

**PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**  
**Wednesday, April 6, 2011**

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman John Fontana called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Parks and Recreation office, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT.

**ROLL CALL:**

*Present:* Chairman John Fontana; Vice Chairman Michael Fasulo, Commissioners David Kanute, Joseph LaPorte and Joanne D. Palmieri; Director of Recreation William J. Masci, Asst. Supt. of Parks David A. Lapreay.

**MINUTES:**

Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to accept the Minutes of the March 2, 2011 as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

**VISITORS:**

1. Mr. Harris and Mr. Wellen re Dog Park. Mr. Harris related an incident where he was asked to leave the Dog Park because he is an out of townner (he does not live in Southington). He explained how he takes care of the park, volunteering his time with his friend Paul Wellen to clean up, fix up and repair things as he sees them. He tries to keep the park well maintained. He said Bristol has a dog park but since he is handicapped, he can't navigate the hill there. Mr. Harris spoke about what occurred with his dog and another dog and the police stopping by. Chairman Fontana happened to be there and gave his account of the incident. Because the dog park rules state "no out of townners", Mr. Harris was asked to leave, but Chairman Fontana asked him to attend tonight's meeting to talk about it. He also spoke to Jim Gura, president of the Dog Park Association.

Commissioner LaPorte said that since we have the rule he was unsure about setting a precedent if we made an exception for Mr. Harris. Mr. Harris was asked about whether or not he had been in contact with Mr. Gura about any of the work they have been doing there, and Mr. Harris replied that he did not contact Mr. Gura nor did he work for him. There were some Southington residents in attendance who spoke in favor of Mr. Harris and their appreciation for all he has done at the park. Mr. Harris also commented that he and Mr. Wellen had planned to repair the roof of the concession stand. Commissioner LaPorte stated that they must cooperate and work with Jim Gura so he knows what is going on.

Following discussion, Mr. Masci was asked to check with the Town Attorney to see if a written exception can be made. Also, to check with the Dog Park Association on the issue.

Paul Wellen spoke at this time and explained why the police showed up at the dog park. Another person was threatening Mr. Harris and Mr. Wellen stepped in to prevent an argument. He did not raise his voice or threaten in any way the other person; however, that person did call the police. Chairman Fontana said he was unaware of that fact and believed the police to be there because of a pit bull incident.

Chairman Fontana told the men that we would get back to them after speaking with the Town Attorney but asked them not to do any work at the park until they heard back.

2. Dave Maroun, Ice Cream Vendor. Mr. Maroun represents Bob's Ice Cream in New Britain. He received his permit from the Town of Southington to operate his truck in town. Apparently there was a misunderstanding when he spoke with Mr. Masci regarding selling ice cream in the parks. He also spoke about another vendor, Mr. Zendros, who indicated that he was "grandfathered" in. Mr. Maroun felt that it

was unfair. He loves Southington and would like to donate to the baseball leagues, etc. He is very conscientious about keeping the kids safe. He now understands that he can go in the park (Memorial) near the pool but not near the concession stand. He understands and respects that. He asked what are the actual regulations of going in the parks? Mr. Masci explained that with his permit he can go anywhere in town but just respect the concession stands and if another truck is already there. Mr. Maroun stated that the Town of Newington has no bid process and Zendros has the exclusive rights to sell in that town. Since Zendros has 10 trucks, he felt that it was almost a monopoly.

3. John & Karen Gersbeck, Ice Cream Vendors. Mr. Gersbeck agreed with Mr. Maroun about the issues with the other vendor. He is a town resident but would not mind sharing with Mr. Maroun; they are both gentlemen and respect each other. Zendros actually went to Mr. Gersbeck's home and harassed his family. Zendros is not willing to work it out with anyone.

Mr. Masci will schedule a meeting with the Zendros brothers as soon as possible. Chairman Fontana will attend also, and promised that the problem will be worked out right away.

4. Mike Leone and Dave Rossi of Cub Scout Pack 8 spoke about their willingness to adopt a town park as part of the Boy Scouts Leave No Trace program. It is all about not harming the environment and doing a community service. They would like to adopt Crescent Lake – pick up trash among other things. They could work with Dave Lapreay and his crew. The board had no objection and approved the request.

5. Bob Free, Southington Little League. He was told there were questions about who uses the fields. Chairman Fontana explained how for the last year we have been in desperate need of fields. By accident it was discovered that some fields are being leased to out of towners. A meeting was held on April 1<sup>st</sup> with the Board of Ed and the Parks and Rec to map a portion of fields and what we are doing. We also had a meeting with the Town Manager and Town Attorney because there was an old policy that stated that anybody who wanted to rent their field out had to go to the Town Manager and then finally to the Park Board. Two things are under investigation now. By the end of April we expect to have a policy for Kennedy, DePaolo and different fields in town. We will have a large book where we can see at a glance if a field is available. It has to be straightened out by the end of April. Mr. Free stated that they do not rent their fields out; however, they do have teams that play on the fields (over 28 and over 40 teams) that may be from out of town but they are on the schedule. No one is charged. Mr. Free was told that what he described is not in question.

Commissioner LaPorte commented at this time that the nets at Rec Park are up. CL&P poles are erected and there is protective coating on the wires. He thanked everyone who helped make all that happen.

