

Town of Newtown, CT

3 Primrose St, Newtown, CT

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT OF THE APPROVAL BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION.

September 9, 2014

The Parks and Recreation Commission help a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 9, 2014 in the conference room of the Town Hall South located at 3 Main Street in Newtown, CT.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Edward Marks at 6:02 pm.

Present: Chairman Edward Marks, PJ Yochum, Jan Brooks, Patrick Barczak, Maureen Crick Owen, Vincent Yanni.

Absent: Tom Dinicola

Staff Present: Amy Mangold, Carl Samuelson, RoseAnn Reggiano

Public: Andy Clure, Richard Warek

Acceptance of Minutes:

Maureen Crick Owen made a motion to accept the July minutes of the July 8, 2014 meeting minutes as presented. Jan Brookes seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

Approval of the August minutes will be approved at the October meeting.

Public Participation:

Andy Clure, 24 Winton Farm Road, Newtown, CT

Mr. Clure previously spoke to Director Amy Mangold regarding softball for his daughter. He was disappointed that at the tryouts this year there were 50 girls trying out this August for the U12 spring teams. Last year there were only 22 girls vying for the U10 team. There are two teams forming and one coach requested that he keep his U10 team together as a U12 team. Mr. Clure felt that this was not in keeping with the by-laws. He felt there was only one team this spring and wanted to know what it takes to form another. He also wondered why out of town children are allowed to participate if there are Newtown children wanting to play. He was inquiring about the 80% participation rule.

Chairman Marks replied that in the past there was not always enough players to form a team so a rule was instituted that there had to be 80% participation in order to use the Newtown facilities.

Mr. Clure mentioned there was a meeting tomorrow night, September 10th, at 8 pm, in Edmond Town Hall for the Newtown Softball League. He suggested that many parents would attend and thought maybe the Commission would like to also. Parents were upset since coaches were not involved in evaluating the children, just the heads of the league. He said there were different rules for travel and Babe Ruth Softball. And was also concerned that out of town children were taking the spots of Newtown children. He also mentioned that an organization was looking at property on Pecks Lane, Newtown.

Mr. Marks stated that the Pecks Lane property was not suitable to use now and he was not aware of other organizations looking at it. He also suggested that other towns have different methods of selecting players. Mr. Marks said he would try to attend the meeting and report back to the Commission members. Children in town should be able to play. There was some discussion regarding Middle School and Travel teams.

Richard Warek, 3 Lone Oak Meadow, Sandy Hook, CT

Mr. Warek stated that he had a serious problem with the Babe Ruth Baseball League in town. He is a state certified umpire in Connecticut. He umpired games three years ago in which Newtown lost two games. He feels that Newtown Baseball Association is discriminatory, and is run by one individual. He feels there is no oversight over the league.

Mr. Warek suggested that the town consider changing its criteria for umpiring for 12 years and older groups. That they should use state certified umpires at this level. Presently, it is all local umpires.

He has lodged a complaint with the baseball league but it has not come before the Association. It has never hit their agenda.

Chairman Marks asked Mr. Warek to forward his complaint to Director Amy Mangold and she would share it with the Commission.

There was some discussion about how other towns handle umpires. According to Mr. Warek, most towns use state certified umpires. There are a couple of towns like Brookfield and Danbury who do not. There was some discussion amongst the commission members about umpires/referees in

other sports. Mr. Barczak asked if Babe Ruth had rules regarding the use of umpires as a national organization; and wondered whether the Commission could suggest changes unless it was under the charter of the league.

Chairman Marks would contact the state commissioner for Babe Ruth. He will get his opinion. After a discussion with Mr. Frank Rocca and a copy of the complaint letter from Mr. Warek, the Commission would have a better understanding of the situation and be in a better position to have a discussion regarding this issue.

Correspondence:

Director Amy Mangold received a letter from the Newtown Youth & Family Services regarding their partnership written by Matt Ariniello. Newtown Youth and Family is the co-director of Safety-Town and the Parks & Recreation Department helped with this event.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman Marks reported on the 26 Bench project. The project is moving ahead.

Chairman Marks also reported on the Community Center project. The fifteen architect firms being considered must be narrowed down to five. Barbara Kasbarian, Ed Marks, and Amy Mangold will review the ten construction firms Wednesday, September 10th. More will be coming on this next month.

Director's Report:

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Fairfield Hills Stage II:

Director Amy Mangold updated the Commission on the Fairfield Hills Stage II Trail Project master plan. She stated that Stantec has to revise the original plan and look at Phase II of the trails project. Director Mangold will then go to the Fairfield Hills Authority with an update. She will then send a letter of Special Appropriation to John Kortze, Chairman of the Finance Board, to begin the request for the bonding of the funds for the project. Once the funds are in place, the project can go out to bid. Parks & Recreation staff is very excited about expanding the trails. When asked, Amy stated that the project has started but that part of it will be concrete and there are temperate requirements for proper installation. The project will start at

Glander fields, go near the ambulance barn, and end at the upper crossing by Danbury Hall.

