

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2009**

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 Megan O. Maruzo, Commissioners David Kanute (arrived 6:55 p.m.), Joseph LaPorte and Joanne D. Palmieri; and Director of Recreation William J. Masci.

Excused: Superintendent of Parks Richard L. Egidio, Sr.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Palmieri made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Maruzo, to accept the Minutes of the August 6, 2009 meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

1. Jim DiNello re Jump Start basketball program. Mr. DiNello, basketball coach at Southington High School, presented his proposal to run a program sponsored by the Parks & Recreation Department for boys and girls in grades 6 to 12. It would run at the high school on Tuesdays and Thursdays after volleyball leaves, from 7 – 9 p.m. Ten sessions would be offered for a registration fee of \$65. He named some of the scheduled staff, including Bruce Kuczinski and Val DePaolo. ACL prevention would be incorporated into the program. Mr. DiNello said in Wallingford there is a hoop school similar to this program and it is a great program. It is an opportunity to get started early in basketball. Mr. DiNello said he would fill out the gym request form; Bill Masci said he would have to co-sign it if it is a Park & Rec program. There shouldn't be any custodial fees. The town would receive the money and pay Mr. DiNello as an employee. He said he would give something back to the town. As far as insurance, it wouldn't be any different than other programs run at Panthorn Park. There will be no actual competition, no teams. The staff is very diversified and could work on different aspects of the game. Mr. DiNello believed he could easily have 50 participants, more if he uses both gyms. There was some discussion about basketballs. He has 25 team balls and about 25 from the men's league that could be used, but they are regulation basketballs. Mr. Masci said he has 125's (smaller balls) that could be used if they wish. It might be easier for the children's smaller hands.

In response to a question, Mr. DiNello said if he didn't get enough signups he could go down a grade; in fact, he would change the proposal to grades 5 through 12. Commissioner LaPorte said we would need a statement of expenses for the program. Mr. Masci asked about purchasing T-shirts. Mr. DiNello thought that was a good idea and he could probably get a very good price. That may be the only expense he envisioned. Registration checks would need to be made out to Town of Southington – no cash accepted. The board was very receptive to the program.

Motion made by Commissioner Palmieri, seconded by Commissioner Maruzo, to approve the Jump Start Basketball Skills and Conditioning Clinic proposed by Jim DiNello. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Masci and Mr. DiNello would get together as soon as possible to discuss details, talk about advertising, flyers, etc.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Email from Wayne Stearns re use of Babe Ruth Field. Mr. Masci told Mr. Stearns to get in touch with Joe Santobazzi or Bill Queen regarding use of the field. Commissioner LaPorte said he thought our policy was that if a Little League field was open and their season is over, the field can be used by others.
2. Eric Beaudoin/Matt Venditto – Use of Softball field for Tournament. The request was to have a softball tournament as a fundraiser on September 12 to raise money for a trip to Florida. Mr. Masci said no one showed up to talk about this so there is nothing to report.
3. Letter to Park Commissioners re Single Stream Recycling. Mr. Masci said that Mr. Egidio is on vacation this week but had done some investigation on this. There was some discussion on the type of barrels that would be needed (covered with holes for inserting cans). Mr. Masci said a report could be made when Mr. Egidio returns. Dave Lapreay, foreman, was asked to attend the meeting to assist in responding to questions. He stated that football already uses the recycle barrels but people don't use them. The park workers find litter all over. Everyone agreed it is a great idea but it's hard to get people to use the barrels. Motion was made by Commissioner Maruzo, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to table the item. Motion passed. Question arose as to who asked us to do this; the Council did. The other part of the letter asked for a presentation on what the board would like to have done at the drive-in property. Commissioner LaPorte said he would attend the next Council meeting to respond to the request.
4. Letter to Board of Water Commissioners re Greenway Project on Mill Street. This is the letter stating that the Parks Department would not be able to perform any maintenance at this site due to overloaded work schedule. There has been no response to the letter as yet.
5. Letter from Bread for Life. This was a thank you letter from Eldon Hafford for the donations made at the weekly concerts.
6. Letter from Janet Mellon, Community Services re Duck Race. Commissioner LaPorte presented a letter from Janet Mellon requesting the use of Recreation Park for the 4th annual Duck Race on October 17 (rain date October 18). It is open to all nonprofits to raise money. Last year's event was a success. No one had a problem with granting this request. Motion made by Commissioner LaPorte, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to approve the request for the duck race at Recreation Park on October 17. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Kanute arrived at this time.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported on trips. Red Sox had two cancellations but they have been filled; it is sold out. Niagara Falls, New Hampshire foliage trips are sharing a bus with others. Florida Snowbirds trip is new and not on the list; not sure it will fly. If so, Mr. Masci does not want the checks made out to the Town of Southington because of the high price, it would deplete the budget. Kayaks at Crescent Lake are doing fine. They are operating on weekdays as well as weekends.

