

**TOWN COUNCIL
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT WORK SESSION
November 9, 2015**

I. ROLL CALL

Town Council members present:

Kristine S. Trocki, President
Mary E. Meagher, Vice President
Blake A. Dickinson
Michael G. White
Thomas P. Tighe

Also in attendance:

Andrew E. Nota, Town Administrator
Wyatt A. Brochu, Town Solicitor
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
Michael C. Gray, Public Works Director
Edward A. Mello, Police Chief
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

II. CALL TO ORDER

The Town Council Parks and Recreation Department Work Session was called to order at 6:33 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown by Town Administrator Andrew E. Nota.

**III. TOWN COUNCIL PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT WORK SESSION**

- A) Parks and Recreation Department: review and discussion.
- B) Fort Getty: review and discussion
 - 1) Communication
 - a) Janis and Alan Loiselle re: Fort Getty Campground experience
- C) Parks and Recreation Director
- D) Story Circle: update.

Town Administrator Nota gave a Parks and Recreation Department PowerPoint presentation covering the ongoing dialogue regarding the Collins Center recommendations with a consolidated version of the extensive review and report that began two years ago. This evening's presentation covers departmental strengths and areas of improvement and should conclude the Collins Center report discussion. The documents covered will be posted on the Town website tomorrow morning. Discussion continued.

Town Administrator Nota recognized Parks and Recreation Department employees in attendance: Program Supervisor Jill Goldstein, Teen Center Coordinator Molly Conlon, Maintenance Supervisor Ron Parfitt and Assistant Greg Pimentel.

Mr. Nota stated the department needs a more formalized management structure and development of a strategic plan to guide it into the future. The information gathered through the Collins Center report and the ongoing discussion will assist new Parks and Recreation Director Andrew Wade in achieving the recommended improvements.

The presentation covered the five categories outlined by the Collins Center Study - Use of Information Systems and Technology, Management and Planning Efforts, Programmatic Services, Facilities, and Staffing and Organization - as follows:

- Background Materials – 2014 Department-wide assessment and inventory of Facilities and Programs developed by the Edward J. Collins Center
 - Organizational Assessment
 - Community Survey
- Audit Scope and Objectives – Comprehensive Organization and management analysis
 - Existing operations and service levels
 - Infrastructure & staffing levels
 - Public input sessions
- Overview of Department Strengths
 - Strong sense of involvement by residents
 - Staff engagement; accommodation of community needs
 - Popular annual events; solicited local sponsorships
- Improvement Opportunities/Recommendations
 - Implement formalized management & planning techniques
 - Develop Strategic Plan
- Categorical Breakdown of Critical Areas
- Use of Informational Systems and Technology to improve services to participants
 - Enhance MIS capabilities
 - Enhance functionality of website
- Management and Planning Efforts needed
 - Department Asset Management plan, performance measures, guiding structure, and reporting systems are lacking
 - Should develop performance measures
 - Should develop a Strategic Plan
 - Should update job descriptions and conduct periodic compliance checks for cash handling policies
 - Some areas improved noted
- Program Services – deficiencies and needed improvements/recommendations
 - Programs change little; department lacks vision for delivery of recreational services; present structure alienates users left out of existing programs

- Department should be more visionary
- Teen Center program should be evaluated regularly to maintain participation levels
- Improve communication re: program offerings
- Establish “Town Program” policy
- Establish fair & consistent payment structure
- Facilities – current and future needs/programs
 - Insufficient indoor space
 - Improve bicycle facilities
 - Consider building swimming pool
- Staffing and Organization – Recreational/Special Events Services and Parks/Maintenance Services
 - Recommendation to integrate Parks Division with Public Works – should be reviewed by new Director
 - Integrate senior services into Town’s program
- Overview of Collins Center Assessment
- Overview of Parks and Recreation Department today, moving forward, and initiatives – with reevaluation by new Parks & Recreation Director

Christine Ariel of Steamboat Street would like to see continued public input, including a continued community voice in the form of a Recreation Council or Advisory Board, to work with the new Recreation Director and Town Administrator for a continual interchange as part of the department reorganization. The upcoming Chorus concert and available facilities were noted. Ms. Ariel also commented on Mackerel Cove Beach and the continued increase in floatation devices, to the detriment of swimmers, which needs to be controlled.

Carol Nelson-Lee of Buoy Street echoed Ms. Ariel’s comments and encouraged the Town to meet the recreational needs of individuals, including expanded bike paths, fishing opportunities, dog-walking areas, dog-free walking areas, and more opportunities for use and storage of floatation devices.

Mr. Nota stated these ideas will be reviewed further when the new Recreation Director is on board. The department is already looking at these areas with better coordination and provisions for needed and desired recreational services. Discussion of the transition of current recreational buildings and facilities (including fields), improvements, and future uses; personnel/staffing; and capital improvements/budget and upcoming budget cycle continued.