Dickenson Park:

Director Amy Mangold stated that the contractor suggests that the safety audit at Dickenson will not be done until the work is finished. There still needs some repair work, staging and planting to be completed.

Arts Festival:

The festival runs this weekend and it is another partnership for the Parks & Recreational Department. The Parks & Recreation Department is listed as a business sponsor on their brochure for the event. Director Amy Mangold believes that these sponsorships are good for the department and the town. Jan Brookes thanked the Director for their partnership with the senior center.

SHOP:

Sandy Hook Organization for Prosperity was also a partnership opportunity. The Department assisted with the concert series and a barbeque. They were also listed on the poster for the event as a sponsor.

Staff:

The Parks and Recreation Department will be short staffed for a three weeks as one staff member is on short term disability and another will be on vacation.

Assistant Director of Recreation Report:

Camp Report:

Assistant Director, RoseAnn Reggiano reported that there were 687 campers combined at the camps this year. She stated that it was a good summer. The Parks and Recreation Department has built a partnership with Newtown Youth and Family Services through their connection with camp. A social worker from the NYFS attended the camp which allowed youth to attend who may not have been able to in the past. A parent expressed appreciate for the camp and the social worker stating that her child had a great time.

Treadwell Park/Eichler's Cove:

Treadwell Park was closed on Labor Day due to vandalism. Swimmers had to use Eichler's Cove. A sign directed the 101 attendees to the Cove. Parking was tight but everyone was accommodated. The goose patrol is working well.

Dog Park:

The Dog Park was also vandalized. The agility tunnel was damaged. Unfortunately, it is not repairable and may cost \$2000 to replace. RoseAnn will get pricing for a new one. She will also look at the children's playground tunnels to see if they are more reasonably priced and are usable in this instance.

She stated that fourteen dogs participated in the Labor Day parade. The Halloween event will either be on October 18th or 25th.

Assistant Director of Parks and Fields Report:

Treadwell Park:

Assistant Director Carl Samuelson stated that there was between four and five thousand dollars of damage done to Treadwell Park on Labor Day. Damage was done to the bathroom mirrors and flushing monitors. They are investigating point of entry as there was not a lot of damage to the doors. The cleaning service was there that night and when he arrived the roll-up doors were open. There are no cameras to assist in the investigation.

The tennis courts at Treadwell Park have begun reconfiguration. The fencing was removed. Approximately 50% of the base prep is done. The retaining walls and water area are being realigned to make a larger departure lane.

Irrigation water supply planning is underway.

Dickinson Funspace II:

Bank filling and landscaping are being done. There is not a lot of funding for plantings but they were able to split off some from Treadwell Park. They completed playground surrounds.

Many various projects are being done around town, some completed and some just beginning, such as: fall field lay out and lining, baseball and softball field prep, field aeration, seeding and pump installation at Oakview field, installed waterline at Dog Park and installed a weather station at FFH shop. Assisted and guided an Eagle Scout kiosk project as well as installed plants at the FFH entrance.

Phase II of the irrigation sprinkler replacement project is completed and work on Phase III has begun.

Old Business:

Field Rules:

Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson, discussed his findings on his research on field rules/regulation and fees. He has contacted many towns around the country to determine what others are doing in this area. His findings show that some towns have one page manuals while others have as many as 80 pages. Some factors on use of fields has to do with age and number of residents. Various towns use different methods on their use and fees varied greatly. He feels a tiered system on priority to the fields with 100% Newtown participation groups being put ahead of those that have less. After Mr. Samuelson has completed his analysis, he will e-mail a copy to the Commission for review so that they can discuss it in further detail.

Dog Park Update:

Please see Assistant Director-Recreation report above.

Sugar Hill AAU Girls Basketball Waiver Request:

Requested information still not received.

Non-Residents Fee:

This was tabled until a new fee schedule is discussed for the Parks & Recreation Department.

Commissioner's Out and About:

Jan Brookes inquired about the skate park. She was wondering if there was a problem with trash. Assistant Director Carl Samuelson replied that there is trash removal service. He does not believe there is an issue there except possibly there is more smoking being done at that location.

Tennis Court Update:

Please see Assistant Director-Parks and Fields Report for the update.

New Business:

Health Fair:

Director Amy Mangold mentioned that the Health Fair would be held at the Middle School on September 20th.

Special Event:

Joel Zeisler will host a special event at Eichler's Cove to teach children ages seven to seventeen how to wakeboard or water ski. He wanted to give back to the town.

Dock Expansion:

There was a discussion among the Commission on expansion of the docks at Eichler's Cove. Parking may be an issue for special events; however, the

parking will be amended next year. If a sign is displayed with that information, it will dispel resident concerns for the future. Four slips would be added as well as four to six jet ski slips.

Motion made by Jan Brookes to authorize the Assistant Director, Carl Samuelson, to purchase four dock slips and four to six jet ski slips for a cost not to exceed \$ 30,000.00, from the Eichler's Cove fund. Vincent Yanni seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Adjournment:

Ed Marks made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 pm. This motion was seconded by Patrick Barczak which was carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting will occur on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 6:00 pm at Town Hall South in the conference room.

Submitted, Elizabeth Smith, clerk.