Mr. Masci is receiving calls about dog feces on the linear trail. It is becoming a problem. Chairman Fontana said he has received about a dozen calls at his home regarding the same problem. Suggestion was made to put up more signs stating that owners must pick up after their dogs. Right now there is one by the bulletin board but if you enter the trail elsewhere you don't see it. Commissioner Maruzo suggested putting up bag holders like they have at the dog park,

but you would need to have trash cans available because people won't want to carry the filled bags around. Comment was made that at the Cape, Agway sponsored free bags as an advertisement for them (name on the bags). Mr. Masci will give Agway in Southington a call to see if they are interested.

Mr. Masci spoke with the woman at Village Pet Grooming regarding the Dog Walk fundraiser discussed at the last meeting. The date is October 18 for the Dog Walk. He will be meeting with them and said we could help with flyers, some press to get the word out. Company 2's 125th celebration is still being worked on. Fall ball has 10 men's teams and 4 women's teams. Women start on Tuesday and the men start on September 14th. Munis system. All organized recreation groups had to have individual requisitions – Mr. Masci did 26 of them. Bow hunting starts September 15. Sign up begins next week. We allow 12 per day; they will have 3 tags each. Safe boating is scheduled for October 6, 8, 13 & 15. Mr. Masci has to get all the information and books and will start advertising. Swimming pools. Memorial Pool is closed. Recreation Park pool will be open on a limited schedule Saturday, Sunday and Monday then closed until the weekend. Last day is Sunday, September 13.

Middle School Dances. Mr. Masci is getting chaperones in place. First dance is September 18. He spoke with Mark Sciota about the chaperones among other things. He was told to get quotes for DJ service. He received five quotes (handed out copies to the board). Lowest quote was from Gary Collin at \$200 per event. Other quotes were \$250-Joe Chasse, \$375-Jerry Limmer, \$375-Kevin St. Pierre, and \$525-Mike Connolly. Mark reviewed the quotes and sent Mr. Masci a letter recommending awarding the job to the low bidder, Gary Collin. Mr. Masci also spoke to the Town Manager about the quotes. The department is under scrutiny with Rescue A Buck, and Mr. Masci believes we have to go with the lowest bidder.

He met with Mr. Collin today. He grew up in Southington and works for a company in Berlin. A recommendation from the Boys and Girls Club in Bristol was received. Discussion followed on what we would get for such a low price, what the sound would be, why we requested quotes since this is less than the required bidding amount of \$10,000. Mr. Masci said the department seems to have been singled out – he reminded the board that even Music on the Green had to be cut back this year. Commissioner Palmieri said she can attest to the Park Board being in the spotlight at Charter Revision meetings. They wanted to have Mr. Masci and Mr. Egidio report to the Town Manager and not have a Park Board. Mr. Weichsel does oversee the department on a day-to-day basis.

Commissioner Palmieri said that if there is no contract and the DJ doesn't work out, we could go to the next person. Commissioner Kanute said he has his own equipment and doesn't have a lot of overhead so could probably do the job cheaper. In response to a question, Mr. Masci said that currently for Music on the Green he is paying about \$360 to the people working and \$350 for Vinny Morelli for sound. If the band does their own sound they charge an additional \$400. Commissioner LaPorte said a lot of bands' sound is made for indoors, and said that he attended a concert in East Haven where the band brought their own sound and he had problems hearing them. Mr. Masci said in Saybrook they bring their own sound system and play in the park and it's fine. Mr. Masci said he was bringing it to the board because he is trying to save money on all things. He even cut the number of chaperones from 14 to 7. Discussion followed. There was concern that 7 chaperones would not be enough to handle the amount of kids at the dances, especially the first one. There was some talk about what chaperones are paid. Mr. Masci said it

is \$90 for about 2-1/2 hours or so. Commissioners Palmieri and Kanute both have first hand experience and know that it is not an easy job and the money is earned. Others believed if the payment was lowered, you could have more chaperones for the same amount of money.

Following discussion, Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to accept Mr. Collin on a trial basis as DJ for the middle school dances. Motion carried 4-1 (LaPorte opposed).

Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to pay the chaperones \$60 and to attempt to get 10 chaperones for the dances. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Masci said he would try to find people to chaperone and noted that he lost some good people whom he cannot use now per the new policy.

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

SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:

Mr. Masci presented Mr. Egidio's written report and said it was self-explanatory. He stated that the flag in front of Town Hall came down during the week. Mr. Lapreay said the pulley on top snapped. The Fire Department went up on a ladder and fixed it. The American Legion gave us three replacement flags because ours were a bit frayed. They will be replaced.

Mr. Lapreay said the fields will be lined; they have started. Mr. Masci asked if anyone saw the sign near the drive-in theater sign. It is for the Denitrification facility. It is not blocking our sign but is quite impressive.

Lights for the tennis courts are going to 10:30 p.m. Mr. Masci said we would have to come up with a date to change the time. Mr. Egidio recommended November 15 if the weather is good or October 15 if it gets really cold. They are on automatic timers but we can switch the time. After discussion, it was decided to wait until the November 4th board meeting and see how it goes and make a decision then.

Girls softball wants to use Panthorn Park on Saturdays and Sundays because they have more than they expected to play fall ball. It would be 10 to 1 only. They would move the bases and then put them back on Sunday afternoon.

Chairman Fontana asked Mr. Lapreay about the parking area at the dog park. He made a suggestion about switching the parking area to avoid walking in the mud after a rain (it is a wet area). Commissioners believed this is a flood plain and planting grass would not be allowed. Mr. Lapreay will check with Dave Lavallee in the Planning Department to see if it would be an allowable option. Chairman said if it is allowed, it would be something for the future.

Motion was made by Commissioner Palmieri, seconded by Commissioner Maruzo, to accept the report of the Superintendent of Parks as submitted by Bill Masci. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Kanute told Mr. Lapreay that as a Park Board they would like to let him know that they are very pleased with his work and the direction things are going. Mr. Lapreay's leadership has a lot to do with how great everything looks, and considering the size of the crew,

he is getting a lot done. It does not go unnoticed. Mr. Masci said that communication is key. When a request comes in, it is done.

REPORT OF PARKS: Crescent Lake. Commissioner Kanute said it has happened twice that boats in the lake have used motors. One time the trailer was still in the parking lot when officers arrived but they couldn't see the boat. Another time no car was readily available and the person was pulling the boat out by the time officers arrived. The cameras do not have zoom so it is not really good enough to read the license plate. The person who reported it could not be called back as cell phone service is not great there. He is not sure if it is ignorance of the rules or just that people don't care. Commissioner Kanute commented that this year the usage of that park has exploded. Since the cameras were placed, vandalism is down. About 7 or 8 tickets have been issued; they try to keep a pretty close watch on it.

OLD BUSINESS: Drive-in property. Commissioner LaPorte repeated that he would attend the September 14 Council meeting to talk about plans for the property. He expects to have the donation for the pavilion in about two weeks.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner LaPorte, seconded by Commissioner Maruzo, to adjourn the regular meeting and go into Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary