that with the announcement last week that Centennial Beach would be closed for the summer, there was continuing discussion about whether or not staff would need to be hired to monitor the facility and keep people off the beach. Since the decision to close the Beach was made, Mr. Santos has had discussion with Weston & Sampson (the company overseeing the beach project design). Based on that conversation, Mr. Santos is confident that the project can be put out to bid in the next few weeks and the process of getting a contractor on board can progress. In the meantime, there are parts of the project that can be

handled internally, sooner than later. Within the next few weeks, it is expected that fencing can be put up at the beach entrances and some of that internal work can begin. Once the fencing is put up the site will be secure and remain secure thru the project. Securing the site, and adding "No Trespassing" signage eliminates the need to hire seasonal staff to monitor the beach and allows Hudson Police stricter enforcement of the beach closure. Mr. Chaves asked for clarification on how much involvement Weston & Sampson would have in the bidding, review and reference checks part of the project. Mr. Santos responded and said Weston & Sampson would be completely involved, as all of those areas are included in the scope of work. Mr. Chaves inquired about whether or not shore access would be open from the reservoir and if any of the work to be coordinated by the recreation department, such as tree work needed additional approval by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Santos responded and said there would be no fencing along the shore as there is work planned for that area; that all tree work feel outside of the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction; and that the contractor would be required to install the necessary silt and erosion fencing once they begin. Mr. Santos stated again that once construction fencing is installed, "No Trespassing" signs will be posted, which will make beach access by anyone prohibited. Mr. Bowen inquired about the buoys that had been placed in the water. Mr. Santos informed the commission that the buoys were put in the Fort Meadow Commission. With no further questions, Mr. Bowen said he believes the project is "good to go".

Facility Use Update – Mr. Santos began by recapping last week's discussion in which the Park Commission asked for Board of Health guidelines with regard to opening facilities to user groups and in particular if non-residents would be allowed to use facilities in Hudson. As of this meeting, the Board of Health has not provided any guidance but expected to do so within the next week. Mr. Santos reiterated his previous statement that the Park Commission should consider setting a start date, so user groups, especially the youth sports groups can make plans. In summary, Mr. Santos stated, the questions before the Park Commission are 1) when do we allow permitted use and 2) once we do allow use, are there further restrictions on access for residents –vs- non-residents? Mr. Lenox asked for clarification on whether there was a different timeline for groups consisting exclusively of Hudson resident and those groups who do not consist exclusively of Hudson residents. Furthermore, Mr. Lenox asked would the Park Commission rely strictly on Health Department guidelines when making their decision.

Mr. Chaves responded and said the Governor sets guidelines based on recommendations from his own Health Department and the Park Commission would follow the same approach and rely on the local Board of Health when making decisions. Mr. Chaves went on to say that the Park Commission needs to have the Board of Health's blessing in all we do.

Mr. Bowen agreed with Mr. Chaves' statement but questioned when and if we would be ready to meet the general guidelines set forth by the Governor.

Mr. Santos stated that it appears things are headed in the right direction, but the Board of Health is taking a very conservative approach to reopening. Stating further that Phase II is the big step in the reopening plan; the next couple of weeks will be telling; and that the Board of Health seems to approve of the approach we have been taking with regard to the decisions we have made to date.

Mr. Lenox expressed an opinion that it might be a "pipe dream" for any sports this summer and that the organizations he is involved with appreciate the challenges being faced. Mr. Lenox encouraged the Park Commission to "push" where it can "for the good of the kids". Saying that, "Kids need some sort of normalcy, but in the end we must keep everyone's safety in mind."

Mr. Chaves and Mr. Bowen both agreed with Mr. Lenox's final statement. Mr. Chaves acknowledged that even though potential dates have been discussed, it is not possible for those involved in youth sports to just "flip the switch". Mr. Chaves encouraged Mr. Santos to "press" the Board of Health, when he can, with the aim of getting things reopened as soon as it can be done safely.

Mr. Lenox then inquired if the Recreation Department was monitoring surrounding Towns to see what they are doing. Saying, "If other Towns take an opposite approach from Hudson, people in Hudson may contact the Department to ask why?" Mr. Santos responded that the Recreation Department is in regular contact with surrounding Town and within the "Recreation" circle and that

many surrounding departments are on the same page, regardless of what individual independent organizations are pushing out for information.

Mr. Bowen concluded the discussion by addressing Mr. Lenox and stating the Park Commission is an ally of the youth sport organizations, but safety needs to come before all else.

