

Town of Newtown, CT

3 Primrose St, Newtown, CT

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

November 18, 2014

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 18, 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 6:01 pm.

Present: Chairman Edward Marks, PJ Yochum, Patrick Barczak, Maureen Crick Owen, and newly sworn in member Warren Spencer. Vincent Yanni arrived after the meeting began.

Absent: Tom DiNicola

Staff Present: Amy Mangold, Carl Samuelson, RoseAnn Reggiano

Public: Kendra Bobowick (The Newtown Bee)

Acceptance of Minutes:

Vincent Yanni made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 14, 2014 meeting minutes with the following adjustments. PJ Yochum seconded the motion which was carried unanimously. The following adjustment were made to the minutes:

Under the Chairman's report, the second paragraph, first sentence should read: The second issue at hand was that Mr. Warek felt that his complaint to the Newtown Babe Ruth organization regarding his inability to work as an umpire in town was not addressed.

The first sentence of the second paragraph under Community Center should read: The building will be 35,000 sq ft with a 10,000 sq ft senior center and an indoor aquatic center.

Under Assistant Director of Recreation Report: Assistant Director's name was spelled incorrectly three times. The name should be Reggiano.

Public Participation:

There was no public participation this evening.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence presented this month.

Chairman's Report:

Community Center:

The interview committee decided on an architect/engineering firm, Quisenberry Arcari Architects. The committee also chose Caldwell & Walsh for the construction company for this project. Selectman Llodra suggested that the project be turned over to the Public Building & Site Use Commission.

Newtown Softball:

Newtown Softball organization had a meeting this month and formed a sub-committee to review the by-laws. Selectman Llodra sent a letter to the organization suggesting changes that may improve parent participation.

Letter to the Bee:

Director Marks addressed a letter that was sent to the Newtown Bee which was critical of the Parks & Recreation Department staffing contracts. Assistant Director Samuelson stated that there had been a widening of wages rates between the Parks & Recreation Department rates and those of the Public Works Department. Director Mangold mentioned that the department has lost good employees to the Public Works Department. The issue at hand was to try to shrink the disparity between the wage rates between the two departments.

Director's Report:

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26 Bench Project:

The first plaque for the benches arrived at the Parks & Recreation Department. It is for the bench to be located near the Peter Rabbit House. Chairman Marks inquired whether the pads could be poured for the benches now. Assistant Director Samuelson stated that they need to bunch the pouring due to the fact the concrete will be delivered by truck.

Camp Social Worker:

Director Mangold stated that the Sandy Hook Foundation was very receptive to the idea of providing the funding for a social worker at next year's summer camps. Having the social worker at the camps was very beneficial the last two years. She should have a final answer by next meeting.

CT Recreation & Parks Association Conference:

Assistant Director Samuelson will attend the conference on Monday. He will be joined on Tuesday by Director Mangold and Assistant Director Reggiano. They will obtain CEU's and peruse vendor tables.

Assistant Director of Recreation Report:

Dog Park:

The dog park has been paved and there has been discussion on the location for the sign.

There has been confusion on how to access the small dog portion of the park. There will be an adjustment to the path which makes it easier to get there. Also work is being done to address the mud issue and get trees planted.

Breakfast with Santa:

This event is scheduled to be held on December 6th.

Track Program:

Assistant Director Reggiano mentioned that the Track Program with Erin Shoemaker went very well. There were 32 participants in the fall program. There will be a winter conditioning track program @ NYA.

Cultural Arts Commission:

The Newtown Cultural Arts Commission is sponsoring three arts programs; Drawing, Ballet, and Ukulele lessons.

Summer Fees & Dates:

Assistant Director Reggiano presented the proposed summer rates and dates. There was discussion regarding the fees and the fact that there will be jet ski slips at Eichler's Cove this summer.

Motion:

PJ Yochum made a motion to approve the fees as amended and it was seconded by Maureen Crick Owen. The motion was unanimously passed.

Assistant Director of Parks and Fields Report:

Treadwell Park:

Winterizing is almost complete; curbing to be completed next week. As much finish grading as possible will be done with the remainder happening in the spring. There will be some landscaping done between the wall and the tennis courts this fall. Surfacing and fencing will be done in the spring. The surfacing requires warmer temperatures to cure.

Docks:

The docks have been pulled out of the water at Eichler's Cove Marina and at Lake Lillinoah.

Dickinson Park:

The damaged gate at Dickinson Park has been replaced and was paid for by insurance.

Teen Center:

A new roof and refrigerator have been installed at the Teen Center.

Dog Park:

The Dog Park parking lot prep work was completed enabling Public Works to pave it. It has also been winterized.

Maintenance Garage:

The HVAC is over budget but there are items included that were not in the scope, for example, CO2 detectors. Assistant Director Samuelson will do a scope review with the lowest bidder. It will take 45 - 60 days for the heating components to be completed.

Oakview Field has a new granite sign. Work has started on the Christmas display preparations. Winterizing and fall clean-ups are almost completed.

