

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

**February 10, 2015**

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 in the conference room located at 3 Main Street in Newtown, CT.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Edward Marks at 6:04 pm.

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

**Absent:** Tom DiNicola and Warren Spencer

**Staff Present:** Amy Mangold, RoseAnn Reggiano, Carl Samuelson

**Public:** Randy Dieckman, Curt Symes, Mary Kate Halmose, Joe Augustine, Andy Via, Linda Hess, John Premus

**Acceptance of Minutes:**

**Chairman Ed Marks made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 9, 2014 meeting minutes as presented. PJ Yochum seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.**

**Public Participation:**

Andy Via, President of Newtown Babe Ruth Baseball, Newtown, CT

Joe Augustine, Vice President of Newtown Babe Ruth Baseball, Newtown, CT

Mr. Via stated the need for a fence on Watertown Field 1. At this time, the field cannot be used for tournaments, because it doesn't meet the criteria without a fence. Chairman Marks suggested temporary fencing that could be used while the field was in use and then removed when done. Mr. Via expressed concerns that the high school had temporary fencing and removed it, because it didn't meet safety criteria. Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson stated that all the infrastructure put into Watertown Field 1 by the town, Babe Ruth and donations, is town owned property. However, the outfield at Watertown Field 1 is split between the town, state and railroad. In order to put a liberty style fence on the outfield, it would require easements from all three owners. Chairman Marks asked if Mr. Via and Mr. Augustine could explore temporary fencing and send the commission links with the results. Also, going back to the property owners to get permission to install a fence.

Mr. Via inquired about the Babe Ruth schedule and expectations on receiving it this year, for the spring 2015 season. Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson will be having a meeting on scheduling on Thursday, February 12, 2015, and expects they will be available by the end of February.

Mr. Via has some concerns about the fields at Hawley 1 and Liberty. Last fall they noticed how the area between 3 baseline and pitcher's mound is sunken in. Grass will no longer grow because of the amount of water that puddles in that area. In order to evaluate for the spring season, they need to wait for the snow to melt and take another look at it. Possibly picking up and placing temporary sod underneath.

Mr. Via made inquiries regarding building a new baseball field like Glander. Chairman Marks stated that it is true. There is money in the capital budget, in the coming year. The budget still needs to be approved. The total project price is around \$85,000. Right now they have \$50,000 budgeted, so trying to figure out between baseball, softball and surcharge to come up with the difference. If approved, looking at it being completed fall 2016. The new field will be located across from Glander Field, on the other side of the stone wall. When the field is completed, Liberty Field will then be dedicated to softball. The new baseball field is expected to have 225ft. Director Mangold stated that the budget went through the selectman, next it goes to the board of finance, legislative counsel and then referendum. Mr. Via inquired about the possibility of lights on the new field, being set back from the road. There is a possibility of lights in the future, but not in budget at this time.

Linda Hess, Newtown Soccer Club, Newtown, CT

John Premus, Newtown Soccer Club, Newtown, CT

Ms. Hess has some issues with the soccer field at the Reed School. It has become very dirty and muddy. She suggested that schools alternate usage of play, stay off dirt part of field or perhaps putting turf down during off season. Assistant Director of Parks Samuelson stated it is becoming more difficult to maintain fields with the restrictions on pesticides and chemicals to sustain fields. Chairman Marks stated with the restrictions from schools, it's getting tougher to get on the field and even more so, maintaining them. Assistant Director of Parks Samuelson is staying on top of new studies from Uconn standards of maintaining fields and what they would need in order to maintain safe playable areas at schools. Ms. Hess stated the primary problem areas are by the goal boxes. One temporary solution would be to sod the goal box areas. Assistant Director of Parks Samuelson stated that going forward, they will be required to maintain a certain gmax level. Gmax level is the impact of an object, to simulate a head, when it hits a surface.

Mary Kate Halmose, (Girl Scout) Independent Citizen, Newtown, CT

Ms. Halmose, wants to reintroduce the idea of a Book Exchange. Ms. Halmose had proposed this idea before the commission and didn't go through with the project, because she graduated High School and is no longer a Girl Scout. She would like to move forward with this idea as an independent citizen. She has proposed having portable libraries at Treadwell Park, Dickinson Park and Eichler's Cove. It would consist of a waterproof box to store books that have been donated. Friends of Library has agreed to donate some books, mostly adult and young adult books. Ms. Halmose would maintain these boxes on a regular basis. This will allow people visiting our parks to borrow a book during their visit.

**Motion:**

**Chairman Marks made a motion to approve the setup of lending boxes in three locations, Treadwell Park, Dickinson Park and Eichler's Cove, in the spring 2015. This motion was seconded by PJ Yochum. It was carried unanimously.**

**Correspondence:**

No correspondence reported this month.

