

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Fontana called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman John Fontana, Commissioners David Kanute, Joseph LaPorte and Joanne D. Palmieri, Director of Recreation William J. Masci and Superintendent of Parks Richard L. Egidio, Sr.
Absent/Excused: Vice Chairman Megan O. Maruzo

MINUTES:

Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to accept the minutes of the December 5, 2007 meeting as submitted. Motion carried ~~unanimously~~. **Corrected at 2/6/08 meeting: Motion carried 3-0-1 abstention (Palmieri).**

VISITORS:

1. John Barry, Council Chairman. Mr. Barry said that at the December Town Council meeting it was the consensus to ask the Park Board to develop a comprehensive plan to develop the drive-in property. He wanted the board to seek input from the public and to examine all suggestions very carefully. Mr. Barry stated that many different ideas have come up, and he has received several calls. One Councilman spoke of a football field that he believed was premature. Discussion ensued regarding what had transpired. The Park Board did not vote on anything relating to the drive-in but did ask for some input regarding possible costs that would be involved in putting in a pavilion, a field, possible placement of such, etc. in order to have some background. Commissioner Kanute also noted that at the last board meeting, the board was asked to provide a proposed 5-year Capital Plan, and some of the estimates were included in that plan.

Mr. Barry felt it was important not to develop the parcel piecemeal. We need to have a long range plan. He believed that it would be a Park Board decision as to how to develop the property. He asked that the board take its time considering all options and then a comprehensive plan would be presented to the Council for ratification. It will become part of Recreation Park. The board agreed to do just that.

2. Ron Newman-SVMFL. Mr. Newman was interested to know when the board would get the word out to the public regarding development of the drive-in property. The response was that it would be before the next Park Board meeting. Mr. Newman stated that he has been collecting letters and there is a petition going around. He will present them at the public hearing. In response to a question, people would be able to present their ideas at the public hearing or if not able to attend, in writing (letters or emails), or by calling.

3. Rick Azera. Mr. Azera is also with the midget football group and said there are many volunteers that have construction backgrounds. He offered some thoughts regarding developing the property. He stated that a metal building with an indoor field and an outdoor field would get a lot of use.

Stuart Estra was expected to attend the meeting later on.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Editorial on Crescent Lake. This editorial was from the Record-Journal and was in support of the purchase of security cameras for the lake.

2. Letter from Town Manager. This was a letter from John Weichsel asking the Park Board to develop a plan for the drive-in at the request of the Council, including some public input.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that trips are going pretty good. They are getting filled up. He did have to cancel a trip to the UConn/Georgetown game because only two people signed up. Three Red Sox games were added (one is Yankees in April). Mr. Masci will be meeting with Donna periodically regarding trips. Apple Harvest. Jim Champagne is on the clock now and will be paid every two weeks for 26 pays. The next committee meeting is January 17 when they will discuss important matters like the parade. Jim had a meeting last night with all the coordinators; he needs another parade person but has some interested people. People seem to want more music in the parade so the committee will write to the AD's in New Britain and other towns to see if their marching bands would like to participate. In response to a question as to who was on the committee, Mr. Masci said it consisted of: Chris Palmieri, Judy Miceli, Mark Sciota, Cheryl Lounsbury and Bill Masci. The Fire Chief and Police Chief are ex-officio members. The committee will do preliminary mapping with the Police Chief next week. Crescent Lake doesn't have any security right now; we are just opening and closing. Mr. Masci and Mr. Egidio check it periodically during the day. Commissioner Kanute said hopefully this month we can get the pole installed so the cameras can be placed. The Council needs to approve the extra \$7,000 at its next meeting. Programs are going back after the holiday break. Mr. Masci noted that Bill Shikowski is going in for surgery this week. Music on the Green is being worked on. Valley Bank is coming in with a \$1,500 sponsorship; they want to do the Diamond Collection. Still have Richard Chevrolet at \$1,500; Dave's Trucking wants to come in. They are considering combining the \$500-\$600 sponsorships to get better groups. Trying to get a winter concert possibly in mid-February; may try a week night rather than Sunday which hasn't been too successful. Bow hunting is completed. We got 7 does and 3 bucks for the entire season—not a great number for weeding out. Kayak rentals are going out again for RFP. Mark Sciota is drawing it up. Mr. Masci asked the board if they wished to raise the \$1 per rental payment to the town; no one saw a need to raise it. This is for the community, not a profit-maker.

