

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Megan Maruzo called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Vice Chairman Megan O. Maruzo, Chairman John Fontana (arrived 6:45), Commissioners David Kanute, Joseph LaPorte and Joanne D. Palmieri; Director of Recreation William J. Masci and Superintendent of Parks Richard L. Egidio, Sr.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to accept the Minutes of the March 4, 2009 meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS: None.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that he has a trip to Washington, DC this Friday. It is a 3-day trip, combined with two other towns to fill the bus. As noted at the last meeting, all the Red Sox games are sold out. There was some discussion about where the bus picks people up. It is the commuter lot across from the Alzheimers Center and Sliders. Mr. Masci spoke with John Vitale and has a meeting scheduled next week. Hopefully we will start golf lessons in May and June. Tennis registration will be in May and will begin on June 29. There will be 3 or 4 two-week sessions. Youth Theatre. Had to close registration today for Footlights and Spotlights – 78 students are signed up. There are 52 students in the younger group up to 6th grade. Playground registration is May 11, 12 & 13. We are still at South End School this year (in case of rain). Slamma Jamma flyers will go to the schools. It will be held in the summer. Kids Entertainment will start up on Tuesdays in July and August. There will be six events.

Pools will open June 19 and will run to September 7 (Labor Day). After some discussion about having an extra week in September, Commissioner Kanute said not many people used the pool during that last week – can probably eliminate it. Question arose what if the weather is really warm. It does not have to be decided today. As in previous years, the pools will remain open to 8 p.m. Some discussion followed regarding care of the pools during the winter and why they are not drained. Mr. Egidio said the pools are drained to just below the skimmers to hold the pressure against the walls. The pool professionals suggested doing that. We don't cover the pools because they are too expensive. At the beginning of the season the Parks Department drain the pools, clean them with acid wash, check the drain requirements and then refill. The Health Department inspects them. Scott Pools checks for compliance. Mr. Egidio noted that Memorial Pool holds 200,000 gallons of water which is free because we have a well there. There is city water for drinking and bathrooms. The Community Pool at Recreation Park is filled from the hydrant which we, of course, pay for.

Crescent Lake Monitoring. Mr. Masci said the park is closed January, February and March. Now that April is here, he asked the board about monitoring – when to start. Discussion followed on times the monitors work, what they do there, etc. Mr. Masci said he will keep time cards. Commissioner LaPorte believed we should keep track of the number of people going in. This will be done. When asked about the Crescent Lake permits, Mr. Masci said a few people have come in for them; they are not sold at the lake. It was the consensus to begin monitoring weekends only in April, then full swing beginning in May. It was expected to get busy then with fishing, boating and hiking so monitoring would be needed.

At this time (6:45 p.m.) Commissioner Fontana arrived.

Mr. Masci asked the commissioners for their comments on the proposed “Defender” game submitted by Jonathan Blais. The Defender court is portable and would be put up and taken down. Mr. Masci believed it was a program that could be taken under the wing of the Recreation Department as they are young kids (15 years old). There was some discussion regarding insurance. It was the consensus that it might be treated like other programs in the department, therefore not requiring insurance, but that the Town Attorney should be consulted first.

Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to allow the Defender program as long as the Town Attorney reviews and approves it. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Masci was asked again this year to make a donation of tennis balls for the Wint Filipek tournament. An email received from Wint Filipek stated that in 2008 the Winton S. Filipek Scholarship Fund gave two scholarships to two Southington High School seniors. They are requesting two cases of tennis balls – cost of about \$160. There were no objections from the commissioners.

Mr. Masci announced that the RFPs for kayak rental went out. Proposals are due on April 24. Mr. Masci reminded everyone that the Board of Finance public hearing on the budget is next Monday, April 6, at 7 p.m. at DePaolo Middle School. All Department Heads are expected to attend. He said when he attended the BOF workshop he presented them with the projected revenue through the end of the fiscal year. He distributed copies of the handout showing projected revenue for the year of \$209,000.

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

SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:

Mr. Egidio stated that the department is getting busy now. Many items are listed on the written report. They are getting ready for softball, little league, getting fields lined, tennis courts ready at Panthorn, etc. Some discussion followed regarding staffing. No departments are increasing. Mr. Egidio did not expect approval to replace Mr. Arena when he retires in June. He noted that the Highway Department lost two people who will not be replaced. The union is OK with it for now because of the economy. Three part-timers were put in the budget and Mr. Egidio hopes they will stay. If not, we would be forced to have overtime.

Commissioner Palmieri asked if it were possible to have the teams volunteer on a rotation basis to clean the bathrooms on the weekends. Commissioner Kanute said getting the supplies to the people would become a problem; it really wouldn't work. In the past have tried to use outside cleaning services but the union objected. For health reasons there is no way around it – you have to clean the bathrooms and the pools. Mr. Egidio said at present he has one person work 3 hours at time and a half on Saturdays until the summer; then it would have to be done on Saturdays and Sundays. There are 8 bathrooms.

Discussion followed regarding the contaminated soil at the drive-in property. They are waiting for approval from EPA and DEP to back fill around the sewer plant rather than having to move it elsewhere which would be very expensive. Apparently there is very little contamination in that soil so it may be approved for basically putting it back where it was. Nothing can be done until those piles are removed. Meanwhile the \$200,000 has not come in yet but Commissioner Kanute said that Zeke Zalaski told him we would definitely receive it since it has already been allocated. Once the piles are out of the way, the Engineering Department can give us grades so work can be started on the field.

Mr. Egidio said he received a quote from the Dalton Company in Cheshire to repair the cracks at the Recreation Park tennis courts. He got two quotes so he didn't have to go out to bid.

There was some discussion on how the crews are working out very well with the new foreman. Several commissioners commented that the Town Green always looks beautiful. They do a good job. Mr. Egidio said he would pass that on to the staff. He added that the bathrooms at Panthorn were painted to cover up the graffiti; looks good.

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

REPORT OF PARKS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Dog Park. There was one call from an out of town person complaining about the Town Residents Only sign. He said we can't do that since it is a public park, and he was going to contact Senator Caligiuri about it. Otherwise no problems there.
2. Crescent Lake. Discussed earlier. Monitoring will start weekends only in April; full swing in May.
3. Drive-In Theater Property. Commissioner LaPorte said he is trying to schedule a meeting with Tony Tranquillo possibly next Tuesday if anyone was interested in joining them.
4. Budget – 2009-2010. Commissioner Kanute was concerned that the \$3,000 for the mat reconditioning might be cut. The Health Department told them they had to discard two old mats and the one from St. Paul had MRSA risks. The one from St. Thomas needs to be reconditioned. No one believed this item would be cut from the budget, especially because of the health reasons.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. NRPA – Stimulus funds. Commissioner LaPorte handed out a notice announcing that stimulus money might be available for restored community parks. It might be ideal for the drive-in. Funds have not been approved yet. It is to get community parks put back in shape. Mr. Masci will call the NRPA Public Policy Office to get more information on how to apply.

2. KBE letter. Mr. Egidio received a letter stating that we were chosen for KBE's 50 Ways to Make A Difference. It has to do with upgrading the community bulletin board on the Town Green. Art Secondo of the Chamber of Commerce told Mr. Egidio someone would be contacting him so perhaps he submitted something. The letter talks about an electronic bulletin board and no one was in favor of changing. Mr. Masci said it can't be done. A few years ago the Planning and Zoning Commission said it would be too distracting for drivers. Suggestion was made that the letter might just be a marketing solicitation.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary