

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE NEWTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
TOWN HALL SOUTH  
JUNE 10, 2014**

These minutes are subject to approval by the Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Barczak called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Commission Members present: Marks, Crick Owen, Brookes, Barczak, Yanni Jr. and DiNicola

Commission Members absent: None

Staff present: Mangold, Samuelson and Reggiano

Staff absent: None

Public: Scott Minchak

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Minutes will be approved at the July meeting.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Scott Minchak, 24 Brushy Hill Road, Newtown. Mr. Minchak handed out copies of an email he sent to Director Mangold and Assistant Directors Samuelson and Reggiano on May 21, 2014. Also included with the email was information on building a deck with railing details and an OSHA Construction Industry regulations sheet. See attached email. Mr. Minchak is concerned about specific pieces of playground equipment that is being installed at the new playground at Dickinson Park. Ms. Mangold explained to the Commission that the rubberized surface still has to be put in place and that the height concerns will not be as Mr. Minchak specified without the surface being down. The equipment will be labeled for the appropriate age group.
- All pieces of the playground will meet Federal Playground Safety Guidelines and once completed will be inspected by a certified Playground Inspector.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- Director Mangold wrote a letter to Scott Hill about the bridge/sidewalk proposed for the area of road along Route 302 and Elm Drive. Mr. Hill responded that they in fact have approved a sidewalk on this area of the road as well as five foot shoulders.
- Director Mangold has had correspondence with the First Selectman on the subject of whether or not we have to let non-residents into Town Parks. Mrs. Llodra gave Director Mangold information to look into. Non – Resident fees would have to be put in place. This topic needs more discussion and planning by the Commission. Director Mangold can send members the legal response from Greenwich 2001 dealing with this topic. Commissioner Brookes would very much like this information.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

- Chairman Mark's reported him, Commissioner Brookes and Commission Clerk, Donna Benson attended a Town Parliamentary Procedure/Freedom of Information meeting.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Director Mangold reported that negotiations for the Parks Maintainers contract are making good progress. The discussion is in bringing the Parks and Recreation Maintainers more in line with the Truck Drivers for Public Works.
- Park Tour Part I is scheduled for Thursday, June 12th at 8:30 am. All Department heads have been invited to the tour as well as Parks and Recreations Commission Members. Part II will maybe take place in July or August.
- Eichler's Cove Marina is fully rented for the season. We still have people calling for slips. The dry storage is fully rented also this year. We are keeping names but only for this year. Not a waiting list for next year.
- There will be a 3 facility rentals for Eichler's Cove in the coming weeks for both the beach and the picnic area. Renter is responsible for paying for additional lifeguards if they are using the beach. One rental is for 60 people, they will have to carpool and in the future Parks and Recreation will have to restrict the number of people who can rent the facility since parking is limited and the facility will still be open to the public.

- Dickinson Playground – one piece of playground equipment is still on backorder. We are still good for the grand opening on July 26<sup>th</sup>. The builder wants to meet with Director Mangold and Assistant Director Samuelson to cover construction safety on June 17<sup>th</sup> because some work will still be going on during day camp.

#### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PARKS – PARKS AND FIELDS REPORT**

- See attached report.
- Waiting for contractor for the Dog Park for water and electric hookup.
- The Treadwell pool is open.
- The camera scan has been scheduled for the Treadwell Pool House pipes.
- If we added slips to Eichler's Cove Marina it would cost about \$20,000.00 for 5 slips. It would pay for itself over the next 2-3 years.
- The management of the k-8 school field has had increased injuries and had reduced expectations of use due to the no pesticides allowed at these schools. Assistant Director Samuelson will forward a study to all Commission members as well as the First Selectman.
- Jeff Tousignant from Newtown Lacrosse would like to come before the Commission to discuss use of fields by groups who have non-residents on their teams. Travel/Premier teams are using the fields 3- 4 times a week with Recreation teams using the fields 1-2 times a week. We will be having intern spot check the fields. Kevin Clark will check the fields over the next few weeks, and go through sports websites to see who meet the 80% residency requirement. The Commission would like to implement new requirements that each roster/team meet the 80% residency requirement. The Commission agreed to inform the sports groups at the Fall Field Use meeting that this change will go into effect next spring 2015. The Fall Field use meeting will be held at the end of July/beginning of August. Parks and Recreation may entertain a waiver if this interferes with tryouts. The organization will have to come to Parks and Recreation to request this waiver. After spring of 2015 there would be no access to the field if they do not meet requirement. The Commission will review the Rules and Regulations at the July meeting for before the next field use meeting for the fall.

#### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF RECREATION – RECREATION REPORT**

- Assistant Director Reggiano reported that on May 21 & May 28 there were two Site/Assistant Site Director training sessions with Lou Bergholtz from Edgework Consulting. He was very impressed with our group. The last training will be June 19 for all Counselors and Directors.
- As of today we have 94 campers in Dickinson Camp and 145 at Treadwell for the full 7 weeks of day camp.
- Strutt Your Mutt was held May 31 at the dog park and between 60-70 dogs attended. St. Michael the Police dog did a demonstration at the park. Andy Gorosko of the Newtown Bee was very impressed with the park. People are just waiting for the water to be hooked up. Assistant Director Samuelson told her the fountains should be on tomorrow.
- Mad Dash was a great success – there were 405 participants. Parks and Recreation worked very well with Newtown Youth Academy on this project. Cody Foss did very well; getting volunteers for the day of the event. The Parks and Recreation Crew did a great job setting up the course.
- This Saturday is the Rooster Run. It is also Flag Day. This is the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the Rooster Run.
- Day Camp starts June 23rd.
- Newtown Youth Football and Cheer is requesting a practice competition on October 4, 2014. This would be a cheerleading event. The Commission agreed that this would be billed as a Special Event and that a \$200.00 fee would be charged for this. The cheerleaders are approximately charging \$50.00 per team to compete. Football pays the surcharge for the cheerleaders each season.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **1. DOG PARK UPDATE**

- The Dog Park opened, Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was very well attended. The event was a lot of fun.

##### **2. DONATION PLAQUES**

- Director Mangold, Chairman Marks, Kyle Liddy of the Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Committee met to give Mr. Liddy information about plaque requests for the Dickinson Playground Project and the 226 Benches project. Mr. Liddy will bring the questions to his committee. We will await his answers/recommendations.

##### **3. COMMUNITY CENTER UPDATE**

- Most of the work for the Community Center is just numbers at this point. That will be due for the next meeting which is June 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### **4. NEWTOWN YOUTH FIELD HOCKEY - UPDATE**

#### **5. SUGAR HILL AAU GIRLS BASKETBALL WAIVER REQUEST**

- Application was in on time for a non-waiver request approval. He has had a waiver for the last two years for this group. Mr. Larsen's group is run by him alone. The Commission asked Director Mangold to speak with him about the fact that there is no Board in place. He would need an organized board and financial documents to the Commission by September 15.

#### **6. NEWTOWN YOUTH BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION SURCHARGE DISCUSSION**

- Assistant Director Reggiano asked the Commission to raise the surcharge on Newtown Youth Basketball from \$10.00 to \$20.00. Assistant Director Reggiano site the amount of administrative work and custodial fees for this organization has grown.

(m/s: Crick Owen/Barczak) "Motion to approve a raise in surcharge to \$20.00". After a lengthy discuss Commissioner Crick Owen withdrew her motion.

(m/s/c: Barczak/Crick Owen/) "Motion to raise the surcharge fee for Newtown Youth Basketball from \$10.00 to \$15.00 per person for next season." The motion passed 4 to 2.

#### **7. COMMISSIONER'S OUT AND ABOUT BABE RUTH**

#### **8. OTHER**

- There will be a track program update next month. There has been no update from Newtown Hawks Track Team since Chairman Marks correspondence

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN – CIP 2015-2020**

- The Board of Selectman will present the CIP to the Board of Finance then the Legislative Council.
- The Commission has been asked to decide the Parks and Recreation priorities for the year 2019-2020.
- Director Mangold told the Commission that the closer the project gets to the year that it's due the more information/detail will be needed, also new cost estimates can be provided.
- Chairman Marks asked Assistant Director Samuelson to schedule someone to check out the condition of the Treadwell pool. If possible before the July meeting.
- Director Samuelson will also get details form Dickinson Parking lot.
- Director Mangold will also get the details for Eichler's Cove.
- The Alpine Road park improvement – possible parking or fence in property and put a shade structure.
- New Fairfield Hill Softball Field – possible split payment with softball and baseball if project was done in house and funded by surcharge and organizations.
- Chairman Marks would like to ask the First Selectman what they expect from Parks and Recreation for the second phase of the Community Center.
- Extend dock 5 sections = \$100,000.00
- Lake Lillinonah – if it was non-residents there could possibly be grants available. The Park and picnic area belong to Parks and Recreation, the ramp belongs to CL&P. If work was done there we would need secondary driveway. Possible docks maybe for jet skis.
- Possibly cut the pocket park study out of the budget. Chairman Marks suggest surcharge be used this year for a pocket park study. This would include what and where the priorities would be.
- The next budget will include more staff with more the extra responsibility of Fairfield Hills. This employee would work for Parks and Recreation only and would not be there to care for the entire campus.

**2. OTHER**

- New name for playground at Dickinson Park. Send ideas to Donna by Friday. Donna will send them out Monday and get back with final choice by Wed of next week.

**(m/s/c: Brookes/Yanni Jr.) "Motion to adjourn." The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting ended at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Donna Benson  
Commission Clerk

\* **MINCHAK, SCOTT**

**PW**

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**From:** MINCHAK, SCOTT PW  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 21, 2014 1:23 PM  
**To:** 'amy.mangold@newtown-ct.gov'; 'roseann.reggiano@newtown-ct.gov';  
'carl.samuelson@newtown-ct.gov'  
**Subject:** Dickinson Park Renovation  
**Attachments:** P5131531.JPG

Amy, Roseann, Carl,

I have been a Newtown resident for over 20 years and I live at 24 Brushy Hill Rd, right down the road from Dickinson park. I have two children ages 11 and 15 who for many years played for hours at the old park. The memories they will carry for the rest of their lives will be of safe fun filled days.

I have been watching the construction of the latest park and even had a chance to speak with Billie Cohen at the park one day. Let me start by saying the park is very beautiful with many different features for the kids to enjoy but I have some serious concerns regarding the safety and town liability with some of the features.

1. The features for smaller children are NOT separated by some type of barrier (fence) preventing them from having unsupervised access to the larger more dangerous features.
2. The structure which supports the start of the zip line is very high off the ground as well as being fabricated from large steel tubing. I don't know what the mechanism will be for traversing the zip line but if a child has to hold on like a monkey bar there is a very high probability that they may lose their grip and possibly fall hitting the steel structure. **I have a zip line and my children need to where a safety harness (see photo) with a lanyard secured to the trolley in order to go down the zip line.**
3. I also have some serious concerns about the height of some of the rock features. If a child were to fall from the top 6-8 feet and land on their head, they could be severely hurt or possibly killed.

I am fully aware that all these features meet federal guidelines but that isn't going to matter to the lawyers suing the town for negligence because they didn't foresee the potential for a child to access a feature which was unintended for that age child and no attempt was made to separate that child from that area.

You can put up all the warning signs you like and have all the disclaimers you want but that will not stop anyone from suing the town for negligence. Even if you win the case it will cost the town (and me the taxpayer) a lot of money in legal fees.

We all know that the supervision provided by many parents at the park is almost non-existent due to cell phones, conversations, etc. So relying of the parent to stop a child from getting into a risky situation will **NOT** happen.

I **strongly** encourage you to review the features in person and contact the towns legal counsel to review the potential liability the town may incur due to a serious injury.

This park is intended to be a memorial for the children of Sandy Hook, it is supposed to be a safe happy place for children to grow up and play, let's make certain we don't have another victim and tragic event from a park that was supposed to memorialize the death of children.

If you would like to speak with me about my concerns I would be more than happy to meet you at the park any time after work or on the weekend.

*Scott Minchak*

24 Brushy Hill Rd  
Newtown  
203-270-1141



## TOWN OF NEWTOWN

### PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

#### PARKS AND FIELDS REPORT

**TO:** Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission,  
Amy Mangold, Director

**FROM:** Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director – Parks

**DATE:** June 10, 2014

**RE:** Monthly park update and field report

June has been a busy month with many special events and functions that our department prepares for.

- Set up and break down for Mad Dash
- Set up and break down for Memorial Soccer Tournament
- Set up and break down for NHS senior events, baseball tournaments and playoff events.
- Aeration and topdressing of High Meadow and Oakview fields
- Growth regulator application to all athletic fields (except K-8)
- Bed weeding and mulching at Treadwell, Oakview and Eichlers Cove
- Water fountain line install at dog park.
- Victory garden irrigation installation complete.
- Tree screening install at maintenance garage complete.
- Pool and pool house opening.
- Contracted cemetery tree pruning and removal complete.
- Daily grooming, lining and mowing operations in full swing.
- Eichlers Cove beach sand addition and grading.

Items we have started/continued work on:

- Ongoing irrigation central control project.
- Treadwell basketball court sidewalk
- Orchard Hill invasive tree/plant removal.
- Dickinson bed weeding and mulching
- Funspace perimeter clean up and water line install.

Staff:

- 144 hours of vacation/sick/personal/injury/discipline hours were used out of 1600 potential work hours in the past month. This represents a 9% loss in workforce or .9 employees per day.