

Torrington Parks and Recreation Commission
Minutes of October 6, 2010 Meeting

Chairperson Patricia Fairchild called to order a regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 6:00 P.M. on Wednesday, October 6, 2010 at the Armory. In attendance were Vice-Chairperson Fran Ducotey, Commissioners Jim Pescatore and Duke Wall, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Brett Simmons, and Recreation Director Donna Winn.

On a motion by Jim Pescatore with a second by Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2010 meeting.

On a motion by Jim Pescatore with a second by Fran DuCotey, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2010 special meeting.

On a motion by Duke Wall with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2010 emergency meeting.

Citizen's Comments

None.

Correspondence

None

A motion was made by Jim Pescatore, seconded by Duke Wall, and approved unanimously to change the order of the agenda to address Other Business next.

Other Business

Mr. Simmons informed the Commission that he had met with Lisa Conti and Sandi Calkins, sisters of retired Parks' employee, Anthony "Gus" Lucia, in regard to a memorial at Christmas Village in recognition of their brother. Lisa Conti presented the ideas that she had discussed with Mr. Simmons to plant eight 4-5' blue spruce trees and to erect a monument at the entrance to the memorial. Ms. Conti stated that the family had \$1,400 in contributions in hand for the memorial, with another \$400 promised, if needed. The Lucia family is also planning to donate a bench that would encircle the center spruce tree. A discounted delivered price of \$100 per tree was received from Moscarillo's; however, Fran DuCotey offered to check with Planter's Choice for a comparison price. Ms. Calkins stated that the family would like a formal dedication ceremony with the public, City officials, and the press in attendance. A proposed date of November

13 was discussed. Mr. Simmons stated that donations received in memory of Gus would cover most of the cost of the trees. Follow-up discussions with the Lucia family to finalize the dedication will be held.

Facility Use

- On a motion by Duke Wall with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the request from Julia Sloan of Brazen Betties to hold a Vintage Expo at the Armory on December 11 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- On a motion by Fran DuCotey with a second by Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the request from Linda Aquavia of the DDS to hold dances at Coe Memorial on the dates requested, contingent upon receipt of all necessary paperwork and that there are no conflicts with other events.
- Mention was made of a request received from the Boy Scouts to hold a Scout Roundup at the Besse Pond Park on October 3. Said event received prior Commission approval.
- A facility request was received from Heidi Kirchofer from Matica Arts to use the Coe Memorial Park Civic Center for practices every Thursday for two hours from September 23 through May 2011. In exchange for rental fees, Matica Arts has offered to hold a circus-type class with all receipts collected going to the City. Should the class not be held due to low enrollment, Matica Arts has offered to perform at the Winter Carnival and Movin' and Groovin' events at no cost to the City. Commissioners discussed the offer, noting that the value of the rental would be in excess of \$3,000 with the City only receiving back a portion of that amount in free performances by Matica Arts. Following discussion, a motion was made by Duke Wall that the Commission leave the decision for this request at the discretion of Superintendent Simmons and Recreation Director Winn if an equal value exchange could be arranged. This motion was seconded by Fran DuCotey and approved unanimously.
- Upon a motion by Fran DuCotey with a second by Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the request from Lauren Smith of the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce to hold a Job Fair in the Armory on November 17 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. This event, co-sponsored by the City, would be exempt from fees. It was noted that PAL would need to be contacted as PAL basketball could not be held November 16 or November 17.

Program Updates

Ms. Winn reported to the Commission as follows:

- The flyers for the Halloween Party scheduled for October 29, 2010, were distributed to the schools; however, associates of some of the schools indicated that in an attempt to “go green,” they would not be sending the flyers home with students. It was suggested that the schools be contacted to determine how information would be disseminated to students and that the Superintendent be contacted to obtain the official policy on distribution of literature. With regard to the Halloween Party, Ms. Winn stated that the event would feature a DJ, hayrides, and a fire show. A Halloween Decorating Contest has also been planned for autumn/Halloween displays that are either lit or unlit. Judging will take place October 24.
- Ms. Winn has been in contact with Joanne Cracco of the Torrington High School in an effort to solicit students to volunteer as elves for Christmas Village and at the Halloween party. Ms. Cracco has also expressed interest in meeting to discuss internships within the Recreation Department.
- Registrations are underway for dog training and dance classes. Energy boot camp was cancelled due to no enrollment. Rosters are being accepted for the Young Men’s Basketball League. The Radio City Music Hall trip is popular and individuals have been signing up for that trip as well as the casino trips.

