

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2007**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman LaPorte called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Everyone introduced themselves to new Commissioner Megan Maruzo.

ROLL CALL:

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

MINUTES:

Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Fontana, to accept the minutes of the August 2, 2007 meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

1. Stuart Estra. Mr. Masci said Mr. Estra would not be attending. Mr. Masci gave a report on the fireworks celebration. He spoke with finance director Emilia Portelinha. Stuart promised the Gridiron Club 50% of the admission fees which amounted to \$8,000. A transfer request from Kids Entertainment to Fireworks was submitted. Stuart had a contract with the Gridiron Club so it has to be paid. Emilia asked for a letter requesting the payment (Item 6 under Communications). Mr. Masci noted that there was no line item for the fireworks so it has to come out of the Entertainment line.

Chairman LaPorte said the board should probably have a motion authorizing payment of the \$8,000 subject to transfer of funds being approved by the BOF and Council. Commissioner Kanute made a motion to write a letter to the Board of Finance requesting a transfer of funds to make a donation of \$8,000 to the Gridiron Club. Seconded by Commissioner Fasulo. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Sal Penta – Soccer Skills Camp. This was a letter reporting that the soccer camp held at Recreation Park went well. Mr. Masci noted that he requested a report because of their using the field.
2. Boy Scout Bottle/Can Drive. This was a request from Mary Beth Flood, Troop 32 Secretary, to use Memorial Park near the warming shed for a bottle and can fundraiser. It is the first time they are doing it there. Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Fontana, to grant Boy Scout Troop 32 permission to use the parking lot of Memorial Park to conduct a bottle drive on September 8 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Andrea Caliendo – Dance City Fundraiser. This is a request to sell packaged snacks at Memorial Park as a fundraiser for a few times a week during the summer. Mr. Egidio does not think it is a good idea. He sees what happens at the dances with candy being flung around, making a mess. There was some discussion about how they would go about it. Mr. Masci said he was planning to have her come in in the spring, and we could ask questions. The board agreed that Ms. Caliendo should be asked to come in next spring to talk about it.
4. Letter re Kurt Kula. This is a copy of a letter to the Town Manager informing him of the employee transfer from Highway to the Parks Department effective July 30th. The board received the information at the last meeting.
5. Letter re Panthorn Park. This was an email from Charles Browne regarding unleashed dogs on the trail at Panthorn Park. He also mentioned a “dump” on the west side. That is private property, not owned by the town. It is a police matter. Commissioner Kanute suggested writing a letter to Mr. Browne informing him of the private property area, and that unleashed dogs is a police matter.

Commissioner Kanute, who is also a police dispatcher, will put in a complaint and have the Animal Control Officer check out the area for unleashed dogs.

Commissioner Maruzo asked about the graffiti along the Rails to Trails linear park, especially near the Brunelli property. Mr. Egidio commented that the owners had asked that the town put up a fence along the trail but the request was denied. The police caught the perpetrators of the graffiti recently and are awaiting a court decision. The town should receive a judgment in the case.

6. SHS Gridiron – Fireworks Celebration Money. Already discussed.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci told the board that this is the last year that Dr. Ryan will coordinate the Apple Harvest Festival. He got a job in Plainville. We will have to go out for RFPs (Request for Proposals) again. Everything is going well. We have more sponsorships than last year. Jerry Limmer has all the bands lined up. Matt Rossi will be back this year. Girls Softball wants to use the lower level field at Panthorn this weekend. Crescent Lake. There were no kayak rentals over the weekend. Mr. Masci doesn't know what happened. The contract said they would have it every weekend until Sept. 3rd. He called Suburban Sports but Keith Nappi was not there. He will find out what occurred. Trips are finalizing. Boston is going OK. Radio City Music Hall trip is almost full. Mr. Masci will meet with Donna Calvi and set up the lineup for 2008 trips.

Dog Park – no problems there. They have been using the Parks & Rec office every other Tuesday for meetings and to discuss regulations. Mr. Egidio said he was asked to change the gates where the little dogs go. They want the current gate moved 10 ft. The association and this department are mowing and keeping the place clean. They are providing bags. Mr. Masci said he needs judges for the Dog Show on Saturday, September 25, beginning at 10 a.m. and asked if any of the commissioners were interested. Mr. Egidio said the department is paying for irrigation. It was damaged when the other league pulled out. It has been fixed with a hose. The association wants to continue it further to have the sprinkler system hitting the grass. Cost is about \$400 to fix the infield. The association asked for a memorial area for dogs that have passed. They might want to hang plaques or something; they are working on it.

Fall Mens Softball has 6-7 teams. Hopefully they will start by the end of next week. All the school applications are in for use of the schools during the year. We will also have to apply separately for special events at the schools. Next week is the last Music on the Green for the season. Last Sunday there was a huge crowd for the Diamond Collection concert. It has been a very good season. Adult Soccer is up to 42 people to play. There will be 10-11 per team and they will play at Recreation Park, half a field using portable goals. All the equipment has been ordered. Mr. Egidio was concerned about games running late in the season if there are rainouts. Mr. Masci said there will only be about 15 games and it should be over by the first part of November.

Chairman stated that a local paper had a letter to the editor about kayak rentals and the fact that there is no safety boat and no lifeguards. Mr. Masci explained that there is a buoy out and no one can go past it. Everyone wears life jackets and no one is ever out of sight. Plus, Keith is very fast in a kayak if need be. There is a flat board boat that could get out there very quickly. The letter also comments on the lack of monitoring at Crescent Lake. It is unfortunate that letters such as this make it look like we are not aware of what is going on there, and that is not true. Chairman commented that we try to keep everyone happy but are limited in how many hours we can have monitors. We also need to be aware of how many days the monitors are working so they don't exceed 120 days, otherwise we would need

to provide benefits, raising the cost tremendously.

Question arose regarding status of the security camera. Commissioner Kanute reported that we had been waiting for Lt. Pocock's recommendations on the appropriate camera to get. Lt. Pocock suggested not using a motorized camera since they need to be fixed more often than stationary cameras. Fixed cameras last longer without problems. We can get three fixed cameras for the price of one motorized one. The Police Department is interested in sharing the cost to get electricity to the pole since they are looking for a repeater location, and that would work very well. Commissioner Fasulo asked if the cameras would be high enough to prevent vandalism. Commissioner Kanute said they would be 35 ft. high. The cameras would have "low light" vision rather than "night" vision since we would really be looking for heat rather than the movement of raccoons, for instance. They would be monitored at the police station. The cameras have been successful in other locations in apprehending the culprits; then word gets out so it acts as a deterrent.

Mr. Masci continued his report stating that the arts and crafts program for special needs kids is accepting applications now; it is only for the fall and winter. It is held in the cafeteria at Derynoski. He stated that the program has been around for a few years now.

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. The department took care of the back of Town Hall. Vent pipes that come up from the dump were painted; they were all rusted. Mr. Egidio met with a pool contractor to get quotes for the pool at Recreation Park. The wading pool is in desperate need after 15 years. Quote for the wading pool plaster is \$14,200. The larger pool quote is \$89,000. These items should be budgeted items. Mr. Egidio would like to do the wading pool in the spring so he may try to get a special appropriation for that. It is best to do the pools in the spring and when filled the water helps to cure the marcite. The quote was from the person Scott Pools hired to do the marcite at Memorial. Tennis courts at Panthorn need repair. Another major thing to look into for budgeting. Mr. Egidio will get second quotes on both items.

Question arose as to the mushroom at Recreation Park. Mr. Egidio said the pool contractor suggested a special chemical to use to clean it up and it looks pretty good. It should be cleaned every year. Chairman asked about the lights on Center Street; a couple are out (one was damaged when they demolished the Brenner Building). Mr. Egidio will check to see if these are the ones that have already been repaired. Commissioner Fasulo mentioned that someone told him those poles were no longer available. Mr. Egidio will look into it. These lights were part of the Downtown Renaissance so the Town Engineer probably has further information on them. Chairman asked about the fountain downtown; it is full of junk and algae. Mr. Egidio said he has someone contracted to take care of the fountain. He will call him tomorrow.

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

REPORT OF PARKS:

Chairman explained to Commissioner Maruzo how the park reporting works; she agreed to take Recreation Park to check and report on occasionally. Commissioner Maruzo commented on the playground programs at South End. She said check-in of the children is handled very well, but no one

really checks on the way out, i.e., who is picking up the children. She wondered if it is just because everyone seems to know everyone and who belongs to whom. Chairman thought that was a very good observation. Mr. Masci will look into it. It may be that we could propose to have a list of “authorized” people for pick ups and ask to see ID.

Crescent Lake. Commissioner Kanute mentioned a letter to the editor complaining that there were no park benches. Mr. Egidio said the old benches were destroyed. He has two 15 ft. aluminum benches they are putting together. He will put those in the rear grove at Recreation Park, and take the four 8 ft. tables and put two of them at Crescent Lake. They will be held down with concrete blocks in the ground with a hook on them; heavy duty benches. One will be placed near the parking area and one in the rear area.

Panthorn Park has a 2-5 year old playground and an over 5 year old playground. People have been allowing their under 5 children on the over 5 playground. We have asked them to use the other area for safety reasons, but they do not want to hear it. They don't want any rules.

Memorial Park tennis nets. One had a hole on the bottom that Tony Mauro was able to fix. A month ago they were fine. Someone complained and wants the nets replaced.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Dog Park. Already discussed.
2. Crescent Lake. Previously discussed.
3. Music on the Green. Discussed.
4. Rails to Trails. There was some discussion about extending the trail from Lazy Lane to Curtiss Street about two years ago. SRS was going to do it but it never materialized. SRS was in the paper recently but it did not say anything about the trail. The \$250,000 for the design of the trail extension to the Cheshire line is already in place. Milone & MacBroom is doing it. A report should be ready November or December. Then it takes another year or so to do the construction. Cheshire is supposed to extend their trail to meet ours but we don't know if anything is done on their end.
5. Turf Update. Commissioner Fontana has been getting phone calls. He has spoken with Sam Caligiuri. There was some discrepancy about the amount requested being changed from \$450,000 to \$250,000 in the bonding. He is making more calls to try to get it corrected.
6. Drive-in Property. Discussion followed on whether or not it was time to write a letter to the Council requesting that the property be turned over to the Parks Department. The board presented a plan that included a pavilion; grant money was requested but not received. Chairman asked Mr. Masci to write a letter to the Town Attorney asking what the procedure should be.
7. Water Department property. The former location of the Water Dept. will be made into a green area. The building will be demolished, the area leveled and made green.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. South End School. Mr. Masci said he spoke with the Town Manager, Mark Sciota and Fred Cox. Instead of razing the building, the Parks & Rec and Community Services would like to have it and give them another park area for the new school. Mark will speak with a few people on the Council to get their input. It may never happen. Flag football was planning to use the back of South End School but Ron Newman now says it is too small.
2. RFP – Apple Harvest Coordinator. Mr. Masci said Joe LaPorte was on the last committee to review proposals and was asked to do so again. Is anyone else is interested, let Bill know.
3. Chris Palmieri. Commissioner Fontana said Chris is a good friend of his, he has no ill feeling toward him, but people have been asking questions. Is there any problem with his position during the

summer and being a school administrator? Commissioner Kanute felt that Chris is a highly paid town employee as assistant principal. Why can't we give someone else a chance at being the aquatic director? Mr. Masci said when Harvey Polansky was still here, he had no problem with Mr. Palmieri's doing things on his own time as long as he did his regular job first. We will now have a new superintendent and we don't know how he will react. Chairman LaPorte said we used to have a problem getting enough lifeguards. Since Chris got the aquatic director position it has not been a problem. He gets them lined up, gives them the rules, and they show up. He is not a lifeguard, so if he is lacking two hours at the pool, he has backup. Commissioner Fontana just brought it up because the new superintendent may not allow it. Comments from people will come up and the board should be prepared to respond. If the problem comes, it will be addressed, otherwise it is status quo.

4. Hours worked. Chairman said he was receiving a report on who worked when. He asked if it could be a regular agenda item. Mr. Masci responded with the procedure that he and Mr. Egidio use when working extra hours. He gives an estimate to the Town Manager before an event, and a voucher is prepared for the Town Manager's approval. Plus, they meet with him every week. If there is a weekend emergency, Mr. Masci calls the Town Manager first. Mr. Egidio said he takes care of the emergency first. The union contract said we have to tell our immediate supervisor, and that is the Town Manager for day to day operations. Mr. Masci added that they only put in for the actual time they work, not a 3 or 4 hour block of time as stated in the contract. He will add the item to the agenda.

Mr. Masci said Frank Galante is in Cape Cod. He will come to the next meeting to receive his plaque.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 3, 2007