

**BEACON FALLS PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
SEPTEMBER 18, 2017**

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

CALL TO ORDER

B. Egan called the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Beacon Falls Parks and Recreation Commission to order at 7:01 PM and then led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: B. Egan, D. Taylor, M.E. Fernandes, D. Ferretti, S. Ruhl

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: A. Sirowich, D. Brooks

OTHERS PRESENT: Sophie Zyla, Ruth Burritt from the Conservation Commission

MINUTES

S.Ruhl made a motion to approve the September, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented. D. Ferretti noted that his name should be added to the list of Commissioners Present as he was in attendance. **D. Taylor seconded the motion with this correction. All ayes.**

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Sophie Zyla, who is active as a member of the Conservation Commission and involved in several other conservation organizations, asked if the Prospect Land Trust could be allowed to conduct an Owl Walk in Matthies Park. Their walks can draw 60-70 people and they are announced events but informal. M.E. Fernandes noted that she loved the idea of the walk, but asked about insurance, if it is an organized event. If they are walking at dusk, the police should be notified that there is a group in the park. M.E. Fernandes stated it was a cool idea but if it is a guided walk or a planned event in the park we would require insurance for liability purposes. Sophie noted that is a free event and other towns such as Bethany and Prospect do not require Certificates of Insurance for these types of activity. It would be possible for the Conservation Commission and/or Parks & Recreation to co-sponsor the program. Involving a local commission, would assist in drawing town residents to the event, since it is a local park and solve the issue of insurance. **Mary Ellen Fernandes made a motion to co-sponsor the owl walk and D. Ferretti seconded the motion. All ayes.**

Sophie Zyla also presented the commission with posters that she had created to make people more aware of cleaning up litter in the parks and the life-cycle of litter. She suggested they go in the kiosks at the parks. She also has other flyers available on conservation.

On October 7th at 9:00 AM she will be sampling the water at Matthies Park and completing a micro invertebrate sampling. She invites the public to join her in the parking lot and participate to see what is found.

Sophie Zyla also has flyers on leaf identification for types of trees in the Naugatuck State Forest, which she can provide to the commission. R. Burritt hopes that hanging this type of information in the park kiosks will raise awareness and cut down on some of the problems that they are

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having at Lantern Ridge and at the parks concerning litter. She noted there is vandalism and graffiti at the parks and people are not being prosecuted or facing any consequences for defacing the parks. She says a simple solution may be to try and attract more people to the parks who are interested in preserving nature.

S. Zyla noted that she has notified the DEEP police force – ENCON and calls their number regularly when she sees issues in the State forests. B. Egan advised the commissioners to call the police and not to confront people in the parks who are not behaving appropriately and reminded them that their safety comes first. Other suggestions for improving security at the parks included “Area under surveillance” signs and field cameras as a deterrent.

S. Zyla also spoke about invasive Japanese Knotweed at the parks and she has conducted a trial run to try and get rid of it. They attended a CT invasive Plant Workshop and learned how to cut it back in June, July and August over the course of 3 years to prevent it from coming back. They intend to continue the process next year by the parking lot at Matthies Park. They are also working on cutting back Japanese barberry, another invasive species.

OLD BUSINESS

A. MATTHIES PARK

1. There is a wedding at the park in early November. B. Egan needs to check that date. The Veterans Day ceremony will be held there.
2. Nothing else is happening at this time of year.

B. PENT ROAD

1. There has been a request for horseshoe pits at Pent Road and they are up top near the old pavilion. The Parks crew is working on seeing what they can do with what we have to set up the pits.
2. The old pavilion is not in good shape and use of that area should be limited.
3. The fields are being used regularly this fall by Fall Ball, Prospect Soccer, NE Collegiate Baseball, Woodland Jr. Hawks
4. To the commission’s knowledge, the Sugar Shack has not been operating this fall.

C. RIVERBEND PARK

1. The town received a \$7500 Katharine Matthies grant for picnic tables, grills and trees at the park. B. Egan will be meeting with the Public Works Department to determine the best use of the funds and the plan for the items that are acquired.

D. SPORTS LEAGUES

1. The basketball League was informed by Region 16 that they will need to pay for custodians over the weekends when they use Region 16 facilities. The cost would be prohibitive for the league. Region 16 uses the town’s fields at Pent Road at no cost for their fall and spring sports season, so there is some reciprocal facility use. This issue will need to be resolved before the basketball league can start the season.

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E. PARK ACTIVITIES

1. The commission should be in touch with Tracy Brody regarding Zumba for Kids at Laurel ledge this fall.
2. The town has not yet received an invoice from Mainstream Kayak for the Canoe & kayak event.

F. COMMUNITY MEDIA CENTER

1. There is no possibility of a survey on the November ballot, so the committee will need to come up with another plan to survey residents on their opinions about a Community Media Center.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

APPLICATIONS

B.Egan has been processing the applications regularly. He approved a birthday party at Matthies Park for October 21st and there is a wedding coming up at Matthies in early November.

GRANTS

Aside from the Katharine Matthies grant noted in the Riverbend Park item above, the town has hired a grant writer who want to meet with the different departments to learn their needs. The commission should put together a list of items that they would like him to explore grant options for. Items such as the new large playground at Pent Road, disassembling the upper pavilion, cameras for security at the parks. M.E. Fernandes asked about benches at the triangle on South Circle which used to be there but have been removed.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

No bills at this time.

BUDGET

The Seasonal Employee line item has \$500 remaining. The cost of the Summer Camp staff was \$14,500. There is \$3,000 in the Recreational Programs line. Stock Fish is \$3,000 to be used in the spring.

There is \$2400 left in the Concerts line to be used in June. B. Egan is looking into booking The Bernadette's for June, but they are more expensive than the average concert. He wants to book

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fewer concerts with better bands. Concerts will be on Wednesdays next summer and we will need more publicity for them.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

M.E. Fernandes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 PM. D. Taylor seconded the motion. All ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin A. Schwarz
Clerk, Parks & Recreation Commission