Christmas Village Updates

- Plans are being made for the Toy Shower. WZBG has been contacted. Wood Acres will be providing the trolley rides that evening as well as for the Christmas Village Opening Parade and the Last Night festivities. Arrangements have been made with the Yankee Pedlar, however, no singers are lined up as yet. A police officer will be needed and the fire department will be contacted. Refreshments of cookies, juice, and hot chocolate will be provided.
- An effort is underway to recruit former Idol singers to do a show at the Warner as a fund raiser for Christmas Village on December 19 at 3 p.m. Approximately eight individuals have indicated their willingness to participate in this event thus far. Ms. Winn has been speaking with the Warner regarding a discounted rental rate.
- The tree lighting will take place on Friday, November 26. The THS Band will perform in front of City Hall. Volunteers will be needed for the tree lighting at Coe Memorial Park. Ms. Fairchild stated that the Altrusa Club

may be available to assist. It was suggested that Dunkin Donuts be contacted regarding the donation of hot chocolate for the event.

- It was mentioned that Joy Zublena had contacted the Parks and Recreation Department regarding a song that had been written by Johnny Audia, a former local musician, about Christmas Village entitled "Santa's Message." Ms. Zublena offered to make a recording of her grandson singing this song and drop it off at the Parks and Recreation Department office.
- Ms. Fairchild informed the Commission that she was approached by Susan Carroll who was doing a biography on Paul Friedman, a long-time worker and originator of Christmas Village. Ms. Carroll questioned whether some type of recognition could be given to Mr. Friedman. Ms. Fairchild then suggested that the Commission formally recognize Mr. Friedman's contributions with a plaque that would hang in the Toy Room at the Village. Mention was also made of formally recognizing Leo Liddle as well, possibly by designating Mr. Liddle as the Parade Marshall of the Opening Day Parade.
- It was noted that with regard to VIP Night, a lot of complaints were received last year regarding the waiting time. Mr. Simmons suggested that there be two lines with two Santa's to greet the guests this year. Discussion continued and suggestions were shared on ways to improve this year's VIP Night.

Softball Updates

Mr. Simmons stated that a wrap up meeting would be needed with Ken Frizzo to review the past season and to discuss next year's season. It was decided that a special meeting would be held in January.

Capital Budget Updates

Mr. Simmons updated the Commission on the status of several capital projects:

- The roof management program is underway and will generate other capital projects.
- The ceiling was removed at the Winthrop Street storage facility, where many Parks materials and equipment are stored. The lighting was also removed and reinstalled. Removal of the ceiling will allow for clearer inspection of the roof to determine the repairs that are needed at this facility.
- Repair of the roof at Christmas Village is also scheduled. Approximately 30 tiles will be replaced and flashing will be installed around the chimney.

- Estimates are forthcoming for roof repairs at the Carriage House as well as for sandblasting and painting the dugouts at West Torrington.
- Mr. Simmons will be meeting with consultants for design/renovation of the Fuessenich Park infield including regrading, reworking of the irrigation system, and installation of drainage.
- Acquisition of a utility vehicle such as a John Deere Gator is being researched.

Facility Updates

Mr. Simmons reported on work that is ongoing within the Parks Department, including mowing and trimming and ball field prep, which is winding down. In addition:

- The irrigation system will be shut down within the next few weeks. Graffiti removal is an ongoing effort. A meeting will be scheduled with the Mayor and Police Chief to discuss this problem.
- Ceiling tile replacement at the Rec Hall was recently finished.
- The Besse Pool was recently closed. The sand and filter system for the pool needs to be changed, and the type of sand and method to change the sand are being researched. This will be done either this fall or early spring.
- Some work was recently done on the Babe Ruth field. Once drainage is addressed, a full renovation will be needed.
- An assessment of all our facility roofs is underway, and a report should be coming within a month.
- Four entrance signs have been installed. The rules and regulation signs are being installed on structures or fences since three signs were removed from the posts that they were installed upon. The signs for the second phase are in fabrication and should be up before snowfall.
- Installation of a swingset at Ruwet is nearly complete; work on installation of playground equipment at the Burrville playground will follow.
- Installation of the ventilation system in the Armory gymnasium should be completed by the week end, then the electrical work and louvers will be completed.
- The top coat of the gymnasium floor will be redone as there were issues with particles that were dragged into the final coat.
- Aerating, fertilizing, and overseeding of fields is planned by the end of the month.
- The flower baskets will be removed within the next couple of weeks and then the lights will be installed at the beginning of November. Work on Christmas Village will then begin.

