



**NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES**

**May 18, 2023 7 PM**

Remote Meeting

Recording: <https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/LGze1WqTsE8jwTKC--4xu4kSh8jPjdoJ/playlists/2786/media/800503?autostart=false&showtabssearch=true&fullscreen=false>

**Present:** Jay McHale, Chair; Bea Bezmalinovic, Vice-Chair; Lisa Collins, Secretary; Laura Robert; Michael D'Ortenzio; Brandon Schmitt, NRC Director

**Guests:** Johanna Winkelman, Peter Serreze, Weston & Sampson staff - Brandon Kunkel, Lauren Schunk and Bryan Chmielewski

**Welcome and Meeting Guidelines**

Mr. McHale convened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

**Public Speak (non-agenda item)**

Johanna Winkelman spoke about the danger to pedestrians at the corner of Clifford and Smith Street, and asked the Committee to work with other Town departments to install additional safety measures.

**Field Use Study Presentation**

Weston and Sampson presented initial findings from the Field and Court Utilization Study. The board discussed the costs/benefits and health and safety data and disposal implications of artificial turf, requested a summary of the number of participants/teams that the usage numbers represent, and recommendations for capturing actual use and streamlining of permitting. The board then discussed next steps including a public forum scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Sound Policy Update**

Youth Softball submitted a permit request for the use of amplified sound for 5 upcoming dates on Warren Field. A summary of the discussion related to the permit request is as follows:

- Ms. Collins & Ms. Bezmalinovic met with Playing Fields Task Force and gathered information on sound requests in an attempt to reduce one-off sound requests and determine what the total demand would be for amplified sound. They asked the PFTF to prioritize the needs for all the groups reporting out Youth Baseball and Softball were the primary users among the PFTF
- Ms. Collins has reached out to other towns and many do not have Sound Policies, but most do issue permits for a number of requests. Ms. Collins would like the Commission to vote on Youth Softball permit and not delay the vote.
- Ms. Bezmalinovic shared that she went with the permit requester, Mr. Pete Serreze, the field to listen to a sample of the amplified sound (music and announcements) Ms. Bezmalinovic also said she went to Washington St., went across the street and from Linden Street and to just get an idea on sound and the level of sound in the area. She said it's barely audible on Washington Street but suggested additional sound checks would be valuable.

- Mr. McHale noted consistency is needed across fields.
- Ms. Robert added we should look into getting a sound expert to do an analysis for any fields to be considered for sound.
- Ms. Collins proposed using softball for a pilot program given its limited scale and scope
- Ms. Bezmalinovic noted the importance of defining the right metric for measurement, and not solely neighbor complaints. She also highlighted concerns with enforcement.
- Mr. D’Ortenzio said teams have used sound in the past and now we are developing a policy to enforce the use of sound. He also shared that this group (Mr. Peter Serreze) and their new request is attempting to meet the NRC in the middle for their events.
- Mr. Schmitt shared the request from Wellesley Youth Baseball and Softball. Mr. Serreze agreed with Ms. Collins to made some adjustments to move forward.
- Mr. Serreze was asking for a 2 hour 10 minute block for both all-star games on Saturday, June. 3 And on Thursday, the group is asking for 7:05-7:30 p.m. He clarified that the only games they announce rosters and do a national anthem were all-star games. Mr. Serreze said the 15 minutes would not be enough time so he was requesting on Thursday’s until all the girls names have been announced once or push the time to 8 p.m.
- Mr. McHale attempted to get pre-announcements for the teams so they can shut the sound off by 7:30 p.m. Mr. Serreze said maybe they can start the game earlier in order to get the names read over the PA system. Agreed to start the games earlier on Friday as well.
- Mr. Serreze said 20 minutes prior to the All-Star game would be the announcements.
- Ms. Collins said she would be there so see if the Pilot Plan works out. Ms. Bezmalinovic said she would clear her schedule to make an appearance. Ms. Robert would prefer a professional evaluation.
- Mr. D’Ortenzio asked Mr. Serreze review the difference in last year’s policy to this year’s request. Mr. Serreze reviewed past requests and admits the new request is a reduction in announcing but an increase in music. Mr. D’Ortenzio is comfortable approving the new reasonable request.
- Ms. Bezmalinovic agreed with Mr. D’Ortenzio about approval of the updated request for the softball league.
- Ms. Robert asked if Mr. Schmitt could show the modified request on the screen.
- Mr. Schmitt showed the original request and then proceeded to make the adjustments to the Pilot Plan for softball to have sound at certain games.
- The NRC voted on the softball request for sound for the following dates – May 19, May 25, June 2, June 3 and June 8 (All-Star Game) with the following parameters:  
 Friday, May 19, Music may begin 10 mins prior to game time, and other amplification can include music between innings and batter announcements until 830PM  
 Thursday, May 25, Music may begin 10 mins prior to game time, and other amplification can include batter announcements until 730PM  
 Friday, June 2, Music may begin 10 mins prior to game time, and other amplification can include music between innings and batter announcements until 830PM  
 Saturday, June 3: Music may begin 10 mins prior to game time, and other amplification can include music between innings and batter announcements until 915PM  
 Thursday, June 8. Music may begin 10 mins prior to game time, and other amplification can include batter announcements until 730PM

