

## **ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

*September 9, 2025*

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order in the meeting room located at 17 Irving Street, Arlington, MA on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

**Commission Members:** Shirley Canniff, Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Scott Walker, Phil Lasker and Josh Fenollosa. Recreation Director Natasha Waden was also present. Program Director Jeff Jamgochian was not in attendance.

**Anticipated Speakers:** Adam Lane

**Members of the Public:** Maelynn Arnold, John Ibsen, Lauren Arcoma, Liz Caffrey, Paula Sakey, Daven Amin, Liz Reisberg, Nishanth Krishnamurthy

**Preliminary Matter:** Commissioner Jen Rothenberg took formal attendance and welcomed anticipated speakers and members of the public to the Recreation Commission meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

May 27, 2025 – Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve, as amended, seconded by Mr. Lasker. Approved 3-0.

June 24, 2025 – Ms. Canniff motioned to approve without no changes, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Approved 4-0.

August 12, 2025 - tabled

### **Correspondence Received**

- H. Czapski, L. Eisenberg, R. Tavani, C. Moy, A. Cheung, K. Chin – emailed Ms. Waden with their concerns about Cutter-Rheinart Park and urging for repairs to be prioritized due to safety concerns.

### **Public Comment**

- John Ibsen (Newport Street) - Requesting expedited repairs to Cutter-Rheinart Park. Has acquired 115 signatures showing community support. Mr. Ibsen noted that the park is used daily by daycares/preschools which provide affordable childcare. He also stated that a School Street neighbor contacted Creative Playthings who, based off photos, quoted \$20K for repairs.
- Paula Sakey (School Street) – Urged the Commission to add Cutter-Rheinart to FY27 and explore CPA funding this winter to fund repairs this spring. She noted that the park has been fenced off with no plan to repair or renovate. Families are asking for a timeline.
- Cindy Page (School Street) – Asked if the grass area could be used. Ms. Waden stated that only the playground’s structure was closed.
- Daven Amin (Robbins Road) – Asked for more information about the Park Inspections/Audits and whether the information was public.

Ms. Waden explained that Cutter was repaired by DPW based on the 2021 inspection. Conditions have worsened and require more than a “fix” at this point. Ms. Rothenberg noted that it is now a liability to keep the park open.

Ms. Mayer shared that the results of the 2019 study are posted on the Town website. She also noted that several of the playgrounds from the list have been renovated since 2019 based on the level of hazards and available funding. ADA was also explained and how the requirements have increased costs.

Ms. Canniff explained that parks/playgrounds adjacent to schools often take priority due to the high amount of use and wear/tear. Mr. Lasker added that the school department does not provide funding for these renovations/repairs.

Mr. Fenollosa suggested working with Fin Com to work maintenance into the Town budget.

- Nishanth Krishnamurthy – Offered, on behalf of the group, to work together. Mr. Fenollosa suggested creating a Friends Group. Mr. Ibsen offered his assistance in organizing a Friends group and drafting warrants etc. Ms. Mayer suggested reaching out to his Precinct’s Fin Com member, as well as write letters of support for CPA projects.

### **Discussions**

- Menotomy Rocks Signage – Adam Lane – Ms. Waden shared the final design. Mr. Lane pointed out the changes that were implemented since the last meeting including font changes, punctuation and wording edits and darkening the Town seal. Emily will create a full-size print out for review.

Ms. Canniff motioned to approve the final design, seconded by Mr. Walker. Approved 5-0.

- 2025 – 2026 Commission Goals and Objectives – The Commission discussed the fiscal crisis affecting the Town budget. The operating budget is depleting, and a large override is expected in the spring.

Ms. Waden shared that Courtney Duggan has been hired as Assistant Director of Recreation to assist with Capital Projects, recreation programming etc.

Ms. Waden explained the use of enterprise, revolving and town funds. Ms. Mayer noted that CPA FY27 applications are due in October. Ms. Rothenberg suggested discussing and voting at the next Commission meeting.

The Commission discussed simplifying and pacing their project plan due to maintenance needs and lack of a maintenance budget or plan, funding limitations and increasing costs. Ms. Mayer noted that ARPA funding, which is no longer available, had allowed the Commission to do multiple projects at once.

- Mr. Lasker – Current project is Crosby, already have design money.
  - Apply for CPA funding for construction October 2025.
  - Delay McClennan and the Field Study (funding will not expire).
  - Recommended planning for design and community input for July 2026.
  - McClennan design spring/early summer 2026
  - Construction summer 2026, open fall 2026
  - Fall 2026 CPA application for Poets – already have field study money

- Field Master Plan can run concurrently with the above projects

The Commission also discussed how to conduct community engagement going forward. Ideas include community engagement as an agenda item rather than public engagement meetings, for which time and resources are not always available.

Ms. Rothenberg stated that emails and letters to abutters and stakeholders would still be necessary. She also suggested posting notices on playground and field bulletin boards.

Mr. Walker recommended exploring virtual methods, allowing for public comments to include project input and updating online bulletins. Ms. Waden will look at the public's accessibility and use of the Town website.

Ms. Waden shared that Jody (playground inspector) said that inspections are only necessary every five years. She can conduct "spot checks" in between.

Action Items –

1. Maintenance plan - Mr. Fenollosa and Ms. Canniff will work with Ms. Waden. Ms. Mayer said that there used to be a Task Force.
2. Website – Ms. Rothenberg recommended hiring a web expert. Ms. Mayer suggested linking the Recreation website with the Town website so the information is more accessible.
3. Back-up plan for Crosby – Not anticipating full \$1.3M from CPA.
4. Review Commission meeting format – Alternate topics, reduce length.

**Comments and Items for Future Meetings**

- Bike Park Grand Opening was a huge success.
- Ms. Waden will reach out to Rep. Sean Garballey for funding for Parallel gates and fencing.
- Associate Commissioner position to be posted.
- Next meeting postponed to September 30<sup>th</sup> due to Rosh Hashanah – will discuss CPA, what requests need to be brought before the Commission, organization of agenda items.

Ms. Canniff motioned to adjourn at 9:53pm, seconded by Mr. Lasker. Approved 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Anderson.