**Chairman's Report:**Budget

Chairman Marks stated the budget has gone through the board of Selectman. Still has to go through the legislative counsel and board of finance.

Community Center

Chairman Marks and Director Mangold met with the architects for the Community Center and had their first meeting with the building contractor. They looked at 3 conceptional designs of which will possibly be the Community Center. They are really impressed and pleased with the architects and pool consultants. The designers have also been working with the senior center for input and ideas. There are some challenges with the building site, so possibly moving the building forward from where the old building was and leaving some open space behind to be used for outdoor activities. They have reached out to the Torpedoes Swim Team and other local swim teams for protocol and regulations for swim competitions. They are making great progress and very satisfied with the consultants. A very aggressive time line and looking at completion within 18 to 24 months.

**Director's Report:**Director's Report:Community Center:

Director Mangold stated that on February 2, 2015, there was a presentation to the board of Selectman of the plans for the Community Center. The town still needs to get approval for the donation from GE and that will happen at a referendum on March 19, 2015. First Selectman Llodra wants to set up public information sessions to have the public be aware of what's happening through the generosity of the donation. These sessions will allow the public to see some of the conceptional plans for the Community Center and the building site. The architects, building contractor, project manager and First Selectman Llodra will be there to answer any questions. First Selectman Llodra would like to get input from the community before the referendum on March 19, 2015. There are two Community Center Information Sessions for the public to attend. The first information session is March 3, 2015, at 7:00pm, at Newtown High School Lecture Hall, Newtown, CT. The second session will be held on March 10, 2015, at 6:00

pm, to coincide with Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting, at 3 Main Street, Newtown, CT.

Assistant Director of Parks and Fields Report:

Assistant Director Samuelson stated that his staff has been doing a lot of snow plowing and snow removal this winter. They are also finishing up projects at the shop when not snowplowing.

They are looking at a regional car washing facility. The reason for this regional truck washing facility is to wash the salt of vehicles that is causing damage to town vehicles. One site that is a possibility is Fairfield Hills, Newtown, CT.

Director Mangold wanted to add that First Selectman Llodra wanted to thank the team for all their hard work and time snowplowing and removing snow, with all the recent storms we have had and bought them lunch, out of her own money.

Assistant Director of Recreation Report:

Ice Skating Party:

The ice skating party was February 6, 2015, and it was a fun night for all that attended. They had partnered with Ben's Light House for this event. They averaged between 50 and 60 people throughout the night. There was a mechanical polar bear, named Lucy that the kids could ride, a DJ, ice bowling, snow art, ice skating and a big bonfire. At the end of the night Chicken Filet stopped by unexpectedly and dropped off sandwiches, left over from an event at Middle Gate School.

Programs:

Finishing up preparing for the spring and summer programs and schedules.

Just filled two positions in the office that have been vacant. The two new staff members added to the Parks and Recreation team: Jennifer Arnold and Gabriella Chernoff.

At the end of March they will start hiring Counselors and Life Guards and setting up schedules for the summer. At the end February they will be hiring Park wardens for Eichler's Cove.

Dog Park:

Planning for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Strut you Mutt on May 16, 2015, from 11:00 to 2:00pm. The park will be closed for the event.

Citi Field:

Assistant Director of Recreation, Reggiano was invited by the Mets to tour Citi Field for possible future events. Assistant Director Reggiano and Jennifer Arnold will be visiting Citi Field on February 11, 2015.

## **Old Business:**

### Field Rules and Non Resident Fees:

*Athletic Field and Facility Administration Manual*, presented by Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson.

Assistant Director of Parks Samuelson has taken all the information gathered over the years and consolidated into one manual. At this month's meeting he presented to the board a draft of the manual. By consolidating all the rules for the town's fields and facilities, he was able to reduce the number of rules from 75 to 58, by eliminating duplicates. Also included are standard forms used for submission, scheduling categories and fee structure. A new rule effective 2016 is audit of organizations. Chairman Marks has suggested that the board and affiliated organizations read through the manual and come up with questions and/or suggestions for the next meeting.

### Planter's Choice:

Assistant Director of Parks Samuelson stated that Planter's Choice had donated \$5800.00, worth of trees to the Town of Newtown. The approximately 300 trees were planted at Dickinson and Treadwell. Assistant Director of Parks Samuelson worked with the landscaping architect that helped design the tennis courts, to come up with a species of trees that would work best in the town's parks. Chairman Marks will write a thank you letter to Planter's Choice.

## **Motion:**

### **Adjournment:**

**Chairman Marks made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 pm. This motion was second by Vincent Yanni which was carried unanimously.**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 2015 at 6:00 pm at 3 Main Street, Newtown, CT in the conference room.

Submitted, Gabriella Chernoff, clerk.