**After a motion was made (D’Ortenzio) and seconded (Collins), the board voted 4-1 to approve sound for the girls’ softball as outlined above - *McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-No, Collins-Yea, D’Ortenzio-Yea***

### **Article 43**

The Board discussed Article 43 from the 2023 Annual Town Meeting and engaging further with the proponents. Ms. Robert stated Article 43 was spurred by NRC actions concerning light and noise but proponents called for a joint study with other landholders. Mr. D’Ortenzio commented that he’s not aware of any plans for lights other than HT&F and existing uses. He said his take was frustration with a lack of enforcement and the need to get more serious about enforcement to drive better outcomes. Ms. Bezmalinovic noted three areas of concern: issues fall between boards and don’t get well attended, the need for more respect for known policies and better adherence, and people don’t feel policies are in place to be ready for significant change. Ms. Collins commented about accountability, fines and the process to impose them. She also felt that people follow the rules 90% of the time. Ms. Bezmalinovic commented that institutional knowledge is lost year to year and residents also have a hard time finding policies. She’s for “few simpler rules better enforced”. She’s not convinced of 90% adherence, acknowledged slippery slope and need to be better on top of operations, trash, traffic, noise as well as communication and collaboration issues. Ms. Robert stated that her take away was 30% of Town Meeting resonated with the proponents and the need for an advocacy group focused on the value of nature as it relates to lights, noise and the experience of night. Ms. Robert also stated that even though no other lights are planned at present, the proponents want to get out in front of what could happen rather than react to it. Mr. D’Ortenzio added more context on enforcement stating the important thing is fostering a feedback loop and communicating on a regular basis to help ensure compliance. Ms. Bezmalinovic spoke to the need for the various perspectives to listen to each other and values based decisions not being easy to get agreement. Ms. Robert suggested maybe the proponents should have a seat on Playing Fields Task Force. Ms. Bezmalinovic stated that Weston & Sampson are also surfacing some of the proponent’s concerns in the Field Optimization Study.

### **Liaison Reports**

- Playing Fields Task Force – No update.
- Trails – Ms. Robert reported that the Trails Committee had their first spring walk and Sunday is the Centennial work being done because the last date got rained out.
- Wetlands – Ms. Robert said the WPC got the same Hunnewell Track and Field presentation that the NRC received from the School Committee.
- Land Trust – Mr. D’Ortenzio reported that the WCLT is working on CRs with land owners in Town, And thanked Mr. Schmitt for all the work he is doing with the data collection and hope for a report in the next two months.