Old Business:

Field Rules and Non Resident Fees:

This is a continuing item. No update at this time.

Non-Residents Fees: This was discussed and a motion was made to accept the fees as amended for the Summer 2015 camps, pool, beach, and slip rentals fees.

Commissioner's Out and About:
No news to report.

Treadwell Tennis Court update:
See Assistant Director of Parks Report.

Newtown Cultural Arts Commission: Flower Project:
Assistant Director Samuelson asked the Commission members if anyone thought of a possible placement for the flower project that the Newtown Cultural Arts Commission discussed before the Commission last month. Director Mangold thought the new Community Center would be a great spot since she was concerned that an outdoor location would damage the artwork. Chairman Marks thought the Municipal Center might be a good temporary site.

New Business:

Budget:
Director Mangold has a department head meeting on December 4th which comes just before the Commission's December meeting. The Finance Director will meet with the Parks & Recreation department after the December Commission meeting to review the budget. Selectman Llodra gave guidelines of no new employees and no increases.

The proposed budget included mandated increase in salaries, social security and retirement contributions. The department is requesting a modest increase in the overtime budget due to the many new facilities that need maintenance; for example, the Victory Garden, the Skate Park, and the Dog Park. They would prefer another full time employee as campus related items are taking away from the day to day requirements of the department. Two part time employees might work also; however, there are a lot of rules regarding overtime due to the unions. There was discussion as to whether contracting out some work would free up time for the staff to accomplish their tasks. The last time a full-time employee was added to the budget was 2007/2008 budget but the position was eliminated before it was filled due to the hire freeze. Chairman Marks suggested it may be time to request a new full-time employee. If not now, then certainly when the pool facility is finished since there will be added responsibility at that time.

Assistant Director Samuelson noted that it costs approximately \$40,000 to resurface the tennis and basketball courts every 5 - 7 years. The courts at Dickinson Park will need to be done next year as they are four years old already. The discussion centered around adding a \$5000 increase to the

budget to be banked for resurfacing so that there will not be a large hit to the budget in one year.

There was also a slight increase in the supplies line item.

Director Mangold was concerned about the funding for the social worker at camp. The Sandy Hook Community Foundation may be able assist in funding the position. An answer should be available by next meeting.

Grounds Maintenance is requesting a 5% increase in their budget.

The major discussion centered on the Capital Budget.

The Commission asked the Department to prioritize the top 8 items on the Capital Equipment Budget.

1. Toro 5910 Lease- recurring lease payment, one of top two mowers in the fleet.
2. Replace 2004 F350 Dump truck- it was out of service for over 60 days this year and is so worn that it is only used as a back-up. It required over \$10,000 in repairs this year to keep it running.
3. Redexim Speed Seeder- to replace 1987 inoperable disc seeder that parts are unavailable for.
4. Replace 2003 Chevy Pickup- oldest in the fleet and unreliable.
5. Ventrac Brush Mower- needed to cut steep slopes and meadows that are only cut a few times a year. It will replace the Kubota. Cost share with Land Use possible on this item.
6. Replace Cut off Saw/Weed Eaters/Back Pack Blowers- replacements for old units that are beyond repair or parts are unobtainable.
7. Replace 2003 F550 with Dump Truck- unreliable.
8. Replace Toro Field Mower- 2nd most used in fleet, early trade in could save money on a lease. If we wait, we may lose value for a trade in.

Assistant Director Samuelson noted that the Ambulance Garage will pose an issue for snow removal. Washington Circle will not permit snowplow use without damaging the curbs. The town trucks are unable to make the turns with the plows. There are also more sidewalks that need to be cleared in this area. Commission members asked if this could be contracted out. The cost for this runs between \$180 -\$190 hour. It was noted that equipment will be need for the addition on FFH town property; however, no money was added to the budget to handle the additional work load. Actually, funds were cut from the Department's budget.

The Commission requested that Capital Projects be prioritized also.

1. New Baseball field at FFH behind Glander Field. This will actually be relocating the field at FFH. This is depicted on the master plan to satisfy the urgent need of youth baseball/softball and through repurposing Liberty Field.
2. Phase I for permanent recycling containers for all parks.
3. Access Control Infrastructure
4. Portable Toilet Landscaping Phase II, to complete landscaping around Dickinson and Liberty portable toilets.
5. Lightning Detection System.
6. Watertown Field 2 Renovation, Renovate 2nd of three youth fields at FFH Watertown location, some funding offered by Babe Ruth for this project.
7. Pocket Park Study, particularly Hawleyville & Dodgingtown areas of town.
8. Skatepark Maintenance & Expansion, routine maintenance and installation of new quarterpipe feature.

Chairman Marks will work with Director Mangold and Assistant Director Samuelson to finalize the budget.

Motion:

Adjournment:

Vincent Yanni made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm. This motion was seconded by PJ Yochum which was carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 9, 2014 at 6:00 pm at 3 Main Street in the conference room.

Submitted, Elizabeth Smith, clerk.