

Recreation Commission
Special Meeting - August 26, 2015
Board of Selectmen's Meeting

Attendance: Mike Crowley, Commission Chair; Frank Prachniak, Commission Vice-Chair; Joe Ciriello, Joe McKernan, and Jennifer Norcross, Commission Members

Item #6 - New Business

"Athletic Field Maintenance Discussion with Dr. Jason Henderson"

Barbara McKrell presented a powerpoint and talk which gave an overview of how the fields are being maintained. Dr. Henderson was present as a resource and also answered questions and provided information and educated opinion on field maintenance. Highway Supervisor Tom Curioso was also present.

Notes from the presentation and question & answer period:

More work is being done in-house. The town is working on learning how to maintain the fields ourselves and do so properly.

Goals:

- maintain strong grass
- high density
- deep rooting
- scheduling of use
- proper maintenance

Needs:

- "It takes people"
- budget to attend workshops
- gather materials
- build relationships with other turf managers
- train personnel

Priorities:

- personnel
- proper irrigation
- mowing
- proper fertilizer
- seeding equipment
- aeration
- weed/insect control

The town previously spent \$5000 on an irrigation contractor. This year \$0 was spent.

Last year \$4190 was spent on a fertilizer contractor. This year \$1400 was spent for self-application.

The fields were aerated and overseeded in June. A contractor will put down 4 lbs of seed per 1000 square feet. This year, in wear areas, 20 lbs per 1000 feet were put down.

Doing work in-house means the town can better accommodate school-scheduled use (work does not affect PE classes, practices, etc).

Rob Simmons asked about the training of personnel:

Mrs. McKrell attended several workshops that were low-cost. Ed Ball of East Lyme, pesticide provider, has provided training.

Jim Sisk commented about the maintenance of infield areas on the baseball field. The town employees do not maintain the baseball field, SHS maintains this field.

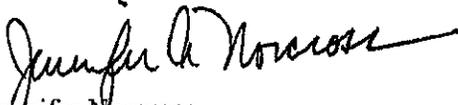
Dr. Henderson, of UConn, made positive comments about how the town is doing, including compared to other towns. He commented that having a certified pesticide applicator makes a difference because low amounts of the products should actually be used.

Sports vs Private Lawns:

A higher volume of seed is used on athletic fields, which helps to reduce injuries. Pesticides should be applied at the proper time at the right rate when the fields are not being used. Herbicides should be applied late in the fall when use is declining. UConn will be doing research on herbicides/pesticides this year.

Dr. Henderson stressed that organics are not pesticide-free. Organics have a high concentration of nitrogen; compost has a high concentration of nitrogen and phosphorus, which creates polluted areas. Organics means plant/animal based only. Pesticide-free is synthetic. If you go organic, you cannot use synthetic fertilizer.

Respectively submitted,



Jennifer Norcross
REC Commission Member