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

VISITORS (CONT'D):

4. Stuart Estra. Mr. Estra presented the board with a framed poster and ticket from the fireworks event held last year as a thank you and memento. He spoke about his disappointment regarding comments that were made following the event. All the commissioners individually congratulated Mr. Estra on the great job that he did on the show and on all events he has done for the town and asked him to give an answer as to whether he was retiring or would continue to at least do the Trails Day events this year. Mr. Estra had a difficult time making a decision on that. More discussion ensued regarding the fireworks that would be happening at this year's Apple Harvest Festival in honor of its 40th year, so there would not be two fireworks shows. Commissioner Palmieri in particular pleaded with Mr. Estra to at least continue with the School Nature Day and Trails Day since if he didn't do it, it would not happen. She was certain he did not want to disappoint all the children and teachers who look forward to it each year as an educational and fun event.

Motion was made by Commissioner Palmieri, seconded by Commissioner Kanute, that Stuart Estra take care of this year's Trails Day and School Nature Day. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Estra made no comment after the motion.

SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:

Mr. Egidio asked if there were any questions on his written report for the month of December. There were none. Commissioner LaPorte asked about the list of things that should or could be done to the showmobile and who would do the work. Mr. Egidio said his department would do what it can. Mr. Masci said the trailer is 11 years old and needs maintenance done. The Calvanese Foundation has offered \$5,000 – now is the time to do it. Some of the needed work involves rust spots, chipped paint, replace gaskets, etc. The work will be done over the winter.

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

REPORT OF PARKS: Recreation Park. Chairman Fontana said he had several calls from Little League at the park. They are very concerned with the parking situation; it is dangerous. They feel there should be more parking. Mr. Egidio said he instructed the president of that league to have the coaches, concession stand operators and those who would be there a while park behind South End School. Of course, once construction begins that won't be feasible. There is a parking lot on the drive-in property; they would have to park there and walk. There were some comments made about police not ticketing all the cars and if they did, would that discourage people from parking in restricted areas? There are No Parking signs on the fence but they are ignored. Suggestion was made to perhaps reconfigure the buffer area to correct the dangerous curve, although no one seemed to think that would solve the problem.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Dog Park. Nothing to report.
2. Crescent Lake/Winter Hours. Already reported.
3. Rails to Trails. No report.
4. Softball League. Chairman Fontana said the league will be discussed at the next meeting. Al Furrow, Joel Stamilio and two others will meet to go over things and come back to the board after that.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Public Hearing on the drive-in property. Mr. Masci suggested having the hearing on the Monday between Council meetings; the next available Monday is February 4th due to the Martin Luther King holiday on January 21st. Pat Berardinelli checked the Council Chambers calendar and it was available. It was the consensus of the board to hold the public hearing that evening. Mr. Masci was asked to get the announcement advertised. He would put it in the newspapers and on the web site. He noted that the next regular board meeting is February 6th and asked if they wished to have the board meeting after the public hearing. It was the consensus to keep the two meetings separate.
2. Letter from Rich Kvietkus-Southington Knights Travel Football. Chairman Fontana referred to the letter requesting town funding to help cover the Florida trip costs of the Mitey Mite squad. Following discussion on the request, motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to send a request to the Town Manager for a special appropriation of \$1,500 for the Mitey Mites travel football league. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Budget Workshop. Budget requests are due in the Town Manager's office on January 15th. Mr. Masci announced that this would be the last year they would see the budget in the green bar format as the town has a new financial system. Everything will be changed. Line items will be condensed and grouped so we would have to remember what is in each group. The financial reports would be

available on the computer so it should be easy to check out.

The board reviewed each section of the proposed budget and made comments and suggestions. There was some discussion about the downtown lights and the problems that have occurred. Mr. Egidio said that the Town Engineer did receive a report from the company that designed the lights basically stating that it is not their fault. Mr. Egidio has been using J&M Electric to replace the bulbs as they burn out. The board asked that Mr. Egidio request a copy of the report from Tony Tranquillo. The capital outlays and new items were reviewed. Some of the items are from the capital plan discussed at the last meeting. Regarding the digital disc DVD camera item, Mr. Masci said it is for recording the Music on the Green to replace the old camera which is VHS because the Town Clerk now has DVD equipment for showing programs on the TV.

Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to accept the budget proposals for Department Numbers 954, 956 and 957 as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Masci announced that on February 2 and February 9 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. would be massive registration for all little leagues in town at the Derynoski School cafeteria.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary

Next Meetings:

Monday, February 4, 2008 – Public Hearing

Wednesday, February 6, 2008 – Regular Meeting