

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
Thursday, September 2, 2010
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,; Commissioners Michael Fasulo, Joseph LaPorte and Joanne D. Palmieri; Director of Recreation William J. Masci.

Absent/Excused: Vice Chairman Megan O. Maruzo

MINUTES:

Commissioner Fasulo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to accept the Minutes of the August 5, 2010 meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

1. Dr. George Costanzo. Dr. Costanzo told the board about the difficulty he is having getting use of a field for the baseball group he coaches. He has been coaching baseball since 2000. This year he had a travel team for the summer. He would like to use the Western Little League field for practice on either a Tuesday or Thursday and then for games on alternate weekends until the season is over around October 31. The travel team is about 50/50 Southington and other town youths. Discussion followed regarding his unsuccessful talks with Gerry Dionne, meetings with John Fontana and Joe LaPorte, and not getting a final answer. Dr. Costanzo just wants to know if he can use the field so that he can make up his schedule for the players. Mr. Masci said he spoke with the Town Manager about the problem, who agreed that if nothing is scheduled on the field, it is open for use. Chairman Fontana said the fields belong to the town, not to an individual league. A system needs to be worked out. Central CT Fall Ball League or CCFBL is also using the western field. Dr. Costanzo said he is asking for either Tuesday or Thursday (due to his medical practice requirements), then the other league can select two days. Whatever is left, Dr. Costanzo's team would use for another practice day. Mr. Masci said he would call the other coach (Scott Lucian) and explain the situation. Dr. Costanzo thanked the board for their time. He would drop off his game schedule to Mr. Masci the next day. Chairman Fontana said he could definitely use the field for the weekend games; the department would get back to him regarding practice days.
2. Councilwoman Dawn Miceli said she came to congratulate Joe LaPorte on the nice article in today's Record-Journal, and to thank him for everything he does for the community. Chairman Fontana commented on an idea for the drive-in movies that he saw in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. They had bookmarks printed with the names and dates of the drive-in movies. He thought it was a nice idea and good advertising. Mrs. Miceli agreed it was a good idea.

Discussion followed on the drive-in movie season. Commissioner LaPorte noted that the parking lot is done now. They are trying to get sand, soil and compost in the next couple of weeks. Mrs. Miceli said nearly \$12,000 was given to Southington civic groups which will benefit schools, sick children, the troops, etc. Everything got filtered back to the town. She said it was a very rewarding experience, even though she gave up nine Saturdays this summer to be there. People really appreciated it. The last night there were over 500 walk-ins. Commissioner Fasulo echoed Mrs. Miceli's comments. The reaction of the people was tremendous. They really liked it when Mike Riccio was walking around in a shark costume the night Jaws was playing.

Mrs. Miceli asked if the final sign at the drive-in would say something like "Thank you for supporting the movies at the Drive-In." She also commented that Vinny Morelli did a good job with the video; it was especially nice when he started showing previews for the next week. Mr. Masci mentioned the vendor payments to the town; Commissioner Fasulo has been doing a report on the drive-in financials and will include the vendor payments in the next report.

Chairman Fontana asked Mr. Masci to schedule an appointment with the Town Attorney to talk about the fields.

He has heard that some of the fields are being “rented” by leagues to outside groups and keeping the money. This is something that needs to be looked into. Mr. Masci will make an appointment to discuss.

Mr. Masci said that John Myers of the YMCA had planned to attend tonight but will come to the October meeting to talk to the board about a possible skateboard park in the downtown area.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Attendance at Park Board meetings.
2. Letter from DEP regarding Crescent Lake. There was much discussion regarding the letter and the pros and cons of opening Crescent Lake to the public without a permit fee. The DEP would do testing, sampling and make recommendations – about \$6,000 worth of services – if the lake were free to surrounding areas. Currently we get about 60 people who come in for a permit. Mr. Masci estimated that the town is losing about \$4,800 worth of DEP expertise by not being open to nonresidents without a fee. Everyone agreed that the town should not charge to fish at Crescent Lake. Commissioner Fasulo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to recommend to the Town Attorney that we stop charging out of towners for permits for Crescent Lake. Commissioner LaPorte said he would like more information about what DEP does with regard to the lake. There was information in the meeting packet; three detailed letters from 2003 and 2004. Motion carried.
3. Email re Flea Markets at the Drive-In. Mayra Dube wrote about possibly having flea markets at the drive-in property on the weekends.
4. Letter from Austin Rogers re Eagle Scout project. The letter is requesting permission to build a pathway behind the Church of Latter Day Saints on Meriden-Waterbury Road from the church to the pond as an Eagle Scout project. Mr. Masci asked him to talk with the Planning & Zoning Department first because of the location near a pond. Several commissioners believed this would not classify as an “excavation” project and might not need PZC approval. Mr. Masci will check on this.
5. NOCSAE re Helmet Certification. This letter was not in the packet as it arrived today. Discussion followed regarding helmet certification and how often it is done. Everyone agreed that it should be done more often than currently for safety and liability purposes. Chairman Fontana said high schools and colleges do them every year; he wasn’t sure about midget football. Mr. Ron Newman was in attendance and said if the helmets were done every other year it wouldn’t cost too much at one time; for example, do the young kids one year and the older kids the next and so on. There was some discussion about whose responsibility it was to check the helmets. Commissioner LaPorte believed the league should check them at least once a month. Chairman Fontana asked if someone from a certification company could come out and look at the helmets before each season starts. That is possible.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that bow hunting starts September 15 and runs through December 31. It is for town residents only and we allow 12 per day. It was very successful last year with a total of 28. Regarding the bubbler at Rec B, when the gas line was put in the water line was broken. It was fixed. The line behind Rec A will be fixed in the spring time. Tony Tranquillo will check with the gas company to see if they will pay for it. People are interested in having flea markets at the drive-in (referred to the email from Ms. Dube). Mr. Masci was instructed to write to Ms. Dube and tell her it could definitely not happen this year and to contact us next year. Some people asked about having a “dog swim” when the pools are closed. After discussion, it was the consensus to deny the request. STEPS has a program at Slopers on Saturday, September 19. They requested use of the showmobile. Mr. Masci spoke with Dave Lapreay who will open the trailer and close it after 4 p.m. that day. The Drug Task Force wants to use it, too. The trailer will be returned to Main Street immediately following the STEPS program. Then it will be needed for the Apple Harvest Festival.

Mr. Masci said he has a meeting with Mark Sciota and the BOE regarding use of buildings and grounds on Tuesday, September 7, at 10:30 a.m. Chairman Fontana will also attend. Mr. Masci said he signs applications for some groups but they pay the custodial fees. He thought that may be a topic. Mr. Masci said there were some custodial complaints about the parking on Flanders School grass by teams using the grounds for practice.

Mrs. Miceli said they were told no one could park in the back parking lot and not to park on the grass. There was some question as to why the back parking lot could not be used.

Pack 72 is ready to have their rocket launching on September 26 at the drive-in area. They were told to be careful of any work going on. Mr. Masci received their certificate of insurance for \$2 million. They have been in touch with Fire and Police. It will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Commissioner Palmieri pointed out that the C.O.I. says Southampton, not Southington. Mr. Masci will have it corrected.

At Crescent Lake a horn is sounded at 7:45 p.m. to notify boaters that it is time to come in off the lake. A couple of neighbors complained about the noise. Commissioner felt this was a necessary thing and it is not constant.

A letter just arrived from Branford Hall about having a massage therapy program. They would like to have a 12 hour chair massage-a-thon in a tent on the Town Green on Thursday, October 28 – 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. It would be a fundraiser for the families of the Hartford Distributors workers. Commissioners would like to see what exactly is being planned, including size of the tent and perhaps a site walk before making a decision.

Disc golf tournament at Panthorn Park is this weekend. In the past there was some vandalism on the course but there has been no problem this year.

Mrs. Aldi, Assistant Principal at Kennedy, wants to do something for handicapped kids, especially autism, at Kennedy. Commissioners questioned why she would come through Parks & Rec for a program at her own school. Mr. Masci will get more information after his meeting next week.

Commissioner LaPorte asked about the DJ for the middle school dances. Mr. Masci said he spoke with the Town Attorney. The current DJ agreed to do it for another year at the same price. Mark Sciota said it would be OK to roll it over for one year. Commissioner LaPorte questioned why we didn't have to get three prices. Commissioner Palmieri commented that frequently in the Police Department if a contractor agrees to keep the same price, a contract will be rolled over for another year. It is common practice. Mr. Masci said he wrote a letter to John Myers at the Y giving him the dance schedule and asking if the Y's Friday night Twilight program could be open only to Y members on the nights of the dances. Commissioner LaPorte did not believe that the Y program was taking kids from the dances but just giving them a choice. Commissioner Palmieri suggested if there are not enough kids attending the dances to change to every other month rather than monthly dances.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Dog Park. Has been quiet.
2. Crescent Lake. Already discussed.
3. Drive-In Movie Committee. Already discussed.
4. Rails to Trails. No report.

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 LaPorte. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary