

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2010**

**NOTE:** Prior to the regular meeting, the board had an informal discussion with Mark Palmieri regarding autism and recreational options for children with special needs.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman John Fontana called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Parks and Recreation office, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT.

**ROLL CALL:**

*Present:* Chairman John Fontana, Vice Chairman Megan O. Maruzo, Commissioners Michael Fasulo and Joseph LaPorte; Director of Recreation William J. Masci, Acting Superintendent of Parks David Lapreay.

*Excused:* Commissioner Joanne D. Palmieri

**MINUTES:**

Commissioner Fasulo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Maruzo, to accept the Minutes of the December 2, 2009 meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

**PRESENTATION:**

Chairman Fontana expressed his sincere appreciation to former Commissioner David Kanute for all his help and advice. Commissioner LaPorte presented Mr. Kanute with a plaque thanking him for his dedication and many years of hard work on behalf of the board, the department, the sports leagues and everything else he was involved in. He will be missed. Mr. Kanute received a round of applause.

**VISITORS:**

1. Rick Bouchard, Blue Knights Travel Football. Mr. Bouchard attended the meeting on behalf of Eric Daigle in reference to the letter addressed to Mr. Masci regarding significant problems at the field house at Memorial Park. The letter requests a budget appropriation of \$20-\$25,000 for needed repairs. Chairman Fontana stated that while he is not opposed to the request, he had other things in mind that may have an effect on the request. One is the River Street property and another is the potential of not having to worry about it because the turf project at the high school seems to be gaining ground. If the turf field is installed, the group would be able to use it.

Much discussion followed on the poor condition of the bathrooms (as mentioned by Mr. Lapreay at the last meeting), the building is very old and the roof leaks. There are numerous problems with electrical and plumbing including exposed wiring in the shed. These are safety hazards. Mr. Bouchard said that the town's Health Department (Scott Cook, sanitarian) reported that the code is changing in 2011, and the building would definitely have code violations as it is.

Chairman suggested that Mr. Bouchard write a letter to the Council asking if they could use the River Street property to make a field, although he noted that the wooded area would need a lot of volunteers to clean it out for a field. We could put a line item in the budget. As far as the turf field, Mr. Fontana is planning to have a meeting in the next couple of weeks with the youth

groups about it. Mr. Bouchard said the travel league played at Falcon Field in Meriden which is a turf field and it was amazing. There was some discussion of what amount would be put in the budget, depending on who did the bathrooms. It was decided to put in \$20,000 as a one-time allotment to include the bathroom work. Statements were made that other groups are also asking for one-time allotments so no one knows how the budget process will work out. Mr. Bouchard will request a letter from the Health Department stating the poor conditions observed to support his budget request. He would also get better estimates on the cost of electrical and plumbing work required at the building. Mr. Masci noted that budgets are due to the Town Manager by January 22 at the latest, so he would appreciate receiving Mr. Bouchard's revised budget request with supporting documentation as soon as possible.

2. Todd Verde, Southington Valley Midget Football League. Mr. Verde congratulated the board on the Planning & Zoning Commission site plan approval of the park at the former drive-in. Anything the league can do to assist in the process, just let him know. Commissioner LaPorte thanked Mr. Verde for attending the PZC meeting in support of the plan.

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

1. Park Board Meeting Dates. This is the list of scheduled meetings for 2010 on file with the Town Clerk. Mr. Masci reminded Commissioners that in June, July and August the meetings are on Thursday because of Music on the Green.
2. Project Financing Plan & Budget. This is the drive-in property project. The \$200,000 can only be spent on this project, not necessarily in the exact amounts listed. For example, legal fees may not be \$5,000 as shown in the budget.
3. F. Vinci re Zoning Complaint from A. Cyr. Art Cyr complained about the changes to the former drive-in sign; Mr. Vinci's responses are included.
4. Letter to Keith Nappi – Suburban Sport. This is the letter written to Mr. Nappi regarding the kayak rentals. We have since received a check for \$394.50. Next year we will ask for monthly or every other month receipts.
5. Letter to Eric Daigle – SMFL buildings. This is the letter informing Mr. Daigle that the item was tabled at the last meeting.
6. Letter to T. Verde re Ron Newman. This letter to the new president of SVMFL was in praise of Ron Newman.
7. Ext. Request for Drive-in Redevelopment. This was the extension request to the State DECD from Emilia Portelinha for the redevelopment funds to December 31, 2010.
8. Letter from Donna Albanese-Funk re Cub Scouts & Panthorn Trail. When the weather is better, Ms. Albanese-Funk will advise us what she would like to do. Suggestion was made to ask Stuart Estra if he would be interested in being a trail guide for them.
9. Letter from Irene Murray re Nature Hike around Crescent Lake. Mrs. Murray of the Southington Land Trust is requesting a nature hike in June. When it gets closer, Mr. Masci will be in touch with her.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