6. Jim Gugliotti has a travel team that is looking for a field to play on. Last year he was able to get the back field at the Rec but this year they need a full size Babe Ruth field. He understood that Massarelli Field is vacant on Sundays and wondered if he could use that. Mr. Masci said Steve Viviano is president of the Babe Ruth League; would have to check with him. Also Brian Ranagan – if they have rain outs to play it may be a problem. Chairman Fontana said until we get permission, no one can touch the area near the Armory.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:**

1. Lions Club letter. This was an acknowledgement letter to the Lions Club thanking them for their donation to the Community Pavilion.

2. Email to Council re Kiosks on Rails to Trails. This email from Commissioner LaPorte to the Town Council explained the conversation between Mr. Cyr at the last Park Board meeting. The Council had taken some comments out of context.

3. Southington Jaycees re Petpalooza. This was a letter from Jody Socha, president, requesting permission to use the Dog Park for the second annual Petpalooza on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Masci had their

Certificate of Insurance. It is a free event. Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to allow the Southington Jaycees to hold their Petpalooza at the Southington Dog Park on May 21, 2011. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Letter from Mike Leone re Cub Scout Pack 8 – Crescent Lake. This was the request to adopt Crescent Lake for the Leave No Trace program and has already been discussed and approved.

5. Letter from Karen Gersbeck re ice cream truck. Already discussed.

6. Email from Brian Ranagan re Southington North Babe Ruth Field. The email suggests parking in front of the dog pound rather than waiting to hear from the Armory about their land. Mr. Lapreay did not feel that that was a good idea. Also you can't block the driveway to the pound. Mr. Fontana will call Brian Ranagan.

#### **DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:**

Mr. Masci reported that the Red Sox-Blue Jay trip had to be cancelled because of not enough participants. He didn't want to get stuck with the whole bus at \$95 a ticket. If you don't have a minimum number in town, the people would have to go to Meriden to get the bus. He will speak to Silver Mill Tours about it. Other trips are starting to fill up. Wint Filipek gave us tennis rackets for the summer and a good net for Recreation Park. They gave out 4 scholarships last year.

TDBank called about changing the name on the Showmobile from Southington Savings Bank which no longer exists to TDBank (SSB was one of the original contributors for the mobile stage). Mr. Masci asked if there was a problem with changing the name? They would pay the cost. No one had a problem with it. Mr. Masci said he would make arrangements before Music on the Green starts.

This Sunday we are doing *Beauty and the Beast* with the Newington Childrens' Theater at Derynoski School at 2:00 p.m. It is being done in conjunction with Janet Mellon. She is supplying volunteers to collect tickets and sell water.

Mr. Masci is making up a 35-team schedule. Also doing womens softball – they had 16 teams at last count. We are planning for an April 26<sup>th</sup> opening. Dave Lapreay said the field will be ready.

Registration for the Playground Program will be at Derynoski on May 2 & 3. Accepting 100 for each session. The cost will be \$100 for each two-week session and \$50 for the last one-week session due to school opening. Mr. Masci met with Caitlyn who is handling the children with special needs.

Youth Theater registration is going on now. Preparing for tennis and golf.

Commissioner Kanute asked about the number of kids attending the Middle School Dances. Mr. Masci said this month was actually higher than it has been (low number due to the YMCA Twilight Program on the same night). We are down to six chaperones and one police officer.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fasulo, seconded by Commissioner Kanute, to accept the report of the Director of Recreation. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS:**

Mr. Lapreay said the crew has been working hard with the good weather. He worked with the Highway guys – they had a bucket truck – cleaning up dead wood in the picnic grove areas, etc. Telephone poles were removed from the drive-in site. Still trying to get rid of concrete; Steve Wlodkowski may take it at the Highway. Water pipe was installed by the Water Department for the gazebo at the drive-in. Electricity is in. Rest rooms will be opened this weekend in all the parks because the season starts.

Mr. Lapreay said some stone fill was put in at the dog park. It gets really bad there. Also the driveway to the concession at Massarelli Field was filled in with stone. They are starting to get the pools ready.

Motors are tuned up and ready to go. Steve Wlodkowski is trying to get the roof at Memorial repaired. There is a crack in the wall which is becoming unsafe. It will probably have to be replaced. He is having plumbing downstairs done this week or next week.

Playground equipment – trying to get on an inspection schedule so no one gets hurt. He is working with Blake Bauer from the Eagle Scouts with his project at the Jaycee Park. They went over what he can do. He has about 40 people coming to help him. The bathrooms at Memorial will be discussed under Budget Cuts.

Commissioner Palmieri made a motion to approve the report of the Assistant Superintendent of Parks, seconded by Commissioner Kanute. Motion carried unanimously.

**REPORT ON PARKS:** Recreation Park. Chairman Fontana still wants curbing and No Parking signs placed or cars would be towed. Commissioner Kanute stated that cars will not be towed unless they are in a fire lane but they would be ticketed. People have been complaining of their cars being hit by foul balls. Mr. Laprey said he would get signs up as requested.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Safety Net – Babe Ruth Field. Reported earlier. Nets are up.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Budget cuts. Mr. Masci handed out copies of the department budget including cuts made by the Board of Finance. The cuts were reviewed and discussed. After discussion, Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to write a letter to the Town Council requesting restoration of funding for three items: bathrooms at Memorial Park, wrestling mats, and the YMCA skatepark. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Masci will draft up a letter. Commissioner Kanute said he would help with the letter.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner LaPorte, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli  
Recording Secretary