Mr. Simmons then updated the Commission on plans for the Armory 100-Year Celebration. A committee has been meeting regularly and plans include an alumni basketball game on Saturday, November 6 at 6:30. Bill Nataro, Bob

Martinotti, and Tony Turina have been helping to organize that event. An effort to gather names of former basketball players is underway. On Sunday, November 7, a ceremony and social gathering will be held recognizing the military and National Guard that was based out of the Armory. Jack Wallace will be the Master of Ceremonies and the Mayor will read a proclamation. The Veteran's Service Office Honor Guard will perform and Neil Hunt, Tony Turina, and Mark McEachern will also speak.

Mr. Simmons reported that the Bishop Donnelly Field sign will read that it is owned by the Hartford Archdiocese and operated by the City of Torrington.

The Stipend Committee recently met to discuss sports stipends. Mickey Mantle and PAL did not submit applications for a stipend this year. The Mickey Mantle League is considering switching over to the Junior American Legion League. The PAL organization decided not to apply, but rather suggested that the funds be used to pay for the Armory attendants. The report from the Stipend Committee recommended that all applicants receive the same stipend as awarded last year. Upon a motion by Fran DuCotey and a second by Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the 2010/2011 Sports Stipends Report for this year. Commissioner Jim Pescatore abstained.

Mr. Simmons reported that training on the new Active Net software is ongoing. On-site training was completed and remote training is underway and going well. Mr. Simmons remarked that the new system will be a great benefit once it is implemented. The plan is to "go live" with the new system in November.

Recent vandalism at the Borzani Playground was reported. Both graffiti and overturned barrels were noted. The police department did some patrols of the area and has recommended that some type of lighting be installed. This will be discussed further. Mr. Simmons commented that it will take some ongoing communication with the police department to improve this situation.

Coe Memorial Park Updates

Mr. Simmons reported that he is working on putting together some plans and specs in order to do some improvements to the Carriage House. Some major leaks in the roof need to be addressed in order to maintain the structure. In speaking with Mr. Zaharek, he was informed that the spruce tree that was transplanted within the Park did not survive. Mr. Zaharek will transplant a new one at no cost. The other tree that was transplanted in West Torrington looks like it may survive. Mr. Simmons stated that he did not think it was a worthwhile endeavor to move any of the other spruce trees given the difficulty in transplanting and the success rate. He stated that he would be getting a cost proposal for cutting and chipping the remaining trees. A contract with Mr. Zaharek for annual tree work and pruning is expected.

Mums have been planted at the Park and Still River Gardens is continuing with their maintenance and plans for winterization. Still River Gardens will be submitting a letter of intent for the contract review process. They mentioned they would like some amendments made to streamline some of the administrative parts of the contract.

A meeting with the Mayor is planned for October 21 at 4 p.m. The Commission, Advisory Committee, and the City Council have all been invited to attend. A walk-thru of the Park has been tentatively planned for Thursday October 14. Mr. Simmons stated that it was important that those involved in the evaluation process be in attendance. A confirmation of that date will be sent out.

Old Business

Mr. Simmons reminded the Commissioners of the special meeting on October 20 at 6 p.m. to discuss the proposed Parks and Field Use Policies. A reminder will also be emailed out.

New Business

None

Other Business

As a result of a request from the public, the Still River Greenway Committee has decided to install a port-o-let on the Greenwoods Road on a trial basis during the months of October and November. If all goes well, the unit would then be put back out in the spring. The cost for the port-o-let would be picked up by the Committee for the first year and then may become an expense for the Parks and Recreation Department the next year.

A question was raised regarding policies on signage for Fuessenich Park. It was stated that the policies regarding signage would have to be a part of the lease.

With regard to an emcee for the Christmas Village opening this year, it was suggested that either Dale Jones or Mike Conway be considered for this position.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Duke Wall, seconded by Jim Pescatore, and approved unanimously at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rategan
Parks Department Secretary