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

Mr. Masci stated that the trips for 2010 were listed in his report. There may be a few more coming. Programs: Boating program will be sometime in February. Ballroom dancing which was previously held at Plantsville School was held at North Center School this year. Now that Plantsville is moved back to their building, Mr. Masci will see when we can start the program at

Plantsville School again. Yoga starts on January 25; fitness on January 22. Arts and Crafts to be announced. Jump Start Basketball Program – had received a bill for \$1170 for custodial services which was dropped to \$195. There was supposed to be no charge. Commissioner Maruzo checked the minutes when this program was approved, and it was stated that there would be no charge for custodian. Total collected for that program was \$3200 but \$2695 was paid to the clinicians, so the town received about \$500.

Check from Suburban Sport for the kayak rentals was deposited. Commissioners asked if there was a report showing how many rentals there were. Mr. Masci did not have a full report but there were a lot of rentals. The Town got \$1.50 per rental. He will get the complete report. Bow hunting is concluded; got a total of 19 (11 bucks and 8 does). Last year we had 24. There is no supervision at Crescent Lake for January, February and March. Just open and close. Mr. Masci and Mr. Lapreay make periodic trips to check it out during the day.

At this time Commissioner Maruzo had to leave the meeting (7:40 p.m.)

Mr. Masci spoke with Mr. Prozzo about softball. We will start mid-February sending letters out to everybody. There was some discussion about who calls a rain-out. Mr. Lapreay gives Mr. Masci an idea of the condition of the fields before he leaves at 3:30 p.m. If it has rained, it is Mr. Lapreay's call. If it has not rained but rains later on, it is the umpire's call.

Commissioner LaPorte had some questions on Mr. Masci's report. He asked why his department calls people to remind them of trips they have signed up and paid for. He felt it was unnecessary; however, Mr. Masci said no overtime is requested, even if the calls are made after work hours. It is a courtesy he has always extended for the trips and people appreciate it. Another comment was made about advertising the winners at the end of the softball season. At least get their picture in the paper. Mr. Masci said he would do that. Other questions concerned the middle school dances, number of chaperones, hours worked, how much outside workers get paid for things such as Santa in the Park, etc. In response to a question regarding the declining number of students at the middle school dances, Mr. Masci said that the YMCA has started a free program on Friday nights so there is competition. The Y refused to cancel their program on the nights of dances. Mr. Masci spoke with the Town Manager about this subject, and he stated that the program is not to make money but to have something for the kids to do. Mr. Masci added that last year the recreational programs brought in \$276,000 in revenue which more than covers some small losses. Even Music on the Green costs the town about \$1600 per concert but the revenue covers the cost while providing a great service to the town.

Another question Commissioner LaPorte had was why we are paying a temporary replacement for the office assistant at her union wage. He felt it was not required since the temporary person is not in the union. Mr. Masci said he spoke to Mr. Weichsel about this and that is the current procedure. Commissioner LaPorte said he may talk to the Town Manager about it.

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

**ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:**

Mr. Lapreay reported that the damaged fence at Jaycee Park was taken down, the poles removed and taken to the Highway Department. Crews are cleaning up the area at the board's request

following the complaint of the neighbor. He plans to get the benches up to par in the spring. Drive-in site trees were cut down, branches chipped and brought to Panthorn Park. The dirt is all gone so there won't be any to use for grading. Commissioner LaPorte said he would contact Dlugos regarding certain other trees. Mr. Laprey spoke to Greg Martin of GAMCO to get a price on security lighting. The department is pruning the pear trees downtown; it takes about a month to get it all done. Regular work such as brush cutting open spaces, trail cleaning, etc. is ongoing. Mr. Laprey has been working on the new budget.

Mr. Laprey said he received a call from the Police Department about an accident on the trail at High Street. A couple of sections were taken out. The insurance company will be contacted. It won't be fixed until spring.

Commissioner LaPorte reported that at the PZC meeting he was accused of pushing the drive-in site plan through without the Park Board's knowledge or approval since our meeting minutes did not show that the board approved the plan. The board reviewed the plan several times and everyone was aware of the proposal. No formal approval was needed to go to the PZC for site plan approval.

Commissioner LaPorte stated that since Mr. Egidio has submitted his formal retirement effective March 30, 2010, the board should begin thinking about the procedure for filling the union vacancy. Mr. Egidio is a member of the Supervisors union, UPSEU. There was some discussion regarding when applications may be received and who is eligible to apply. The Town Manager will be consulted on this topic.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fasulo, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to accept the report of the Acting Superintendent of Parks. Motion carried unanimously.

**REPORT OF PARKS:** No reports.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Budget 2010-2011. The board would review proposed budgets following the regular meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Fasulo to adjourn the meeting, at 8:25 p.m., seconded by Commissioner LaPorte. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli  
Recording Secretary