Summer Rec Programs Update – Mr. Santos began by presenting the Park Commission with the Summer Camp guidelines released on June 1st at 3:30pm. Saying that while most of the guidelines pertain to “licensed camps”, which is a classification we do not fall under directly, we would need to abide by many of them. Included in that list are; no field trips, group size limited to 10 participants plus 2 staff members, staggered drop off and pick up times, physical distancing of 6’, significant sanitation and disinfectant requirements, as well as a required indoor space for emergency use which must provide 30 sq. ft. per individual. Mr. Santos informed the Park Commission that in the short time since the guidelines have been made public, the Recreation Department staff has been discussing them and members of the staff are split on whether we should run summer day programs. Further that a significant decision that may affect our ability is completely out of our hands, which is the need to meet the indoor space requirement. In order to meet this we would need access to a Hudson Public School building. As of this meeting, the School Department has been non-committal on us using its space but is considering it. Mr. Santos stated that if we are unable to get indoor space, we cannot operate. Mr. Santos expressed concerns about keeping staff and participant’s safe, saying that kids are social by nature and with that comes close physical contact at times while playing games and activities. Given the guidelines presented, Mr. Santos wonders how much “fun” a program would be.

Mr. Hannon expressed a desire to pursue a possible day program for the summer. Mr. Hannon acknowledged the challenges up front, but made a case for considering how the challenges could be overcome, stating further that summer recreation day programs are the department’s “bread and butter”. It’s what we do. Mr. Hannon stated that it’s his belief the kids and families in the community need something and that all avenues should be pursued before a final decision on whether or not to run a summer day program is made. He cautioned against rushing to a decision based on what seems like overwhelming restrictions however acknowledged that we are currently faced with making decisions using Phase II guidelines, knowing full well that we would not operate until Phase III.

Mr. Chaves stated he realized that recreational programs are of the utmost importance to the community and many residents rely on them for “child care” and “day care”. However, although the Recreation Department may feel pressure to offer programs solely based on those reasons, we must realize we are in different times. Decisions must be made on the basis of health while considering how to equitably serve the community. While the traditional programs people are used to may not be possible this summer, other summer programs such as one-time special events (drive-in movie, fishing derby) should be considered. Mr. Chaves concluded by stressing the need to get creative and the hope that this is only a one year deviation from what we’ve done in the past.

Mr. Bowen agreed with Mr. Chaves and added that 5-6 individual programs in late July and into August might be more realistic.

Mr. Santos added that it’s his belief public health concerns will be woven into the new norm and consideration must be given to how much time and effort will be required of the staff in order to put forth any and all recreation programs throughout the summer months. Saying that perhaps this summer the focus of Recreation should shift from its traditional focus on kids to a focus on families, alluding to the program ideas Mr. Chaves and Mr. Bowen referenced earlier.

Mr. Lenox asked if there was a feeling that the need for programs would there. Mr. Lenox suggested a survey be conducted to gauge such interest. Finally, Mr. Lenox inquired about the lead time needed to set up a program if restrictions and guidelines were loosened.

Mr. Santos responded to Mr. Lenox and said he liked the idea of a survey and that the Recreation Department staff would look into conducting one, as currently they did not know what the desire for programs is among members of the community. (note: Mr. Lenox has a daughter, who is a previous program participant and two sons, who are previous recreation employees). Mr. Santos inquired about his feelings on allowing his children to attend and work at the program, given the guidelines presented earlier. Mr. Lenox said he’d have no issues with his children attending a day program.

Mr. Santos responded to Mr. Lenox in respect to lead time, indicating 3-4 weeks would be needed to ensure staff, supplies, and facilities could be made ready.

Mr. Chaves concluded the discussion by saying no decision on whether to run or not run summer day programs will be made at this time, allowing the Recreation Department staff to review the guidelines in more depth, before making a recommendation to the Park Commission at a future meeting.

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

A. None

9. Announcements/Adjournment

A. Mr. Santos announced that the next Park Commission meeting would be held on Wednesday, June 10th at 7:00pm via Remote Zoom.

Mr. Chaves motioned to adjourn at 8:37pm, seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried...

Vote: 2 – 0, in favor

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| Motion to Approve: | Mr. Bowen |
| Second: | Mr. Chaves |
| Vote: | 3 -0, in favor |
| Date: | June 10, 2020 |