

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2007**

CALL TO ORDER:

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

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Joseph LaPorte, Vice Chairman David Kanute, Commissioners Michael Fasulo, John Fontana and Frank Galante; Director of Recreation William J. Masci and Superintendent of Parks Richard L. Egidio, Sr.

MINUTES:

Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to accept the minutes of the July 12, 2007 meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

1. Ron Newman, SVMFL and Ans Swanson, Soccer League. Chairman LaPorte introduced the group who were invited to attend the meeting to discuss possible use of the lower soccer field on Saturdays in the fall for flag football games (6 to 8 year olds). Chairman said it is a very large group and they would be seriously inconvenienced if they were not able to use that field. Mr. Newman said the flag games run back to back and they are looking for a total of three hours anywhere on the weekend. Ms. Swanson said it is a matter of availability, especially in the fall. She gave a brief rundown of what groups play there ranging from youth league, travel league, alumni and others. She was sympathetic to the football league's plight but the field is really not available for a set 3-hour time period on Saturday or Sunday. Question arose about the status of adding lights to the field. Ms. Swanson said apparently they did not have the right paperwork for nonprofit status and are still in the process of getting the 501(c) 3 status. Commissioner Kanute asked if he could have a copy of the quote from Musko for the lighting. Ms. Swanson agreed to give him a copy.

Discussion followed on other possible options, including the drive-in property (not turned over to the department yet, road going in to the sewer treatment plant, etc.), Milldale Park (too many issues with drainage, parking, etc.), front of Recreation Park (would have to measure from the trees to the first catch basin), and field behind South End School. After discussion regarding the South End School area, it was decided that it might be the best option. Mr. Egidio will check it out. He could put lines on the field. Mr. Newman said he would get portable field goals that would be taken down after the games. Chairman said we would have to get the school's approval first. Everyone agreed this was not a permanent solution but could help. Mr. Newman was certain that the league would break the 500 mark this year – he already has 467 registered. He also said he has a source for portable lights that could be used for practice. They could be moved and locked up at night. The practices would definitely be over by 8 p.m.

In response to a question about signage at Rec Park, Commissioner Kanute said he spoke with Officer Mullins about putting up one-way signs and eliminating parking on both sides of the road. He will check on the status of the request.

2. Stuart Estra –Reports. Mr. Estra reported that he had some successful events recently. Nature Day had over 1,000 students. He received good feedback from the students. Trails Day was on June 2; it was very hot but did not rain. There might have been higher attendance if it weren't so hot but in any case it was very successful. Fireworks Celebration on June 30 was a huge success. Mr. Estra was overwhelmed by the comments by the people – very positive feedback. He thanked the

board for approving the project and supporting him. He had been trying to arrange the fireworks for a couple of years. The Town did fund the insurance part of the fireworks celebration and he was grateful for that. Mr. Estra said that some start-up money came from previous Trails Day and Kids Entertainment series. Since there have been so many people asking for another fireworks celebration again, it would be great if the town could help financially.

Chairman LaPorte told Mr. Estra that he did an outstanding job and thanked him on behalf of the entire board. Board members also received many compliments on the event. Mr. Estra stated that the police did a phenomenal job; he was very appreciative of their help.

Mr. Estra spoke about the Board of Finance meeting held last night. The BOF had some concerns. He passed out a copy of a Record-Journal article on the meeting which Mr. Estra felt put him in a bad light. He was offended that the BOF was questioning him and had not brought their concerns to the Park Board first. Chairman said that no one expected the fireworks event to be as large as it was. If there were to be another one, certain guidelines and controls would need to be in place because it would be a town event. He insisted that no one was questioning Mr. Estra's integrity or record keeping practices. Mr. Estra distributed copies of his reports. One was from the Finance Department but is not broken down to show the fireworks event separately (it was not a line item in the budget). Everyone agreed that the town's financial system is lacking in some areas; a new system will be upcoming. Mr. Estra also handed out his own report from Quickbooks. The report indicated \$57,152 total income for the fireworks (includes \$5,000 from Trails Day and \$5,000 from Kids Entertainment). Total Fireworks program expenses were listed at \$57,116; it was a break even.