Report continued with discussion of Fort Getty with photographs.

- Fort Getty - Areas of interest
 - Pavilion Project completion
 - Building/structure and waterfront improvements

- Fees and revenues
- 2015 Campground Season facts and fees
- Fort Getty Story Circle – Roach Family contribution (dedication on November 21st at 4:00 p.m.)
- Mackerel Cove Areas of interest
 - Fee structure; Facility and functionality improvements
 - Parking; Fee schedule; Programming; Staffing; Enhancements
- Lawn Avenue Complex Areas of interest
 - Tennis court improvements; Basketball court installations; Skate Park expansion
 - Bleacher/Bench installations; Walking/Exercise trail; Field enhancements
 - Available funding and potential grant funding

Samira Hakke of Gondola Avenue referenced school-owned exercise equipment procured for a previously-proposed trail.

- Eldred Avenue Fields Areas of interest
 - Field improvements, enhancements & management
 - Proposed, needed well
- Golf Course Areas of interest
 - Building replacement
 - Secure new lease for 2017
- Fort Wetherill Areas of interest
 - Exterior refurbishment; Interior improvements
 - Roof/Window/Door replacement & installation
- Recreation Center Areas of interest
 - Facility Rehabilitation, expansion, accessibility and maintenance
 - Building & Facilities Committee recommendations
- Special Events Areas of interest
 - Centralized calendar of events
 - Expand events; policy setting
 - Improve event coordination (already in process)

Mr. Nota stated this concludes his review. President Trocki noted Council's anticipation of the new Recreation Director coming on board to continue the discussion.

Public Comments.

Arek Galle of Clinton Avenue, Fort Getty Story Circle Architect, commented on upcoming improvements, especially the new restrooms, to be resumed in early spring and relocation of electrical lines by National Grid. Completion of the Story Circle Project is a great recreational accomplishment; kudos to the Roach family for the generous donation that made it possible. The soccer fields turf and drainage upgrades are on the horizon, and a potential year-round pool would be a great asset. Mr. Galle suggested the need for a feasibility study for such a resource.

Samira Hakke of Gondola Avenue commented on swimming lessons not offered in Jamestown. A swimming pool is a great idea, but a recreational swimming program is needed now. Councilor White suggested coordinating with CISF for swimming instructions. Ms. Hakke also commented on the need for a safe bike path into town. Vice President Meagher referenced a bike path along North Road and developing alternate routes. Councilor White referenced safer alternatives to North Road. Discussion continued.

Jill Goldstein of Beavertail Road, Parks and Recreation Program Supervisor, commented that Mackerel Cove is a surf certified beach, and therefore surf certified lifeguard instructors are required, which is difficult to secure. This can be reviewed further.

Arek Galle of Clinton Avenue inquired about the status of the North Road bike path. Town Administrator Nota referenced the RIDOT proposed bike path and the Jamestown proposed bike path. The three-year Town plan for the North Road area north of Route 138 connecting to the North Reservoir was discussed. Mr. Galle recommends the path over the reservoir spillway to the community farm. Discussion continued.

Councilor Dickinson noted the cost aspect of a Bike Path or any other project and improved information technology. The No. 1 issue is the Town's ability to collect customer feedback for programming and other needs. The one thing missing from the program improvements discussion is the money component. Once the need is established how it will be funded is paramount. The goals should be achievable and measurable. To facilitate the ideas discussed this evening the use of technology for self service and to eliminate duplication of customer data is required, which could be accomplished by use of a third-party software program. Discussion continued.

Vice President Meagher questioned once the need is determined, a strategic plan would be developed, and would that be staff generated? Mr. Nota stated there would have to be public input. How do we proceed with Fort Getty and what is the methodology - is it time for professional planners or public input? Mr. Nota stated we have a lot of information in terms of infrastructure improvements, and a plan for other needed improvements would be helpful. However, long-term waterfront plans need more public discussion.

President Trocki stated the Council is looking forward to having our new Director on board and having discussions on how all components discussed this evening can be achieved. Mr. Nota stated the discussion could continue at community meetings rather than Council meetings, with information brought back to Council.

Councilor Dickinson commented once the need is defined, we must solicit voter buy-in. Can implementation be accomplished by the Town competitively, and what is the best resource?

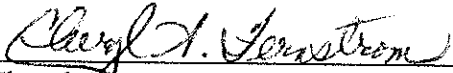
Vice President Meagher stated pools are expensive and commented on funding.

President Trocki commented on the vision for potential projects and funding opportunities. The Council looks forward to working with the new Director and Town Administrator to move the Recreation Department forward.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no more to discuss, the work session was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Attest:



Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council
 Town Administrator
 Finance Director
 Town Solicitor