

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Minutes

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 Michael Fasulo, Commissioners David Kanute, Joseph LaPorte and Joanne D. Palmieri; Director of Recreation William J. Masci, Asst. Supt. of Parks David A. Lapreay.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to accept the Minutes of the April 6, 2011 as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

1. Garrett Meccariello. After wishing Bill Masci a happy and healthy retirement, Garrett introduced his friend Joe D'Agostino who is learning the business. Purpose of their attendance was to request permission to renew his permit for his hot dog business in town. It has been four years since he received permission, and it has been good. He has his health permit and is in the process of getting the certificate of insurance. It was the consensus that he has done a good job in the past and he could continue. Mr. Meccariello asked for documentation of the board's approval with a letter. This will be done once he submits his certificate of insurance.

Commissioner Kanute made a motion to grant Garrett Meccariello permission to renew his hot dog vending business with the current stipulations. Seconded by Commissioner Palmieri and carried unanimously.

2. Bob Borkowski, Northern Little League. Mr. Borkowski had three items for discussion. First, he is seeking approval to install batting cages at the Babe Ruth field; second, covers for the minors dugouts; and third, potential for another diamond at Memorial Park down the first base line from the road. Discussion followed. Brian Ranagan last week regarding the batting cages after receiving the request. He instructed Mr. Ranagan to see the Town Planner for permits, which he did. As far as the dugouts, Mark Lovely has already pulled the permits and has agreed to do the job. The extra diamond would be used primarily for practice and for scheduling the minor leagues. Mr. Borkowski said there is synergy with the football league since some of the same people are on the boards. Commissioner Fasulo wondered, if there is room for another diamond there, why it wasn't done a long time ago since we keep hearing about the need for more fields. Chairman Fontana commented that he hoped they would use synthetic fields. There was some discussion about the fence along the road and whether it would need to be extended.

Commissioner Kanute made a motion to give permission to go forward with the batting cages and to put covers over the minor league dugouts. Commissioner LaPorte seconded the motion which carried unanimously. The additional diamond request would need to be considered further once it was looked at.

Chairman Fontana asked Mr. Borkowski to share with Mr. Ranagan that a meeting was held regarding the Armory area with some good results. A letter will be going out. It won't happen overnight but it is in process.

3. John & Karen Gersbeck, Ice Cream Vendors. Mr. Gersbeck was following up on the last meeting. He hoped the board was going to make a decision about town resident vendors having preference over out of town vendors. Bill Masci tried to contact Zendros and left messages but had no response. Some

discussion followed regarding whether or not the board had authority to limit certain vendors from the parks. Once you have a permit from the town, you can go anywhere supposedly. Comments were made about the other vendor being uncooperative in the past and now. Karen Gersbeck stated that they are mainly interested in being able to sell at the Park & Recreation programs such as Kids Entertainment, Music on the Green, playground program, etc. Commissioner LaPorte asked the Gersbecks if they would be interested in a bid process. Mr. Gersbeck said in a bid process it would go to the lowest responsible bidder, and they could probably not compete with the other vendor. However, in an RFP process with plans and specifications, you can choose who you want who meets your requirements. He noted that New Britain has a “vendor of choice” for their Parks & Rec department so no one else can sell.

Question arose as to how difficult it would be to pull a person’s permit? It is a question for the Town Attorney. Commissioner LaPorte said we have to draw up some guidelines. Until we draw them up, Mr. Masci was asked to give the Gersbecks a letter stating that they have permission to go into the parks. Commissioner Palmieri believed a certified letter should go out to Zendros telling them that they are not allowed on town property. Commissioner LaPorte said he would prefer talking with them himself and asked Mr. Gersbeck to call him if he has a problem with Zendros and he will handle it.

