

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ROLL CALL:**

*Present:* Chairman John Fontana, Vice Chairman Megan O. Maruzo, 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 Maruzo, to accept the Minutes of the June 5, 2008 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**VISITORS:** None

**COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:**

1. Letter from The Vacation Center. This was a request regarding a fund raising event that would benefit social services. They are asking that an announcement be made at the weekly Music on the Green concerts and that the board allow the karaoke contest finals during the band's break at one of the last Music concerts. The singing contest has been held weekly at Machiavelli's Restaurant. The board had no problem with allowing them to have the two finalists sing during the break at a future concert.
2. Refund Request from Deborah Longley. This letter requests a refund of \$285 for 3 children scheduled to attend the summer playground program. Mr. Masci said we have refunded in the past on a case-by-case basis if we were able to get a replacement. He stated that we did get replacements for the program. After discussion, Commissioner Kanute made a motion to refund the \$285 to Mrs. Longley. Motion seconded by Commissioner LaPorte. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Thank you email from Sue Aulbach. This was a thank you note to Lisa Carroll regarding the Junior Theater program.
4. Recreation Park Usage by SHS. This is a request by Eric Swallow, Director of Athletics at SHS to use the soccer field if necessary. Mr. Masci said he and Chairman Fontana spoke about this with Supt. Erardi. We are trying to get some cohesiveness in sharing school and recreation facilities. Commissioner Kanute pointed out that the request does not state how many days or how many fields they are talking about. Chairman Fontana said they are just asking in case they need it because they are putting in some new grass on their field. Commissioner LaPorte felt that they should come back to the board when they know what they need. After discussion, Commissioner Maruzo made a motion to allow SHS to use the field with the understanding that they will come back with more details and work with Bill Masci and Jiggy Egidio, and that the use does not conflict with other groups already promised those fields. Commissioner Kanute seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
5. Softball Game "Event" – letter from Jay Salerno. Commissioners read the letter and Mr. Masci gave a synopsis of the event. It has been taken care of. Mr. Budris did not play any other games during the season, which is now over.
6. Southington Softball Commission response. This is the commission's response to the incident above.
7. Refund Request from Robin Sack. This request for \$50 refund for the Junior Summer Theater program. Mr. Masci said he was able to get a replacement so there is no problem if the board wishes to refund Ms. Sack. Commissioner Kanute made a motion to refund \$50 to Robin Sack; seconded by Commissioner Palmieri. Motion carried unanimously.
8. Astro Turf Meeting – September 29. This is a notice of a meeting to be held in Council Chambers on Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Fontana spoke with the Town Manager who said he would

forward the notice to the Town Council, Board of Finance and the four state legislators. Chairman Fontana said he would send it to other groups as well. He has three people coming in to give a presentation on the turf field for SHS. He hopes it will be well attended. Of course, all Park Board members are invited to attend.

9. Letter from Kaye Davis on behalf of United Way re Duck Race. This is a request to hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Duck Race at Recreation Park on October 18<sup>th</sup>. This is one of the things Stuart Estra used to do at Hawks Landing. Commissioner Kanute questioned whether there would be enough water flow. There is a fire hydrant on the property, and they would be working with the fire department. It should work. No one had a problem with it. Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to give permission to hold the duck race at Recreation Park on October 18 with a rain date of October 19, 2008. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Letter from Todd Duchemin re Tournament. This is a request for a one-day tournament to be held at Panthorn Park on August 9<sup>th</sup>. Discussion followed on the number of teams, whether anything was required of the department, etc. Mr. Egidio said there is nothing to be done. The tournament would be from 8:30 a.m. to about 8:00 p.m. They would sell hot dogs, etc. to raise money to go to Orlando for the World Tournament. Even though the date is this coming Saturday, they are still waiting for an answer. Mr. Masci would call Mr. Duchemin after the meeting. Commissioner Kanute noted that we would need proof of insurance. Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to grant permission for the one-day tournament as requested, provided that they provide us with a certificate of insurance. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Refund Request from Lisa Maindon. This is a request for a \$50 refund for her daughter's swim lessons since she broke her arm and cannot go swimming. Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Maruzo, to refund the \$50 program fee to Lisa Maindon. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Letter from David Turci re Crescent Lake experience. Mr. Egidio said he spoke to the Caretaker about this incident reported in the letter. The incident and any discipline should be documented. Mr. Masci will respond to Mr. Turci's letter.

Crescent Lake. Further discussion about out-of-towners using Crescent Lake without permits ensued. Permits are currently available in the Parks & Recreation office for \$25 but many people show up without a permit. There was discussion on how to prevent this practice. Suggestion was made to have the Caretakers have the authority to issue permits on site. Then the money could be used for park upkeep or extra hours at the lake, etc. Whenever a Caretaker is on duty he could check for permits and tell people they have to pay for a permit or leave. The thinking was that after a while, word would get out and the problem would go away.

Commissioner Kanute also believed that better signage would also help. Signs with the Park Rules and permit information. Mr. Masci said that he spoke with Officer Palmieri who would come up with signage for us.

