

Torrington Parks and Recreation Commission  
Minutes of May 5, 2010 Meeting

Parks and Recreation Commission Chairperson Patricia Fairchild called to order a regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 5, 2010, at the Armory. In attendance were Vice Chair Fran DuCotey, Secretary Dan Lovallo, 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 accept the minutes of the April 7, 2010 meeting.

### **Correspondence**

Correspondence was read from Q-Buns, requesting permission to place hot dog carts in the parks. Mr. Simmons questioned the Commission as to whether this should be considered this year or added to the bid process for next year. Following discussion, a motion was made by Duke Wall, and seconded by Dan Lovallo, that this request be tabled until more information could be obtained. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Citizen's Comments**

Diane Manchester read a letter to the Commission addressing her concerns relative to Torrington Youth Soccer and Alvord Park, specifically the conditions of the driveway, holes in the field, field usage and availability, and lighting. Superintendent Simmons responded by stating that the road and parking lot are major capital projects at a time when our capital improvement funds are lacking. Although a clogged catch basin was cleared and the area re-graded recently, a fully engineered project for the redesign of the driveway and parking area is needed. With regard to the field issue, Mr. Simmons stated that the heavy usage of the field from early spring to late fall does not allow any time for field maintenance to fill in the holes, over-seed, and perhaps bring in some turf. Rotation of the fields and working to schedule more away games in the fall would help to provide some time to perform this much-needed maintenance.

Fred Bonvicini addressed the Commission and thanked them for providing a field for the Torrington Tornados this year; and requested more field time next year in order to play more of their home games in Torrington.

### **Facility Use**

- On a motion by Dan Lovallo, with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve a request from Education Connection to hold their Summer Food Service Program at Coe Memorial Park, June 28 – August 20, 2010.
- Following a lengthy discussion, a motion to approve a request from High School Dance Party.com for a local high school dance on a date to be determined pending a meeting with the police chief and receipt of insurance and references

was made by Dan Lovallo, seconded by Duke Wall, and approved unanimously. Rental and maintenance fees to be paid.

- Request from Darlene Battle for use of the Bannon Street playground – no Commission approval needed.
- On a motion by Dan Lovallo, with a second from Fran DuCotey, the Commission voted unanimously to table the request from Cassandra Mastrianni for a Jail and Bail event at Coe Memorial Park.
- On a motion by Duke Wall, with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to deny without prejudice the request from Prime Time based on the unavailability of playing fields.
- On a motion by Jim Pescatore with a second by Fran DuCotey, the Commission voted unanimously to approve all of the pre-approved facility requests (First Congregational Church, Children's Games – June 13, 2010 – Major Besse Field; Dave Kissko, Union Training – May 6, 2010 – Armory; Early Childhood Collaborative, Back to School Free Clothing Event – August 13-14, 2010 – Armory; Brotherhood of Diversity, Father and Son Basketball – June 12, 2010 – Besse Pond; Mayor's Office, Summer Reading Carnival – August 16, 2010 – Coe Memorial Park; Probus Club Auction – October 17, 2010 – Coe Memorial Park w/ maintenance fees).

## **Program Updates**

Recreation Director, Donna Winn updated the Commission as follows:

- Summer Playground registration will be held Saturday, May 8 from 9-11 a.m. Approximately 20 applications have been received from former playground counselors seeking employment this summer. Thus far, 13 former lifeguards will be returning for the summer; and swim registration will be held on May 15 from 9-11 a.m. Jim Vannini will again be the Aquatics Director this year.
- The Pitch, Hit & Run event was held May 2, with many volunteers attending, but few participants. This event will be held again next year, with a focus to improve the turn-out, perhaps by issuing prizes for the local winners and changing the time of the event.
- Planning for the "Moovin and Groovin" event continues in coordination with the Torrington Municipal and Teachers Federal Credit Union. This event will be held on June 6 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., with a raindate of June 13. Life Star and SWAT vehicles will be present, and the DOT and Lime Rock Park have expressed interest in participating as well.
- The summer concert series will begin June 15 and run through August 20.
- The softball season is underway; and, as always, scheduling for games, practices, and field maintenance is challenging.

## Capital / Budget Updates

Brett Simmons reported that the Capital Subcommittee will be meeting to wrap up this year's capital budget and plan for the 2010-2011 budget. Most of the funds for the current capital improvement budget have been expended.

## Facility Operations

Superintendent Simmons then reviewed his list of completed, current, and upcoming projects, a few of which are noted below:

- Installation of ceiling tiles at the Recreation Hall continues during rainy days.
- Concrete slabs were poured to accommodate the new bleachers at the Toro fields. The bleachers will be erected within the next few weeks.
- Design work for the Armory entrance and gymnasium ventilation system is continuing. Documents will soon be sent to the State for approval, while the Torrington Historical Society has given their approval for the project. This will go out for bid at the beginning of the fiscal year in July.
- Painting of the walls and installation of molding is underway in the concession area at Fuessenich Park. A problem with the paint not adhering to the primer in some spots was encountered and is being remedied. This project is expected to be completed soon so that the area can receive health inspection approval prior to opening. Painting of the restrooms may have to wait until the fall.
- Work continues on the renovation of the Ruwet field.
- The irrigation system start-ups are underway.
- Approximately one dozen ball field lights will be replaced next Monday, May 10.
- Fill and topsoil will be brought in to West Torrington at the site where the ice rink was installed. The area will also be graded and seeded.
- Aeration of the edges around the infield is planned at Fuessenich prior to the start of the Titan's season. A full renovation of the infield is needed and may be done in the fall pending funding availability.
- Upon completion of all the ball field renovations, work will begin on the playscape at Oak Avenue.
- Fence repairs by Frankson Fence and tree work by Precise Landscaping is planned.
- An agreement with Active Net has been signed and training and implementation of the program will be scheduled for late September.

- A meeting with Ray Turri is planned regarding the Fuessenich Park bleachers. Sponsorships and support is needed so that a touch-up of the bleachers can be done. Duke Wall questioned whether the Fuessenich Park Committee would pay for the work to the bleachers.

Mr. Simmons also informed the Commission regarding City property at 279 Main Street. This property has been maintained and used by an adjacent land-owner who now has been asked to vacate the property by the City. Should an agreement not be reached between the City and the nearby landowner, maintenance of this corner property will become the responsibility of the Parks Department. Commissioner DuCotey offered his services to maintain this portion of land, if needed; however, Mr. Simmons will be speaking with the Planning and Zoning Department to see what can be done with the property.

With regard to the Winthrop Street storage facility, Mr. Simmons reported that the building, which is home for much of the Parks' Department storage of equipment and supplies, is continuing to deteriorate. Discussion was held on the importance of getting a new facility, despite the fact that the capital improvement reserve for a new facility was reduced from \$200,000 to \$50,000.

Mr. Simmons updated the Commission on the status of work to map the trails at the Charlene Susan Besse Park in West Torrington. Volunteers have been working on this trail map, which when completed, can be used to try to obtain grant funding.

### **Coe Memorial Park Updates**

A walk-thru of the Coe Memorial Park was held earlier this evening with Still River Gardens. An urn will be installed in the ivy glen garden as part of this year's plan. Mr. Simmons commented that the gardeners did a lot of work and research for the Park and that he was pleased with their plans.

At this point, Ms. Fairchild excused herself from the meeting, and Mr. DuCotey took over as Chair.

### **Old Business**

With regard to the proposed Parks and Field Use Policy, Mr. Simmons requested that the document be reviewed before the next meeting so that it can be disseminated as a draft to all groups that would be affected by the new Policy. Mr. Simmons would like to have a special meeting with all impacted groups in August or September to speak to the Policy prior to its effective date of January 2011.

Discussion was held regarding memorial donations and the need for a policy for handling memorial donations. Mr. Simmons will research for some sample policies to bring before the Commission

### **New Business**

Mr. Simmons informed the Commission of the Titan's Non-Profit Night scheduled for July 16. Discussion was held regarding the type of activities the Commission might

propose for that evening. Duke Wall suggested a pie-throwing contest involving Commission members. Suggestions for a 50/50 raffle and a dunk tank were also mentioned. The Titans have requested a response from the Commission by May 7.

A request has been received for a trash receptacle on the new bike path near Harris Road. USA Hauling has offered to pick up the trash if the City would provide the receptacle.

### **Other Business**

Discussion on the slogan contest submissions was tabled.

Mr. Simmons distributed the results of the bids for parks signage, with Giordano Signs and Graphics being the low bidder. To begin this project, Mr. Simmons stated that he would like to install entrance signs at four parks the first year, and do four more parks each year until all the entrance signs have been installed. Samples of the materials for the signs were shown to the Commission. Toro and Oak Avenue fields will most likely be among the first of the parks to have these new entrance signs. As far as the signage bearing the park rules, Mr. Simmons would like to have 10 of those signs installed this year, as they are less involved and not as expensive as the entrance signs. The vendor has offered to hold their prices for this year and has the option to renew their prices next year. Following discussion, a motion that the Commission move ahead with the proposed signage for presentation to the City Council was made by Duke Wall, seconded by Dan Lovallo, and approved unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

On a motion by Dan Lovallo with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rategan  
Parks Department Secretary