4. Jacki Willametz is the volunteer coordinator for the Youth Services Kick-Off event taking place on June 3rd at DePaolo Middle School. Proceeds from the event will go into a fund for a new program they are working on called the Summer Youth Festival Initiative, known now as SYFI. The initiative is in line with the focus on youth, especially at-risk youth that the STEPS program is concerned with. Publicity for the kick-off will be starting this week. Mark Sciota looked over all the contracts and the liability insurance that the performer (a magician) has. The vision is that this could be a self-sustaining program with volunteers from many different areas. Ms. Willametz said she would probably come back to report on how the kick-off event went. She was basically asking for the board’s “blessing” to go forward with their plans.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Letter from J. Kubicza re Bouncy House. Mr. Kubicza is having a birthday party at Recreation Park on June 10 and is requesting permission for a bouncy house. Commissioners had no problem with it as long as there is adult supervision at all times and he provides a certificate of insurance.
2. Letter from B. Ranagan – Southington North Babe Ruth. Request to building two batting cages (discussed earlier).
3. Letter from J. LaPorte to L. Aylsworth, Northeast Utilities. Thank you letter for supplying labor and equipment to install poles for safety netting.
4. Letter from J. LaPorte to Board of Water Commissioners. Thank you note regarding installation of a water line at the drive-in area.
5. Letter from J. LaPorte to SSYAA – Nets. Thank you note for help and cooperation in getting safety nets installed.
6. Letter from J. Willametz for a Festival. Discussed above.
7. Letter from C. Palmieri re Pool Rules. Recommendations for new pool rules signs for both Memorial and Recreation Park pools to update and replace old signs. Commissioner Kanute made a motion to amend the Pool Rules signs to Chris Palmieri’s recommendations. Seconded by Commissioner LaPorte and carried unanimously. Dave Lapreay will work get some prices and work with Chris Palmieri to get the signs made and installed.

REPORT ON PARKS:

Chairman Fontana reported that a meeting to talk about the fields was held. Attendees included Bill Masci, Dave Lapreay, Garry Brumback, Eric Swallow, Fred Cox, Dr. Erardi and others. A lot of problems and concerns were discussed. Dr. Erardi asked Bill Masci and Eric Swallow to set up a schedule for use of all the fields. It became a big problem. He talked about some of the issues. Eric Swallow was put in charge of the high school coaches. Anyone who wants to use a school field or gym must come to the Parks & Recreation Department where it will be determined whether or not the group is nonprofit. A master book will be kept in the department so you can look up any given date or field to see

if it is available. People will have to show what they are charging the youngsters to play. Dr. Erardi wants to meet with John Fontana on May 13th and if all is agreed, it will be put in writing. Groups would be given a written permission to use the fields. Dave Lapreay commented that the department already has a book so it is already happening.

Commissioner Kanute stated that in Wallingford they use an electronic calendar for scheduling fields. The principal of the school would get an email when a field is reserved. Some discussion followed on the fees now charged for rental and "field preparation" or maintenance fees. Mr. Masci said the Parks & Recreation Department would screen the people wishing to use the fields and sign off if it is a nonprofit; rental fees are not charged to nonprofits. Chairman Fontana said that written guidelines would be drawn up to clarify it. He stated that he received numerous phone calls from folks saying that the fields are town property and they should not be charged.

Mr. Masci said he has a USSA team that wants to use Kennedy School fields on Saturday from 12 to 6. They scheduled a double-header without having a field. Mr. Masci now has the application. They must come in with their finances; it is for one day only. It is a regional baseball league. They will also use Massarelli Field on Sunday. The application will go to Sherri DiNello.

Mr. Masci received a letter from Ed Thompson requesting permission to hold Problem Solving Clinics at the dog park. The question and answer only clinics would be free of charge. The board did not believe he should use town facilities since he would be looking for business for which he would charge. Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to deny the request. Motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that the YMCA has been having a road race at the Apple Harvest Festival for years; it is basically part of the festival. At the last festival meeting a member had concerned regarding the cost of police overtime during the road race. Information is being gathered by Chris Palmieri with the help of the Police Department to ascertain costs. He is also in contact with the YMCA on this matter.