Chairman suggested Mr. Estra sit down with Bill Masci, Mark Sciota and Emilia Portelinha (and possibly the Park Board) to establish procedures. A large amount of money is involved. It has to be under town guidelines. It is not a personal thing. Chairman LaPorte repeated that everyone has the utmost respect for what Mr. Estra does for the town. Commissioner Kanute added that Emilia might come up with a way to do this more easily, so this is a positive thing.

Some discussion followed regarding whether a future event, if any, could be scaled down to just fireworks and a little entertainment. There are a lot of fixed expenses, such as police, custodian, trash collection, shuttle buses, etc. Commissioner Fontana suggested that an organization to sell tickets would be a great help. Regarding VIP tickets for this event, Mr. Estra responded to questions he received about "free" tickets. For every \$100 donation to either Trails Day, Kids Entertainment or Fireworks, that person or organization received five VIP tickets. There were some in-kind tickets. Mr. Estra would like the Park Board to approach the Board of Education on use of the field if we are doing the fireworks next year. Also, the board should ask the Board of Finance for a special appropriation of \$25,000 toward the event. It was the consensus that the board would consider it but there was no rush to do so before the summer is over.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Suburban Sports Report re Kayaking Rentals. Matt Gionfrido of Suburban Sports sent a letter reporting the success of the kayak rentals at Crescent Lake. He included a request to have a sign or banner near the roadway stating "Kayak Rentals" for people passing by. After discussion, the board had no problem with a sign as long as it did not advertise the company itself. A second request was to add "kayak and canoe rentals" to the Parks & Recreation website under the "Activities" section. Mr. Masci believed it was already on there but would check it out. The board had no problem with it.
2. Softball Website. This was an email complaining that the softball website was shut down. Mr.

Masci explained that one of the people doing the website was getting married in Bosnia and the other person is getting a job with the Cincinnati Reds. Since the season is over, it was shut down temporarily. We will still have the website. When Doug Brown comes back from Bosnia, the web site will be back up. Mr. Masci emailed a reply to Mr. Brotherton.

3. Resignation Letter – Frank Galante. Everyone was very sorry to read Commissioner Galante's letter of resignation effective September 1, 2007. This would be his last meeting.

REPORT OF PARKS: Memorial Park. There have been no more complaints of noise in the area. Commissioner Kanute commended Mr. Masci and Mr. Egidio on a nice job on the plaque and pool dedication.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that the trip to Saratoga is sold out. He will be meeting with Silvermill Tours for future trips. Crescent Lake. Mr. Masci called Councilman Art Secondo in response to his questions about whether permits are required. They are not required for kayak rentals. Mr. Masci spoke with the Town Manager about it. People do need a permit to fish, but they do not need one to walk the trails. Mr. Secondo was concerned about out of towners since about 75% of kayak renters are from out of town. Mr. Masci said there was never a stipulation in the contract that it was for in-town only. Town Attorney Mark Sciota agreed. We could stipulate an extra \$2 more for out of towners if that is what is wanted. There have been no complaints about not getting in; no town residents are being deprived.

Commissioner Kanute asked for the status of the camera for the lake – did it pass the budget process and if so, was it ordered? Chairman said it is in the budget. Officer Ed Pocock indicated that the camera should probably have night vision on it; we are in the process of selecting the appropriate camera. Commissioner Kanute will check with Ed Pocock on the status.

Apple Harvest Festival. Mr. Masci said he met with John Ryan, festival coordinator. There are lots of vendors lined up. We will need to get some keys for Dr. Ryan, one for the external door of Town Hall and one for the small conference room on the lower level – for counting the money. Pat Berardinelli will take care of it. Theater Group. *Annie, Jr.* went well. Tonight and tomorrow at DePaolo is *Once Upon a Mattress*. On Monday morning they are starting work on the stage floor at DePaolo (were not aware of this before), so everything needs to be off the floor. Mr. Egidio has a person and a truck lined up to move everything. Golf Lessons are full. There are many more people interested. Mr. Masci will talk to get John Vitale to see if another session could be scheduled perhaps in September. Mens and Womens Playoffs start Monday. Some teams did not finish the season because of rain so everyone is in the playoffs. Dog Park group will have a dog show on Saturday, September 15th – need judges. It will be at 10:30 a.m. Bow hunting begins September 15 to November 30 and then again December 15-31. We allow 12 per day as in the past. The hunters will have to come in to the office to register same as before. Mr. Masci said he receives numerous calls regarding midget football and baseball. Twelve teams have requested fall ball – 14 game schedule at Panthorn. Regarding the new yellow balls, Mr. Masci said half like them and half do not.

