

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE NEWTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
TOWN HALL SOUTH  
April 12, 2011**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Marks called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

Commission Members present: Marks, Crick Owen, Brookes, Yochum, and Barczak

Commission Members absent: DiNicola

Staff present: Mangold, Samuelson and Reggiano

Staff absent: None

Public: Shannon Hicks from Newtown Bee, John Moore of Parks and Recreation

Staff/ Relay for Life, Harvey Pessin on behalf of the Community Garden/Food

Pantry, Scott Coleman of the Trails Committee and Tyler Coleman – Eagle Scout

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES**

**Mr. Barczak made a motion to approve the minutes from March 8, 2011 and Crick Owen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- John Moore asked the Parks and Recreation Commission for their support for the upcoming Relay for Life event. The event will take place June 4 – June 5. Mr. Moore said there will be fewer responsibilities on the Parks and Recreation staff this year than in the past. Mr. Marks said that the commission will give their full support to this event.
- Harvey Pessin, a Newtown resident, explained the history of the community garden in Newtown. He started the idea a few years ago when he grew his own vegetables and then donated the vegetables to the local food pantry. The Newtown food pantry services about 2000 Newtown residents each month. The food pantry clients loved taking home their own potted vegetable plants. Mr. Pessin reported that he went to see a community garden in Washington CT with Ms. Mangold. The Washington garden only grows food and gives it away to people in need in Washington as well as surrounding towns. Mr. Pessin said his primary goal with the garden is to provide vegetables to the Newtown food pantry but his secondary goal is that it will be a place for community involvement, to make it fun for the people of Newtown. He reported that there is a perfect location for the garden on the Fairfield Hills Campus. There is an area near the old tennis courts that is visible from Wasserman Way and near the 5/6 school. He said that he has asked for volunteers to work in teams. The teams can grow anything they want; the only requirement is that all the produce goes to the needy. Mr. Pessin took Lee Paulsen, the director of the food pantry to see the site and she was thrilled! Mr. Pessin started a website for information about the garden. The website is: [foodpantrygarden.org](http://foodpantrygarden.org). He is hoping to have 8 or 9 teams but he said he will not micromanage the teams. After much thought he said since it is not a traditional community garden, a more appropriate name for it would be The Victory Garden. Mr. Marks asked Mr. Pessin if there were any challenges with the site and Mr. Pessin replied, no, that it was perfect. Mr. Pessin showed some pictures to the group of the Washington, CT garden. He added that he would like to

compost things from the garden too. Ms. Mangold reported that the Fairfield Hills Authority is on board with the project. She said the George Benson and Pat Llodra are also in support of the garden. Ms. Brookes asked if the garden would stretch the Parks and Recreation staff since they already have a lot on their plates. Mr. Samuelson said that the garden would not be a big project for his staff. Ms. Mangold added that this garden is a perfect fit for Parks and Recreation. Mr. Marks asked when ground breaking is anticipated. Mr. Pessin said that his goal is to start planting the seedlings on May 15<sup>th</sup>. **Ms. Brookes made a motion that Parks and Recreation will support The Victory Garden in the ways laid out by Mr. Pessin. Ms. Crick Owen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.** Ms. Brookes suggested some picnic benches for the area near the garden.

- Tyler Coleman presented his Eagle project to the commission. He plans to create a picnic area near some of the trails at Fairfield Hills. He plans to take down the dead trees in the area, get rid of invasive species and remove the lower dead limbs from the good trees. Mr. Coleman requested a chipper to chip the wood and leave the wood chips in the picnic area. He also plans to put up 3 picnic tables. Mr. Coleman will go to the Fairfield Hills Authority next to discuss the project. Mr. Marks said that the Parks and Recreation Commission thinks Mr. Coleman's project is a great idea. Mr. Samuelson suggested that Mr. Coleman go to local stores for the picnic benches.
- Scott Coleman reported that the trails are in good condition. He would like to change one of the trails, **Point of Rocks** to a pedestrian only trail, because a neighbor of the trail is threatening to sue the town if it allows bicycles on the trail.
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#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- None

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

- None

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Ms. Mangold reported that the budget is going to be going to the voters without any changes.

#### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PARKS REPORT - Carl Samuelson**

- Mr. Samuelson reported that the field's operation supervisor will be out for the next four months.
- He added that he is hosting the CT Park Association meeting on Wednesday, April 13. 43 people from all over the state will be attending.
- He said he is working with the boards of spring sports to schedule the fields use. He added that it was going very well. He said that the fields calendar is now online so people can see which fields are being used and when.
- Mr. Samuelson said that he bought some shelving at Borders for the Trades lane Maintenance facility.

- He reported that the Superintendent of Schools said that the turf field at the high school can be used on the weekends only. He added that there will be a fee if groups would like access to the scoreboard, lights and bathrooms. He said that renting portable bathrooms for a weekend would be cheaper.
- Mr. Samuelson said that he would like to use some of the surcharge money to buy track mats. He said they are rubber mats that will essentially be left out to protect the track from potential damage from cleats. **Mr. Barczak made a motion to approve the spending of up to \$2000 of surcharge money to purchase the protective mats. Ms. Yochum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT-Roseann Reggiano**

- Ms. Reggiano reported that the flashlight egg hunt that was held on Friday night was a success. About 50 people attended. The Saturday morning egg hunt for younger kids was also a success. About 200 people were at that event.
- She said that this week she is finishing counselor interviews. She plans to hire 5 or 6 new ones. Next week she will begin interviews for the water director position for Eichler's Cove. She reported that she also plans to hire many lifeguards. Each guard will get at least 10 – 15 hours each week.
- Ms. Reggiano said that the Rooster Run will be on May 21<sup>st</sup>. She reported receiving good donations for the event.
- She said that she will be meeting with Kyle Lyddy and Cathy Brophy of the NYA to go over the schedule for November 2011 through October 31' 2012.
- Ms. Reggiano and Ms. Mangold met with the Newtown Youth Wrestling. The Newtown Youth Wrestling would like more space at Sandy Hook for their fall program. They would also like to buy more mats and therefore will need more space to store the mats.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Dog Park** – Ms. Reggiano said that the Strut Your Mutt event will be on May 21<sup>st</sup>. She has 5 or 6 vendors coming to the event. She also has 2 sponsors to pay for t-shirts and doggie t-shirts. There is an 8 foot bone sign advertising the event. The sign will be moved to a new location in Newtown every two weeks. Ms. Mangold, Ms. Reggiano, Mr. Samuelson and Jim Palmer went to the proposed dog park site. It was great to see! \$13,000 has been raised for the dog park so far. They are anxiously awaiting the site approval. The Land Use Department needs to approve the site.
- **Update of Newtown Plan of Conservation and Development/Mission Statements** – Ms. Yochum shared her mission statement for the Parks and Recreation. She will send it to Ms. Mangold to distribute. Ms. Brookes and Ms. Crick Owen will send their mission statements to the group.
- **2011-2012 Budget Update** – Mr. Marks reported that there are no changes to the budget.
- **Capital Improvement Plan Update** – Ms. Mangold reported that the CIP was passed by the Legislative Council. The amount for the Community Center has been reduced.
- **Newtown Youth Academy Update** – Ms. Mangold said that she met with Peter and he wants to make the building accessible for general assembly. In order to make this possible doors would need to be added. Mr. Marks

added that parking would become an issue. Ms. Mangold said there will be a follow up meeting soon.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Fairfield Hills Master Plan – Impact of Possible Cochrane House Renovation** – Mr. Marks distributed a map showing the Cochrane House site plan for 160 apartments. Ms. Reggiano asked if the parking lot for the baseball field would be eliminated. Mr. Marks said yes it would be gone. He added that parking for 2 fields would go away as well as 3 fields. He would like to make sure that the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee knows that they can use that land but they need to accommodate the fields/Parks and Recreation somewhere else. This could also affect the trail proposals. The group then had discussion on affordable housing.

Mr. Samuelson shared a slide show of recent projects that he completed with his staff, including, Eichlers Cove, new tennis courts, the skate park, and a lightening detection system.

**(m/s/c: Barczak/Yochum) “Motion to adjourn.” The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Allison Sharlow  
Clerk