Tennis is going on now. Youth Theater registration is completed. Golf lessons are picking up. Touch-A-Truck will be held on May 21. Nature Day is June 2 for the 4th graders at Panthorn Park. This is the event formerly coordinated by Stuart Estra that Bonnie Sica is now heading up in conjunction with Trails Day. June 4th is the grand opening of the new section of Rails to Trails. The ceremony will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the beginning of the trail near the Hearthstone.

Mr. Masci said as far as the transition of the Recreation Department, he will be available to help out. It will be especially hard since his secretary, Gerri Roper, is also retiring in June. Her job will be posted to the union. In response to a question as to who will fill the position, Pat Berardinelli stated that the town would be holding municipal testing for clerical/secretarial positions on June 4th. It will be advertised very soon. The last test was conducted in 2007. Once people start moving around within the union, there will be open positions to fill.

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

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS:

Mr. Lapreay reported that leagues are in full swing. Taking care of the fields weekly. Will keep at the drive-in area so that the grass will come in nicely. Mr. Lapreay's recommendation is not to use the field until next year. All the rest rooms are open and are being maintained on Saturdays and Sundays.

Regarding the rest rooms at Memorial, he was instructed to get some prices to re-do them. He doesn't know if the Council will restore funding for them. Tennis lights are on; had a few requests. Trying to keep up with maintenance on the trail. The dog feces problem is not as bad as it was after the winter.

New piping and hot water heater were installed at Memorial Pool basement. The heater was very old. The electrician is there now repairing some rotted wires. Steve Wlodkowski was on the roof with a contractor today to assess the situation and get a quote.

Recycling bins were placed in Recreation Park in strategic locations to see how they work out. The vendor will empty them every two weeks. When the pools open we will probably put a few in the pool areas. The No Parking signs are up. Hopefully that will take care of the parking problem.

The town received 34 bluebird bird houses from a Kennedy woodshop class. Have started installing them as time permits in designated areas.

Commissioner Palmieri asked how working with Highway was going. Mr. Lapreay said it has been working just fine; they are still two different departments that work together. Commissioner Palmieri believed that it was a great idea and more departments should work together to save the town money.

Commissioner Kanute asked about the possibility of making reflective signs for Crescent Lake saying Dawn to Dusk. People have said they can see the rules when it gets dark. Perhaps if we had reflective signs the rules can be enforced. He commented that last Sunday there were about 60 cars at the park.

Commissioner Fasulo made a motion to accept the report of the Assistant Superintendent of Parks, seconded by Commissioner Kanute. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Pavilion at Drive-In Park. Commissioner LaPorte reported that the pavilion should be erected by the end of the week. Rainy weather has held up the work. Commissioner Fasulo asked if it would be done by June 18, the day of the first drive-in movie. It might be but not certain.
2. Dog Park. Mr. Masci reported that he checked with the Town Attorney who said the park is for Town Residents Only. Chairman Fontana spoke with the people who attended last month's meeting regarding out of towners.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Transition of the Recreation Department: Music on the Green. Jerry Limmer is on top of things. There was a little problem with the Lions Club as to the date for their sponsorship but it is all set now. First concert is June 1st. Kids Entertainment. Mr. Masci spoke with Jerry about it; he said he could handle it. Whoever takes over the position won't be able to have overtime but would be entitled to compensatory time off. We will call the theatrical people for bookings.

Commissioners were reminded that the Town Council would vote on the FY 2011-12 budget on Monday night.

This being Mr. Masci's last board meeting, all the Commissioners thanked him for his many years of service to the department and the town.

ADJOURNMENT:

At this time, Chairman Fontana called for an Executive Session. Motion made by Commissioner Fasulo, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to adjourn the regular meeting and go into Executive Session excluding all but the Commission member at 8:13 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary