

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

April 6, 2015

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a special meeting on Monday, April 6, 2015 in the conference room located at 3 Main Street in Newtown, CT.

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Patrick Barczak, at 6:05 pm.

Present: Chairman Edward Marks, Patrick Barczak, Thomas DiNicola, Maureen Crick Owen, PJ Yochum, Warren Spencer.

Absent: Vincent Yanni, Jr.

Staff Present: Amy Mangold

Staff Absent: Carl Samuelson, RoseAnn Reggiano

Public: Chris Lafky, Jim Swift, William Logging, Joe Augustine, Michael Heran, John Klager, Andy Via, Richard Dieckman, Rory Dieckman, Vicki Clark, Pat McCleary.

Public Participation:

Chris Lafky, Boy Scouts Troop 270, Newtown, CT

Chris Lafky proposed to the Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission, building a Gaga Ball Pit as his Eagle Scout project. It was suggested to him by Assistant Director of Recreation RoseAnn Reggiano that this might be something the town may want. Mr. Lafky described Gaga Ball being similar to dodge ball. The game takes place in an octagonal pit and involves dodging, running, jumping and hitting opponents with a ball under the knee while avoiding being hit. Mr. Lafky described Gaga Ball as a popular new game that appeals to kids of all ages. Mr. Lafky proposed: a clear 30' x 30' area to be filled with packed 1/8" gravels process; install 20' x 20' Gaga ball pit with cement footings; install sign with how to instructions; install bench with cement footing to be used by spectators. The materials that will be needed: wood to construct ball pit; cement for footings of ball pit and footing of bench; 1/8" gravel process to provide a hard surface on which ball can be played; brackets for the construction of the pit and attachment to the footings; screws. Mr. Lafky is asking the commission for: a small plot of land to place this pit; use of town owned cement mixer and plate tamper; help of a town employee to operate aforementioned equipment; if reasonable, donation of any other materials listed above. Director of Parks and Recreation Amy Mangold asked Mr. Lafky if he had any thoughts on where he would like to place the Gaga Ball Pit? Mr. Lafky suggested that somewhere near where camps would be taking place. He stated that it is a safe game for younger kids, so

possibly Treadwell Park or Dickinson Park. Director Mangold suggested that one possibility would be Dickinson Park, somewhere near the pavilion. Chairman Ed Marks suggested that the Parks and Recreation team give it some thought on location and the construction of the pit. Mr. Lafky was asked to come back to next month's meeting where there will be further discussion and input on suggested locations and to discuss any issues that may need to be resolved. Director Mangold inquired about the time frame of this project and when Mr. Lafky expected it to be completed? Mr. Lafky responded that he would need to complete is Eagle Scout project before he turn 18 years old and would like to have it completed by the end of the summer.

Motion:

Commissioner Thomas DiNicola made a motion to approve to proceed with getting more information on the proposal of building a new Gaga Ball Pit. Commissioner PJ Yochum second the motion, which was carried unanimously.

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

Mr. Via with Newtown Babe Ruth Baseball stated that there were repairs made to the batting cage net behind the Middle School, on Monday April 6, 2015. Coach Augustine and Coach Conklin got permission from the Middle School, to go behind the school and fix the batting cage nets during school hours. Mr. Via stated that with the exception of a couple of stakes to keep the nets down during windy days, the cages were up and ready for use. Mr. Via also wanted to inform the Parks and Recreation Commission that the Field Operations Director of Babe Ruth Baseball, Adam Taylor will be leaving at the end of the season. His replacement, George Conklin will be his replacement and will be shadowing Mr. Taylor until he takes over. Mr. Via again stated that he visited each field and that Glander 1 and Liberty 1 were in nice condition and Hawley 1 and 2 still had snow on parts of the field. Mr. Via did suggest that Liberty could use more mound material that it was a little flat, but other than that he thought the fields looked very nice. Chairman Ed Marks said that they are still looking to open fields on April 15, 2015. Director of Parks and Recreation, Amy Mangold stated that that is the goal, but it is weather permitting and that there is rain in the forecast.

New Business:

Waiver – Fairfield County Captains:

Chairman Ed Marks stated that since the denial of the Fairfield County Captains Baseball waiver at the March 10, 2015, there has been a lot of feedback and discussion with parents, First Selectman Pat Llodra, Director of Parks and Recreation Amy Mangold and some of the Parks and Recreation Commission members.

Motion:

Commissioner Pat Barczak renewed a motion from the previous meeting to approve the waiver request for the Fairfield County Captains for the spring and summer 2015. Commissioner Tom DiNicola second the motion.

Commissioner Pat Barczak stated that although he was not at the last commission meeting on March 10, 2015, when the Fairfield County Captains Baseball waiver was denied, he did review the notes and looking at the roster for the Captains, feels that the team does meet the resident requirements. Commissioner Barczak continued to state that going forward with the new rules and classifications the team may not meet some of the qualifications, but while we work through the process of this, the Captains should, based on residency, be allowed the waiver for the spring season. Going forward in the fall with the new categories it will make it much easier to classify the teams. Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen stated the reason she had denied the waiver at the March 10, 2015, meeting was because she didn't feel that the Fairfield County Captains Baseball met the uniqueness requirement. However, going forward when the new rules are finalized, we will no longer have waivers and it will be on based on categories. Commissioner Crick Owen stated that because the Fairfield County Captains does meet the residency requirements for the spring 2015, she would approve the waiver. Commissioner Warren Spencer inquired if the Fairfield County Captains will be classified as a non-Newtown based team, based on the new categories under the new rules? Chairman Ed Marks stated that Assistant Director of Parks Carl Samuelson will be working on defining and clarifying the different category buckets. Commissioner Thomas DiNicola inquired if there was going to be an issue with field space and time to support the Fairfield County Captains? Chairman Marks stated that Assistant Director Samuelson will have to take a look at the schedule and adjust.

Motion:

Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen moved to amend the motion to approve the waiver for Fairfield County Captains with the condition that allocation for the field use and access be equitable with scheduling for spring and summer 2015. Commissioner PJ Yochum second the motion. In a roll call vote, Commissioner Warren Spencer voted to approve the motion for spring and summer 2015, on the basis that it is for just spring and summer 2015, referring to extenuating circumstances associated with situation, but questioned the uniqueness. Commissioner Thomas DiNicola voted to approve the motion, based on that it is for the kids, but questioned the uniqueness. Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen voted to approve the motion, questioned the uniqueness, but approved based on the understanding that the process will be changing in the fall. Commissioner Pat Barczak voted to approve the motion, knowing the process will be changing. Commissioner PJ Yochum approved the motion for spring and summer, knowing the policy will be changing in the fall. Chairman Ed Marks didn't vote at last meeting, March 10, 2015, so abstained from voting this month. The motion was carried 5 to 0 with one abstention.

Director of Parks and Recreation Amy Mangold stated, as Director she is not on the commission and is not eligible to vote, but is happy that The Fairfield County Captains waiver was approved and that Newtown kids can play on Newtown fields. Director Mangold went on to say that this is for the kids and that we should all remember to be good role models and teach them that things can be resolved, when we all work together.

Eichler's Cove Addition:

Director of Parks and Recreation Amy Mangold had proposed to the commission, on behalf of Assistant Director of Parks Carl Samuelson that we increase the previously approved allocation of \$25,000, for new boat and jet ski slips at Eichler's Cove to \$35,000. The original \$25,000 permitted purchasing 3 more new boat slips and 2 more new jet ski ports. Director Mangold went on to explain that with an additional \$10,000, this will allow us to purchase 6 larger boat slips and 6 jet ski ports, for a total of 12 slips. Assistant Director Samuelson had provided information that showed the cost per rental space is about \$4200.00, with a 3.5 year return on investment if we get the 2 boat slips. The cost per rental space is under \$3000.00, with a 2.5 year return on investment if we increase the funding to \$35,000.00. Commissioner Barczak inquired if the money for this increase was in the Eichler's Cove fund and where will the new slips be added? Director Mangold responded that the money is in the Eichler's Cove fund and that the new slips will be an extension to the current docks.

Motion:

Commissioner Thomas DiNicola made a motion to approve an increase of \$10,000, from \$25,000 to \$35,000 to purchase a total of 12 dock slips. Commissioner Warren Spencer second the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Director of Parks and Recreation Amy Mangold, explained to the commission that it has been brought to the attention of the commission that there are times when players and parents are solicited at organized events to join other outside organization and that it has been suggested that there be some guidelines on how to prevent or handle those situations. Chairman Ed Marks responded that this should be something included in the new Rules/Regulation manual coming out this fall. Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen suggested that it could be a form that coaches sign.

Correspondence:

Director of Parks and Recreation Amy Mangold stated that she has sent out a survey to the Torpedoes recreational swim team, the end of March 2015, to get a feel for how families feel about the program. Commissioner DiNicola inquired if the Torpedoes swim team was a year round program? Director Mangold responded that it is, but the summer program is more recreational. The team is coached by college aged students and the practices are held at Treadwell Pool and they travel for their meets, because of pool use constraints. Director Mangold went on to say that the Torpedoes swim team has been more of a recreational

program for more than 30 years and is now sensing that some of the parents are looking for a more competitive program. Chairman Ed Marks suggested that we query Mary Atkinson (founder of the program) or other outside sources for some input and a little history on some issues that can be fixed and issues that are not within the scope of what the program is.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman Ed Marks stated that the Director of Parks and Recreation Amy Mangold, Assistant Director of Recreation RoseAnn Reggiano, Barbara Kasbarian and Chairman Marks have been very involved with the conceptual process of the Community Center Phase I since last November 2014. Chairman Marks went on to say that there has been some push back from the community on the intent of the Community Center and that some of the feedback was that it was more a Senior Center with an aquatic area and not a way to help the whole community. The intention was for this to be Phase I with Phase II and III to follow, but the feedback from the community was that is not a guarantee. First Selectman Pat Llodra felt the need to pause the process, re-evaluate and start again. Chairman Marks stated that they are waiting to hear back from First Selectman Llodra on how to proceed.

Director's Report:

Director of Parks and Recreation Report

-Director Amy Mangold stated that she is pleased with the budget process so far. It has gone through the board of selectman, board of finance and the legislative council without any changes and now ready for referendum on April 28, 2015.

-Director Mangold stated that to date, all but 10 boat slips at Eichler's Cove have been rented for the season.

-Director Mangold and Chairman Ed Marks attended a Fairfield Hills Authority meeting and presented the master plan and visions of the Parks and Recreation department. Director Mangold stated that the second phase of the Fairfield Hills Trail bid came in under the bonded amount of \$300,000. LRM Landscaping won the bid and will be starting the project soon.

-Director Mangold stated that when an organization uses the grounds of Fairfield Hills for an event, they must go through a process of going through all the departments, one being through Parks and Recreation. At this time there is no fee for usage of Fairfield Hills grounds for an event, but it's costing Parks and Recreation money after each event, for cleanup and maintenance. Director Mangold is in the process of reviewing policies and possible fee schedules for events that are held at Fairfield Hills, with George Benson, Christal Preszler, Carl Samuelson and RoseAnn Reggiano.

Assistant Director of Parks and Fields Report:

Assistant Director of Parks Carl Samuelson was unable to attend the meeting, but had reported that the construction of the Treadwell Tennis courts had not started yet. The air temperature needs to be consistently at 50 degrees before they can properly lay the surface material for the tennis courts.

Assistant Director of Recreation Report:

- Assistant Director of Recreation RoseAnn Reggiano was unable to attend the meeting, but had reported that she has met with the new Newtown Youth Academy Director, Nick Hoffman and looking into setting up a new Pickle Ball.
- Assistant Director Reggiano had also met with Andrea Spencer regarding possible future community events.
- Newtown Parks and Recreation Face Book page now has 800+ followers.
- Parks and Recreation will continue to offer skate board lessons at the park.
- Mad Dash to be held on June 13, 2015 and looking to put together Super Hero teams.
- Looking into having a Mini Dash for 5-8 year olds.
- Assistant Director Reggiano is currently interviewing summer 2015 staff (camp counselors, life guards, gate guards, site directors, park rangers)
- Organizing summer staff training paid with gift funds.
- The Easter egg hunt at Dickinson was very successful.
- Chairman Ed Marks inquired if the dog park was completed? Director Mangold responded that Assistant Director Reggiano had sent Assistant Director Carl Samuelson a punch list of items to be done, but understands it may take a little time due to the long, hard winter. Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen stated that our dog park is beautiful in comparison to other town's dog parks.

Old Business:

Field Rules/Regulations Manual

-Commissioner Pat Barczak suggested that when we are putting together the Field/Rules Guide that we remove the categories piece of it and convert it into a separate appendix to cut down on the number of pages in the handbook. Chairman Marks elaborated on that idea and suggested a bucket spread sheet to make it easier to see the different tiers when evaluating requirements.

Commissioner's out and about

Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen inquired if anyone has been in touch with Kyle Lyddy and the commission in charge of the permanent memorial? She inquired on where it was going to be placed, the cost of maintaining and who was responsible for maintaining the memorial? Chairman Marks responded that he will reach out to Kyle Lyddy regarding this.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Commissioner Tom DiNicola made a motion to approve the minutes for January 13, 2015, as presented. Commissioner Warren Spencer second the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Commissioner PJ Yochum made a motion to approve the minutes of February 10, 2015, as presented. Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen second the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen made a motion to approve the minutes for March 10, 2015, as amended. Commissioner PJ Yochum second the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Amended March Motion: Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen made a motion to approve spring 2015 waivers for: Newtown Samba U17, CFC West U16 Boys, CFC United West U14 Boys, CFC Samba U14 Boys, Newtown West United U13 Boys, Newtown CFC West U11 Boys, CFC West U14 Girls, CFS West U13 Girls, CFC West Newtown U12 Girls. This motion was seconded by Warren Spencer. Vincent Yanni, Jr.; Maureen Crick Owen; Warren Spencer were in favor. PJ Yochum abstained. The motion approved with 3 in favor and 1 abstained.

Amended March Motion: Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen made a motion to approve waiver request for the spring 2015 American Legion Admirals Baseball 17U. The motion was seconded by Vincent Yanni, Jr. In a roll call vote: Vincent Yanni, Jr. – nay; PJ Yochum – nay; Warren Spencer – nay; Maureen Crick Owen – nay. Motion Failed to pass and therefore the waiver was denied.

Amended March Motion: Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen made a motion to approve waiver request for the spring 2015 American Legion Admirals Baseball 19U. The motion was seconded by Vincent Yanni, Jr. In a roll call vote: Vincent Yanni Jr.- nay; PJ Yochum – nay; Warren Spencer – nay; Maureen Crick Owen – nay. Motion failed to pass and therefore the waiver was denied.

Motion:

Adjournment:

Commissioner Pat Barczak made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 pm. This motion was second by Commissioner Maureen Crick Owen, which was carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at 6:00 pm at 3 Main Street, Newtown, CT in the conference room.

Submitted, Gabriella Chernoff, clerk.