

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
Wednesday, April 7, 2010
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

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

ROLL CALL:

Present: Vice Chairman Megan O. Maruzo; Commissioners Michael Fasulo, Joseph LaPorte and Joanne D. Palmieri, Chairman John Fontana (arrived 6:45 p.m.); Director of Recreation William J. Masci, Acting Superintendent of Parks David Lapreay.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Fasulo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to accept the Minutes of the March 3, 2010 meeting as written. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS: None

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Letter from Donna Albanese-Funk. This is a request to have a Cub Scout pack event at Panthorn Park on either July 12 or 19. Mr. Masci said it will not interfere with anything. Extra barrels are put out and people are asked to bring their own bags for cleanup. Commissioner Fasulo asked if they had to name the town on their insurance. Commissioner LaPorte said no since there is no expense to the town. Their own insurance is sufficient. It was the consensus of the board to approve the request. Mr. Masci will call Ms. Albanese-Funk.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that he has a trip to Washington, DC on Friday. It is being shared with another town but most of the group is ours. In response to a question, the bus will make a pickup in North Haven after it picks up in Southington. Red Sox games are pretty much full. We are back to monitoring at Crescent Lake with three men. It is getting heavy. There was a trailer with two jet skis on it, noticed by one of the guys (also showed on the police monitor). They were told to leave and that no motors are allowed on the lake. The park is opened by 8 a.m. and there are about 8 hours of monitoring every day. Butch Bugbee is there on weekends. We keep track of time of the monitors so as not to get to the 120 day limit. Hours are tracked by calendar year, January through December.

A boating course starts on April 27th; we already had one. People want to get legal. They do stop people on the water. Kayak rentals will start Memorial Day weekend. We told Suburban Sport that we want accounting every two months. Dave Lapreay will check the beach area and put some sand there as needed. Mr. Masci said he had a softball meeting last night. There are 33 men's teams and 6 women's teams. Games will be played Monday through Friday, 3 games a night, sometimes 4 games for those who want to play late games. Mr. Masci asked when they should turn on the lights for the tennis courts and basketball courts. People have been calling to ask. The lights are on timers approximately from 7 to 10 p.m. Everyone agreed that April 15 was OK to turn the lights on.

At this time (6:45 p.m.) Chairman Fontana arrived and chaired the rest of the meeting.

Commissioner Palmieri asked if the other leagues had submitted calendars similar to the Girls Softball League calendar. Mr. Masci said once all the schedules are made up, they will submit them and he will distribute to the board. Right now he is receiving lists of the new officers.

Rails to Trails. Mr. Masci reported that this was discussed at the Department Heads meeting this morning. They will start working on the extension. He mentioned the problem Hamden has started having with their trail whereby people are using motorbikes. We should start thinking about how to curb that if it begins here. We do have signs posted on the trail that no motorized vehicles are allowed. The new T-3 vehicle that the Police Department has started using on the trail has been successful so far. Everyone agreed that no motorized vehicles should be allowed on the trail as it is too dangerous. Commissioner Maruzo asked if there was anything the town could do regarding the Brunalli site which you can see from the trail; it is very messy looking. Other commissioners agreed since it seems that they put all the items they are not using back there. There were no suggestions made.

Mr. Masci said he is signing up for tennis lessons and playground. He met with John Vitale and he will do three 5-week golf sessions for \$100. There will be three long games and two short games. They will be at Hawk's Landing.

Pools. We are shooting for June 19 to open. We are not using South End School this year because they will be demolishing the old school. We will use DePaolo Middle School for the playground program and Memorial Pool for the swim lessons. Mr. Masci made a suggestion about changing the opening time for the public for Memorial Pool to 1:00 p.m. instead of noon in order to accommodate the swimming segment of the playground program. He would have the kids swim to 11:00 a.m. and then have swim lessons from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and then open for the public on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. There is a sidewalk from DePaolo to Memorial. Commissioner Maruzo commented on the check-in and check-out of kids for the playground program. She noted that check-in was very good but in the afternoon it was lacking; she herself was able to take other children home with her and no one questioned it. That could be a big problem waiting to happen. Everyone agreed that the check-out procedure needed to be tightened up. Mr. Masci will see to it. He noted that the change in opening time would only be for one year. It was the consensus to approve Mr. Masci's suggestion.

Skatepark. Mr. Masci has the check for \$4,500 and is waiting for the YMCA to pick it up. Budget. Today we were asked at the Department Heads meeting if we have anything to cut or at least defer before the Board of Finance makes its cuts. The board agreed that the budget is very lean as it is so there were no cuts to suggest. Drive-in. Mr. Masci distributed a copy of an email from Adam Birnbaum who works in the movie business as a film buyer/consultant. He is introducing himself should the town need the type of services he provides. Mr. Masci gave it to the board for information but he will be passing it on to Mike Riccio and his team of volunteers who are working on getting a movie event going. Commissioner LaPorte said that Vinny Morelli said he has digital equipment that would probably work for the town. We are not setting up a drive-in business. More information was needed. Mr. Newman, who was in attendance, said he is on Mike Riccio's committee. A meeting is planned for next week. Mr. Riccio would like to get at least one movie shown before the end of the season. Mr. Lapreay said that he received a call from Vinny Morelli asking about cutting some trees down. Commissioner LaPorte at that point reviewed a map of the park, showing where the current fields and parking are, where the screen is, etc. and no one believed that any trees were in the way and did not approve cutting any trees at that location. Tennis Tournament. Wint Filipek is having the annual tournament and again asked for a donation of a couple of cases of tennis balls as we have done in the past. He gives scholarships to students including Southington students and gives a report on it as well. It was the consensus to approve the request. American Legion Auxiliary requested permission to put yellow ribbons on a few of the trees on the Green in honor of our people in the military. Everyone agreed to approve the request. Softball website. Mr. Masci said we are not doing the website. Darren Prozzo is going to do it. Also, we are not buying stickers for the legal bats this year. We came up with our own sticker, saving \$500, allowing us to charge a little less for team entrance fees.

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

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:

Mr. Laprey reported that the last few weeks the department was in full swing with cleanup of the parks. A few pieces of equipment are down so it is taking longer. They are putting up silt fencing and removing snow fence at the drive-in site. He spoke with George Cole of the Highway Department today. They will stockpile soil for us until we are ready for it. Mr. Laprey checked with Agway again on the dog dispensers. While they admitted they have done it in the past, right now they are not doing any donations because of the economy. It was suggested he try again mid-summer. Chairman Fontana added that someone he knows who was successful in receiving a donation had gone through the corporate office rather than the local franchise. It might be worth a try.

Mr. Laprey said the rest rooms will start being open on the weekends for the leagues. He will schedule men for overtime to clean them on the weekends if OK with the board. The board approved. Signs are being replaced on the trail as necessary. They are being defaced with spray paint and can't be cleaned. Four were replaced and more are ordered (they cost \$30-40 each). It will probably be an ongoing thing. Mr. Laprey said he will be hiring part-timers for the summer. Right now he has two that will be scheduled in a couple of weeks as it is getting busy. He didn't want to have too many part-timers because of the pending merger; not sure how it would work.

Parking Authority wants to put parking signs to indicate where the municipal lots are on each end of the Town Green. They are 24" x 30" – too large. They also want them on the poles where we have the flags. Everyone agreed they would not look good on the Green, also, how many people can't find the parking lots? Mr. Laprey will meet with Tom DelSanto of the Parking Authority tomorrow. Suggestion was made to put a sign on Center Street down near Praline's; it would be a much better location. Dog Park. Commissioner Maruzo asked if Mr. Laprey had any more information on Agrabate. He said he did not but he knows it is probably expensive and does not believe it would solve the problem at the dog park. No fill can be placed there either. We were told we could plant grass but Mr. Laprey did not believe that would work either.

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

REPORT OF PARKS:

Drive-in. Commissioner LaPorte spoke about what needs to be done there and the frustration of not getting anywhere as far as having enough revenue to do it. Out of the \$200,000 grant from the state, \$25,000 was used to demolish the concession stand, \$25,000 for some drainage for the road to the sewer plant, \$5,000 for the state to review the plans. When you include the \$25,000 donation, we have about \$175,000 to: build the pavilion, put in rest rooms, electrical and utilities, water and sewer, landscaping, parking areas, and a field. It will definitely not be enough. Unbeknownst to any Park Board members, Tony Tranquillo had put in \$200,000 in the town's Capital Budget for the drive-in. Commissioner LaPorte found out about it the night of the Finance Board meeting. The BOF is telling us to just go as far as we can with the \$175,000 that we have. We have no idea if the BOF will let the capital amount go through the budget process. Commissioners planned to speak or write to board of finance members and Council members to plead their case. Some discussion followed regarding questions raised by Council members to Chairman Fontana about the watering system for the all purpose field. The sprinkler system would cost about \$15,000. Commissioner LaPorte agreed to email the Park Board members a list of the cost of each of the items for the drive-in so that they will have the facts they need when speaking with people. This would be a one-time expense for the town.

OLD BUSINESS:

Turf field. Chairman Fontana spoke about all the calls he is receiving from the leagues. After months of working with people to get the turf field approved, it is now three years away. He said it is unfortunate because the price will be about \$500,000 higher if we wait. He felt it was a major issue in this town because there is not enough space for playing and practice fields. The Memorial Park leagues were expecting to have a turf field to play on and backed off of the River Street property idea. What do we tell

them now? He also noted that the track is crumbling but it will not be replaced; will probably have to have all track meets at other schools.

At this time (7:40 p.m., Commissioner Fasulo left the meeting.

Park Department Changes. Discussion ensued regarding the plans to merge the Highway and Parks Departments. Chairman said he contacted 24 towns who have merged these departments and it is not working in any of them, except for Plainville where the highway person had parks experience.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner Palmieri to adjourn the meeting, at 7:55 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Maruzo. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary