



# *Natick Recreation & Parks*

People Driven. Service Focused.

Travis Farley  
Recreation & Parks  
Director

February 13<sup>th</sup> 2023  
Commission Meeting  
Recreation and Parks

Present: Kelly McPherson, Wayne Szretter, Mike Fair, Barbara Sanchez, Seth Levine, David Ordway, Sandra Dower, Dave Hiller, Travis Farley, Deputy Director of Recreation and Parks and Andrea Verdelli, Recording Secretary

Absent: Jessica Ordway

Meeting called to order: 6:01pm

**Minutes:** "NYE Event remove starts at AMVETS, Hot chocolate and s'mores" Motion to pass with amendments by Mr. Ordway. Seconded by Ms. Sanchez.  
Motion passed unanimously.

## **Citizen's Concerns:**

None

## **Directors Report:**

Annual Report:

*Recreation and Parks Department organizational structure update:* New developments in the department include two new positions; Assistant Director of Programs and Services and Assistant Director of Resource Allocation. The two positions are intended to assist in the consolidation of all community services departments to improve the level of service for the community. Lauren Meurer has accepted the position as the Assistant Director of Programs and Services. The Resource Allocation position will be a facility-focused and responsible for permitting a blend of all fields and buildings under community services as well as oversee playground maintenance and assist with capital projects. A few other positions on COA are being created to blend with recreation including a volunteer coordinator.

*Roles/Responsibilities:* Mr. Farley states if there are any roles or responsibilities commissioners would like to take on or think he himself should to take on, please feel empowered to do so.

if there are any kinds of roles or responsibilities that commission wants to take on or have Mr. Farley take on, Mr. Farley would like to empower you to do so.

*Pickleball update:* Art Goodhind from Land Facilities Natural Resources installed wind screens at Connor Heffler Park. A survey was conducted for residents and non-residents exploring demand on the shared court between pickleball and tennis at Connor Heffler Park. Over 225 people completed the survey



# *Natick Recreation & Parks*

**People Driven. Service Focused.**

**Travis Farley**  
Recreation & Parks  
Director

which consisted of 55% residents and 45% non-residents. Based on the results and consideration of other tennis only courts in town, Mr. Farley proposes changing the recommended play days from 4 days of pickleball and 3 days of tennis to 5 days of pickleball and 2 days of tennis. Mr. Jim Acton, Pickleball instructor, states the tennis courts are more congested on the weekends and recommends Thursday to extend pickleball play. Mr. Doug Steinberg, Pickleball instructor, states since the pickleball nets are mobile they are being damaged. Mr. Szretter suggests making the pickleball nets permanent to try and avoid damage. Ms. Sally Evans, resident of Border Road in Natick, states she lives near the Connor Heffler courts and has concerns about advanced players intimidating beginners on the court, as well as non-residents outnumbering Natick residents and asks why the survey included non-residents. Mr. Farley wanted understand how many residents vs non-residents are using the courts. Mr. Acton agrees that more advanced players gather at the same time and suggests installing a white board to try and help organize the use of the courts. Mr. Steinberg states there would need to be a park monitor to oversee the organization and there is not enough space for demand. The intent of designating these courts to pickleball would aid in the delegation of court use. Mr. Szretter suggests installing a pickleball-only court at J.J. Lane park on the side designated to passive recreation. Mr. Levine states if pickleball is in demand, the commission would like to support it, but he also wants to ensure the tennis community has been heard. He adds if the demand for pickleball is this high, we may need to designate a fee to afford a park monitor, his biggest concern is Natick Residents not being able to utilize the courts they've already paid for in tax dollars. Mr. Farley found it difficult to reach the tennis community with the survey and will reissue the survey on a more public platform in an attempt to obtain more information from them, but adds he does spot checks on tennis days and can confirm the courts are empty. Mr. Farley agrees the department may be able to charge a fee, similar to rec basketball, and use those funds to afford a park monitor.

*Dug Pond:* Lauren Meurer will managing the beach for us this year.

*Boat Ramp:* Meeting in March with Bill Sprat, Facilities Manager, and Brian Lauzon, Deputy Chief of Police, to determine a plan to be proactive against the illegal swimming at the boat launch that prevents individuals from launching boats and fishing in the area. Mr. Farley invites neighbors to reach out to express their concerns to our department.

*Diving Board:* Mr. Farley reports a productive meeting with Kompan discussing logistics regarding the removal of the diving board. A timeline is proposed to remove it this Summer.

*MRPA Conference:* The Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Association conference is taking place from March 27<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>. Travis, Lauren, Melissa, and Aaron will attend to network and expand their education.

*Fall programming ideas:* Mr. Farley is hoping to add new programming to host at the Community Senior Center. If there is anything commissioners see in the community that could be a good addition, please let us know.

*Summer 1 Registration:* Registration starts Wednesday February 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon for Natick residents.



# *Natick Recreation & Parks*

**People Driven. Service Focused.**

**Travis Farley**  
Recreation & Parks  
Director

*Front Desk Support:* The front desk receptionist changed to a full-time position at the Community Senior Center and we are currently running interviews to fill her role.

*Rink Advisory Committee Update:* FMC meeting with Jon Marshall, Town Administrator, on February 28<sup>th</sup> for the rink advisory committee.

*Sweethearts Dance:* The Sweethearts dance was successful and featured a photo booth and DJ.

## **Common Requests:**

*Farmers Market:* Natick Center Cultural District to host their annual Farmers Market on Saturdays from May 6 until September 30, 2023 from 7:30am-1:30pm. Motion to approve made by Ms. Sanchez. Seconded by Mr. Szretter. Motion passed unannamously.

*MetroWest Walk to Fight Suicide:* American Foundation of Suicide Prevention to host their annual Metro West Walk to Fight Suicide on Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup> from 7:30am-12:30pm. Motion to approve by Ms. Sanchez. Seconded by Mr. Szretter. Motion passed unannamously.

*Earth Day:* Sustainability Committee to host the Earth Day Festival on Saturday, April 29, 2023 from 9:00am-1:00pm. Rec Dept. will have a table at the Earth Day festival. Motion to approve by Ms. Sanchez. Seconded by Mr. Szretter. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Member Announcements:**

*CRT:* No new updates

*NEETEGA:* Submitted annual update.

*PATH:* The organization is reaching a consensus on renaming the organization.

*Open Space:* No new updates.

*Charles River Dam:* No new updates.

*Gazebo Repair:* No new updates.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Ordway at 7:15pm. Second by Mr. Levine.

## **Next meeting date:**

March 13, 2023 at 6:00pm