Commissioner Maruzo made a motion to authorize people who oversee Crescent Lake to issue numbered permits (give them 10 at a time) on site. They would be responsible for issuing the permits and turning the money over to the Parks and Recreation office. Seconded by Commissioner Palmieri; carried unanimously. Mr. Masci noted that they have weekly meetings with the Caretakers so it would be convenient to do this at that time. They would not have to wait until they sold all ten permits; they could turn over whatever they've collected each week.

Commissioner Palmieri had an item to discuss while talking about Crescent Lake. She went to the lake last Sunday due to complaints she received about "horrendous" conditions there. She stated that she walked the trail, which was beautiful, but wished there was something to indicate how long each of the three trails was before beginning. Are there any markers? For instance, it would have been good to know that going around the lake is 1.25 miles or whatever it is. Someone noted that the green trail is 3

miles. Also, there were some muddy spots. She noted that there were so many volunteers working at Panthorn Park, which is great; perhaps we could get some to help at Crescent Lake. Mr. Egidio stated that his department cleans up where the canoes are when they can; they do not go into the trail area at all. He said that Home Depot had indicated interest in helping at Panthorn Park. Commissioners wondered if Lowes or other groups might be interested in doing the same at Crescent Lake. Commissioner Maruzo said she would look into getting volunteers from Prudential. They usually have a volunteer day in October.

Discussion followed on benches and tables at the lake. Most of the tables were thrown into the lake but there are a few. Suggestion was made to cement the benches in the ground. Mr. Egidio said that could be done but not until September or October, when the department is a bit less busy.

Commissioner Palmieri presented some comments from Butch Bugbee, one of the Caretakers, which was then distributed to the board. The comments were reviewed but felt there was nothing new reported. The board is well aware of what needs to be done. If the caretakers notice people not following the rules (i.e., drinking alcohol, etc.) they are to take down the license plate numbers and call the police. Mr. Egidio said the bottom line is the department is understaffed and can't do everything that needs to be done. Commissioner Kanute suggested that perhaps a "trails maintenance person" be put in the budget to maintain various town trails all year long. With all the new open space areas, there are a lot of trails to take care of. Mr. Egidio noted that he pays someone to maintain trails, such as Novick's Orchard, weekly.

13. Refund Request from David Bishop. This was a request for refund of \$270 for the November trip to Radio City Music Hall. Mr. Masci explained that the former policy for trips was that the checks were not cashed until after the trip. Now checks must be turned in for deposit daily, so Mr. Bishop's check was cashed already. Commissioner Kanute made a motion to refund the \$270 to Mr. Bishop; seconded by Commissioner Palmieri and carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:**

Mr. Masci reported that the request to carry forward \$41,400 to Trails Day was approved, so there is money in the account for Commissioner Kanute to work with on that event. Youth Theater had three great shows. The music at the shows was very good. Softball. There have been problems with bats; people are having them shaved. Mr. Masci talked about the problem with Darren Prozzo. They will have an exhibition game trying out different bats. Mr. Masci is doing all the school applications for fall and winter. He is going back to carte blanche time and as we go along we will fill it in. He does not have the school calendars yet so he can't do special events yet.

Mr. Masci received a call from SHS about using Memorial Pool during the week of August 25-29 for the swim team to practice from 3-5 p.m. This has been done in the past. If the board had no objection, he would have them work with Chris Palmieri. Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to allow the swim team to use the Memorial Pool from 3-5 p.m. during the week of August 25-29, 2008.

Trips. Saratoga trip is sold. So are Red Sox and Lancaster trips. Mr. Masci will be meeting with Donna Calvi to get more trips. Kids Entertainment at Recreation Park is going well; people seem to like it. He has not had to use the school because of weather. It has been a very busy summer. Music on the Green is drawing some good crowds.

Next meeting is on the schedule for Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Fontana is not available that day and asked if other board members were available on another day that week. They will all check their calendars and get back to Bill Masci who will announce the rescheduled date. (Note: The meeting was rescheduled to Tuesday, September 2).

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

**SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:**

Mr. Egidio submitted reports for the months of June and July. Last month the department mowed a portion of the Brandenburg property. Rich Kvietkus was happy to be able to use it. This is the property on River Street that was purchased for a possible future middle school. Mr. Egidio is checking in with Nickerson a few times a week at the drive-in property. The town has still not received the grant money.

Connecticut Climbers, a group of about 30 people (12 from Southington), want to secure a fixed anchor in the rock at Crescent Lake. They also want to do things for the park such as helping with garbage, graffiti, environmental things. They are asking for permission to put in the anchors. They have all signed waivers of liability. Each of the out-of-towners will pay \$25. Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to give permission to secure the fixed anchors as requested provided it is reviewed by the Town Attorney first. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Egidio noted that any work done by the group would not be grieved by the union because it is all volunteer work.

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

**REPORT OF PARKS:**

Dog Park. Commissioner Maruzo said the sprinklers are in. The dog association will pay half for the 85 sprinkler heads.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Crescent Lake Camera. Mr. Egidio will follow up with CL&P since everything is ready to go; we are waiting for them.
2. Kayak Rentals are going well. They are having a good year.
3. Pedicab business has not started; can't get pedalers.
4. Drive-In. Still waiting for all contaminated soil to be removed. They are putting in a water line for the roadway.
5. Munis is going great.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli  
Recording Secretary