

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARBLEHEAD
OBSERVER CORPS

Report of the Recreation and Park Commission - January 9, 2020
LWVM Observer: Kay Rieper

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Chip Osborne. All members were present.

Members of the community who run Marblehead Youth Sports were in attendance to discuss the budget cuts and possible user fee for children and adults who participate in sports that use the athletic fields. Chip gave a power point presentation outlining what the Rec. and Park department has done and spent in past years to keep the fields healthy. Beyond grass seed and fertilizer, upgrades and repairs are constantly needed. As a bit of background, the school department and the rec. and park department originally each maintained their own fields with separate workers and equipment. In 1989, when the town was in dire financial straits, the maintenance of the school fields and town athletic fields was combined and given to the Rec and Park department with one man and no extra money. With level funding and 10% budget cuts the last two years, it has become impossible to carry out proper maintenance. As a way to balance the budget and keep the fields in excellent condition, the Board, offered the idea of a suggested user fee of \$15. This would probably not be implemented until 2021. After much discussion, the main feeling of the attendees was that since the high school athletes use the school fields and also town athletic fields, they should also contribute to the user fees. This presentation will be made to the School Committee. There will be further discussion at upcoming meetings.

Other business

Plans are ongoing at Chandler Hovey to replace the inner harbor pavilion, and eventually the outer harbor pavilion.

Current access to the dog park will be closed because of a new development. Rec and Park is clearing brush from the lower area to create access from below.

Peter James reported that winter maintenance has been done including picnic tables and the kayak rack at Riverhead Beach. \$95,000 is collected from fees for using the rack, but all the money goes into the general fund.

When the school rents out athletic fields, this fee goes to the school department and not back to Rec and Park for field maintenance. \$125,000 has been spent on school fields last year.

It was voted to approve \$3500 for the removal of the tree that fell on the fence at the Seaside tennis courts.

Jaime reported that summer programs and hires are being finalized. Programs will be advertised after February vacation. Credit cards can now be used to pay for programs when registering.

The next meeting will be January 21 at 7:00 pm.