### **Director’s Report**

- **Permit Request** – Mr. Schmitt presented a request from a group that wants to use Morses Pond for Tri-Athlete training. It was originally scheduled for June 3-4 but they would like to use it the following weekend June 10-11 when the bathrooms will be open. **After a motion was made (D’Ortenzio) and seconded (Collins), the board voted to allow a local group of Tri-Athletes**

**to train for one weekend at Morses Pond. The vote was approved 5-0 - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yes, Collins-Yea, D'Ortenzio-Yea**

- **Permit Request** – The Recreation Department would like to bring a local band to play during beach open hours for a few days to play from July 22, 29 and the final day on August 20 from 2-3 p.m. Recreation will be there and running the operation at the beach. Discussion to continue but would like to give people a chance to comment on it. Mr. D'Ortenzio, who lives near the beach says he hears the announcements and that's the nature of living near the beach. The NRC will vote on this permit at the next meeting (June 1).
- **Morses Pond Summer Operations** - Mr. Schmitt shared information on the opening of Morses Pond. Morses Pond will unofficially open on June 5 through June 25. There will be no lifeguards; parking lot will be open to residents only; someone will be on sight to monitor parking lot but it is swim at your own risk until June 26. The Beach officially opens with lifeguards June 26 through August 20 (10 a.m.-5 p.m.).
- **Morses Pond Management** - Update from Ken Wagner and the Dredging Project – The report shared that there are minor contaminants in the sediment and Mr. Wagner will have more results in the future.
- **Morses Pond Harvesting** – The harvester will likely be place in the water next week (Week of May 22-26). Mr. Schmitt said the new boat will arrive later in the summer. The Shoreline Restoration project will also begin and take at least two weeks.
- **Climate Compact** The CRWA is requesting public input on information surrounding the dam at Longfellow pond. The video is available on the Climate Compact webpage and there is a feedback form to be filled out as well. The video is on the NRC website and here.
- **Simons Park Project** – Approximately 10,000 square feet of black tarp is now covering the area in preparation for the Habit to Habitat Pollinator Project. Residents are asked to stay off the tarp. Lisa Moore installed a story walk along the way for Wellesley's Wonderful Weekend. Mr. Schmitt shared photos of the tarp covering the area.

### Liaison Reports

- **Trails Report:** Ms. Robert reported a recommendation from the Trails Committee to install signs for walkers and bikers along Fuller Brook. Chair Jay Proznitz has accepted a position with Town Advisory Committee and Trails will be looking for another Chair for Trails. Ms. Robert also added that the Trails Committee has been discussing e-Bikes on Fuller Brook Park, and the NRC may want to discuss a policy related to the vehicular use of the path. Ms. Robert reported the next walk – Morses Pond Trail on Saturday, May 20. She also added June 3 is Hemlock Gorge and Echo Bridge (9-10 a.m.). Also she reported the Trails next meeting is June 20. Ms. Robert reported May 25 is the Wetlands next meeting. The Committee is expected to discuss the Peer Review.
- **Playing Fields Task Force:** Ms. Bezmalinovic reported that they reviewed field permit approvals for the summer. She reported the PFTF approved a one day permit at Schofield for the Jewish Arts Collaborative. They are doing an installation on the field, taking photos and then clearing it up immediately after. Ms. Bezmalinovic said sound was a major part of the discussion in the meeting.

- **Mobility:** Ms. Collins will work with Colette Aufranc to assess if there are any mobility issues at the aqueduct bathrooms. The second issue was a discussion on the eBikes.

### **Climate Emergency**

- Ms. Robert – discussed signs on NRC land suggesting that we make it a goal to reduce the number of signs and waste citing the example of excessive sets of four for Wellesley Wonderful Weekend and messaging that is not usable from year to year..
- Ms. Bezmalinovic – NY Times article about temperatures are souring. - <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/17/climate/record-heat-forecast.html>

### **Approve Minutes**

- Approval of minutes to be pushed to the next meeting upon receiving edits from the committee members.

### **Urgent Items Not Anticipated Prior to 48-hours of Posting**

N/A

### **Schedule meetings**

Meetings are set.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 PM

### **Materials Referenced**

Draft Field Utilization Study

Permit Requests: triathlon training at Morses Pond, Amplification for Girls Softball

Draft April 20, May 6 meeting minutes

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/17/climate/record-heat-forecast.html>

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Collins, Secretary