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

SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:

Mr. Egidio's written report was in the packet. He did not have much to add. Both tennis courts are done and repainted. Three benches were installed at Holcomb Park. Brick columns for the Rainbow

Playscape were completed. Commissioner Kanute asked if it was possible to add to the playscape at Recreation Park. Mr. Egidio will get a company representative to give him information on that. Midget Football requested moving the poles back a bit to make more room for parking. Mr. Egidio will take care of that. Recreation Park wading pool. Marsite on the bottom after 15 years is beginning to chip. He has a meeting with the person who did Memorial Pool to look at it. There is also a crack in the larger pool; he will see if anything is needed. In September we will have hairline cracks fixed at Memorial. It is from expansion. Mr. Egidio said he held back \$16,000 although all the work was done; he will see what has been paid.

Mr. Egidio has a new person starting on Monday for the laborer position – Kurt Kula from the Highway Department. Mr. Kula has worked in construction before. By union contract he was the senior applicant. He served his probationary period satisfactorily at the Highway Department. There was some discussion about a probationary period in the Parks Department. Mr. Egidio would check with the Town Manager and give a report at the next meeting. He had 41 applicants, two from Highway.

Italian Festival. Mr. Egidio reported hours and overtime amounts worked by Parks Department staff as follows:

Friday: Opened showmobile around 2 p.m.; closed at 11 p.m.	\$184.65
Saturday: Open	\$241.32
Saturday: Close	\$212.07
Sunday: Open	\$289.52
Sunday: Close	<u>\$254.22</u>
Total	\$1,181.78

Mr. Egidio said it was approximately the same last year.

Last year there was a motion to waive the fees for the rentals because two of the groups raised money to purchase the stage. After discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Fontana, seconded by Commissioner Kanute, to waive the rental fees for the showmobile use at the Italian Festival. Motion carried unanimously.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Rob Raggiozino requested approval to put picnic tables in between two of their garages. They want permission for accessibility. Discussion followed on whether it was his personal property and no need to ask permission. There is a space that is town property. They will come in with a formal letter request. The board had no problem with it but it must be checked with Mark Sciota first.

In response to a question, Mr. Egidio said the graffiti on the trail is in the courts. They have the people responsible. The court will give an amount to pay for restoration. He commented that in the fall he will need to trim the trees from the wood bridge to East Summer Street. Commissioner Kanute said the police have twice a week patrols on the trail – bicycle and a quad are used.

120 Day Work Rule. Chairman LaPorte reminded everyone that a policy needs to be enforced regarding any employee of the town that works 120 days in a year, even part time or an hour a day, could be eligible for union status and benefits. There is a possibility of three people being in that category. Chairman said someone has to monitor their time when they reach the 100 day mark and carefully review remaining time. There was some discussion about closing the park in January,

February and March. Mr. Masci said he would be responsible for monitoring the time – he does the time sheets now anyway. He would speak with the Town Manager tomorrow as there was question as to when the days start – hire date or July 1st of each fiscal year? Commissioner Kanute said he believes the people in question could sign off that they would not look for benefits or union status. Mr. Masci will look into that and report back.

Galante Resignation. Commissioner Galante wanted everyone to know that he was honored to be a member of this board for the past 15 years. He started with the town on the first Charter Revision Commission, went to the Parking Authority, the Industrial Development Commission, Park Board, Conservation Commission and back to the Park Board. It has been a pleasure to serve with such wonderful people, but he is ready to retire. Everyone offered their thanks and appreciation to Commissioner Galante. He will be missed. Chairman said they would like to present him with a plaque to honor his service and asked if he could attend the next meeting to receive it. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 6th. Commissioner Galante agreed to attend.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner Galante, seconded by Commissioner Kanute, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 6, 2007