

**MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2009**

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 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 Palmieri made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Maruzo, to accept the Minutes of the June 4, 2009 meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

1. Michael Haberski, Venturis Enterprises re 125th Anniversary Volunteer Firefighters. Mr. Haberski introduced himself as the president of Venturis Enterprises and a volunteer firefighter with the Town of Southington, Company 2. In honor of the Co. 2's 125th anniversary, he was requesting permission to hold a one-day event in the parking lot of Derynoski Elementary School on Saturday, October 17 (rain date Sunday, October 18). His request letter, which was in the meeting packet, explained some of the attractions that are being considered. Mr. Haberski gave more details. The event would be geared to children ages 4-14. He is planning to have demonstrations from Fire Headquarters, AMR, Police Department, etc. on how they keep the community safe.

There was some discussion regarding using the school space. Mr. Masci said he handles the request. In response to questions, he stated that it is most likely not a problem with the soccer practice since they have games on the weekend and wouldn't be practicing. He will, of course, check with the league. Mr. Haberski stated that they have \$2 million insurance. Mr. Egidio told Mr. Haberski that he has contacts for portable toilets which will be needed. Mr. Haberski stated that he is not looking for money from the department, just support in obtaining use of the lot for the event. Commissioner Palmieri thought it was a wonderful idea and commended him for going forth with the event. Mr. Haberski added that the Fire Department is very aware that we are very short on volunteers and is hoping to get the word out. They will have a booth at the event. Mr. Masci said they could also put a sign on the board on the green, and it could be put on the TV and the website. No one had any objections to having the event as long as there were no conflicts with the date.

Mr. Haberski thanked the board for their support. Mr. Masci will check with the soccer people. Mr. Egidio added that as long as they clean up after the event, he had no problem. Mr. Masci will also talk to Derynoski's principal, Karen Smith.

Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to give permission for Venturis Enterprises to have the volunteer firefighters anniversary event at Derynoski School on October 17, 2009, subject to availability. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Anthony Tranquillo, DPW/Town Engineer re Sanitary Sewer Interceptor. Mr. Tranquillo presented a map showing where the underground piping would be located for the Marion Highlands Interceptor in the Burritt Street/Panthorn Park area. He stated that about a year ago residents in the area asked for sewers. The Council approved \$2.8 million to bring sewers to the area. It is a two-stage project. First, the interceptor would be about 5,000 ft. The second phase would be the pipes in the street. The piping would cross the entrance road to Panthorn Park, and he explained on the map where it would go. Mr. Tranquillo is hoping to go out to bid in August and start work in September. The work will not block access to the park.

Mr. Egidio said he asked for a lateral in case we want to connect to the garage in the future. Commissioners thought that was a good idea. Board members had no concerns in connection with the sewer project.

Commissioner LaPorte asked for an update on the Rails to Trails project. Mr. Tranquillo replied that the town is putting a lot of pressure on the DOT to get everything in place by the end of the summer.

Mr. Egidio said that the Council had asked for copies of maps of the drive-in property. Tony will provide them for the Council and also the Park Board. Mr. Tranquillo also stated that the material from the treatment plant will be off the site by September. Only the large pile from the school construction will be there. He noted that the contaminated earth is part of the Remediation Plan which says we have to check the entire site to make sure it is clean. If the board is concerned about it, he stated that the project will be not approved by the DEP and the EPA unless everything is done to their satisfaction.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Letter from Venturis Enterprises – Volunteer FF Event. Already discussed.
2. Letter from Stacey Dionne re Dog Walk Fundraiser. Commissioners believed the fundraiser to raise awareness and research funds for Eosinophilic Disease was a worthwhile project. Basically they are just looking for a place to walk the dogs. Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to approve the request for use of the trail for this fundraiser. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Masci will call Mrs. Dionne to inform her and get more information.
3. Letter from Eric Beaudoin – Fundraiser Softball Tournament. This was a request to have a softball tournament at Panthorn Park on Saturday, August 8, to raise funds for the traveling team to attend the world championships in Orlando, Florida. Mr. Masci said they are interested in using the fields down below because there is more room. He had no problem with it because the field is not used on Saturdays. Other groups that may use the field are not using it that day. Commissioner Kanute questioned the late request since the tournament would be in a few days. Commissioner Maruzo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kanute, to allow the softball tournament to be held at Panthorn Park on August 8, 2009. Motion carried unanimously.
4. STEPS Community Picnic. The STEPS groups is requesting use of the mobile stage for their free community picnic to be held at YMCA's Camp Sloper on Sunday, September 20, 2009, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Masci and Mr. Egidio talked about this, and the problem is that it is a Sunday and the department would have to pay the staff to open and close the stage at double time rates. Mr. Egidio said it was repeated at the last Department Heads meeting to be stringent on overtime. He

believed this would be considered “unnecessary” overtime. Commissioner Kanute thought there may be a different opinion since this is a town program. Discussion followed on how much it might cost; it is variable based on the rotation but was estimated to be about \$700. Suggestion was made that they use one of the pavilions instead for their performances. Mr. Masci said he would speak to the Town Manager first to get his suggestion. He would suggest that Ms. Berkmoes speak with Mark Pooler about using the pavilion.

Commissioner Kanute made a motion to give permission to STEPS to use the mobile stage for their community picnic on September 20, 2009, subject to approval by the Town Manager. Motion seconded by Commissioner Palmieri. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Park Board Attendance Sheet. There were no comments on the report.

6. Letter from Pamela Backes. Commissioner Palmieri said this letter was given to her to present to the board. Since there was no meeting in July it was handed out tonight. The letter, which was written on behalf of South Beach Tanning Women’s Slow Pitch Softball Team, addressed three items: (1) to allow a girl who lived in town to continue to play; (2) to allow play for pay fee structure for nonresidents; and (3) start a women’s basketball league.

Mr. Masci said that the issue regarding a player who was not allowed to play because of residency was never brought to his attention. Due to the circumstances, she would have been eligible to continue playing. He did not throw her off the team; why did she go off the team? Commissioner Kanute said he would like to table the matter so that he could speak with her about it and also about the basketball league. In response to a question regarding what the qualifying rules are, Mr. Masci said you have to live in town or own real property in town, or if you graduated from the Southington school system you would also qualify. Mr. Masci will call Ms. Backes.

7. Thank you letter from Sal Penta. This was a thank you letter for allowing the soccer clinic in the summer. Mr. Penta made a donation of \$125 for a future youth sports program. Mr. Masci said the check was deposited in the General Fund, as usual. Board members believed he should ask for it as an appropriation.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that the trips are going fine. He said in the summer with many people going on vacation it’s good that we can combine trips with other towns so they don’t have to be cancelled. Saratoga trip is sold out, as is the Red Sox game on September 13. Tennis is concluding this weekend. Mens softball A, B and C leagues have championships next week. Womens softball is concluded. Youth Theater presented four performances this year, including The Pajama Game and Thoroughly Modern Millie. The Junior Theater did a musical extravaganza. They did very well and covered all their expenses. Mr. Masci noted that revenue is up to about \$20,000 already this fiscal year. Swim lessons are in the second week of the second session.

Mr. Masci got word from the Town Attorney that they will demolish South End School next year so we won’t be able to house the playground program there. He is considering using DePaolo Middle School since it would be an easy walk to Memorial Park. He will check into it. Mr. Egidio added that he saw the print for the school project, and the school is coming down because

that will be the location for the parking lot and soccer field.

Mr. Masci said the kayak rentals are not only weekends now but week days, too. It is very popular. He has not received any major complaints on the dog park. Mr. Egidio reported that he did some renovation there with processed stone in the parking lot since it keeps flooding. Jonathan Blaise is getting kids waiting in line to try the Defender Program. They will use the front lawn on August 8 & 22 and September 5 from 10 to 5.

Registration for organized recreation groups is taking place. Late registration will take place in the department. Mr. Masci is working with Audicon on the electricity audit. They went to all of the parks and checked the meters. Some of them are not even in existence, some were being charged the residential rate, etc. They will save us some money. They are working on something that would work through the phone system to turn off lights if programs are cancelled. Someone wouldn't have to go to the parks to turn off the lights.

Mr. Masci has been working with the Munis system; there are various steps to get requisitions through. Applications went out to the schools for the yearly usage. Dr. Erardi called 3-4 weeks ago; he had a youth who needed to do some community service for 40 hours. Mr. Masci put him at the playground; he was a good worker and did a great job. Dr. Erardi was very pleased and appreciative.

Budgets: Mr. Masci said he needed the board's help on reducing the budgets for organized rec. As stated at the last meeting, the proposed budget was cut back by \$7,701 in that account. Mr. Masci handed out a list of the groups included in the account showing the budget cuts and proposed changes to each line item. After review and discussion, it was agreed to use Mr. Masci's suggestions with the only changes being to reduce the two Babe Ruth Leagues to \$3,250 each. Subsidy Budget was cut back \$6,000 from the proposed budget. Mr. Masci distributed a copy of the groups in the Subsidy Budget and the list of members of the Southington Festival Chorale including their expenses as requested at the last meeting. Discussion followed on how the \$6,000 could be split by the four groups in that budget. It was decided to reduce the Festival Choir and YMCA Camp Sloper by \$2,000 each and the Arts Council and Wrestling Mat Reconditioning by \$1,000 each. There was some concern about cutting anything from the wrestling mat line because of health and safety reasons. Commissioner Kanute said he would put in a request to get the \$1,000 back for safety reasons. He didn't feel that was asking a lot since revenues from our programs are very good.

Music on the Green. Commissioner LaPorte stated that the Mark Verselli concert was rained out both days. They are a very popular group, and Mark Verselli would be willing to do a concert free (he was paid for the concert that wound up being cancelled). The stage guys and Jerry Limmer would volunteer their time. We would just have to pay the police and the Parks staff. It would be approximately \$1,000. He suggested adding it as the last concert in September. After discussion, motion was made by Commissioner LaPorte, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to approve the rescheduled concert of Mark Verselli for the first Wednesday in September. Motion carried unanimously.

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 his written report for the months of June and July. He reported that a very bad storm caused a large pine tree at Recreation Park to come down, damaging a fence near the wading pool. Repairs were made. Some large pines in that grove will have to be removed because they are split or have a disease. He will report at a future meeting which ones have to come down. A lighting system and a large panel of 16 lights that the wires burned up were affected by storms. He has a call in to Musko Lighting. It will cost \$4,000 to get the pine trees out of the grove – some are 80-100 ft. high. It will have to go out to bid.

Mr. Egidio reported that he did quite a bit of backhoe work at the dog park, 22 tons of processed stone. Some was placed in the parking lot and some in the entrance. He reminded the board that we can't pave the area because it is wetlands. Krissy Fontana from ESPN has a bunch of volunteers that want to do some work in the parks. We may have them paint the letters for the drive-in sign, a group to Slopers and a group to Crescent Lake. Possible work date is August 18. Mr. Egidio has a few buildings to paint in the parks, trees to take down in open space on Harness Drive. He reported that Bill Chikowski got sick again and his son is taking over the program.

Mr. Egidio reported that the two trees downtown that were removed have been replaced. He gave them a summary of what occurred. Commissioner LaPorte said nothing was done maliciously, but we should make a policy that nothing like that is done without asking the Town Attorney since that area is part of the Renaissance project. Comment was made about the Christmas lights that were placed on one of the trees last year. There are still some lights on the tree. Chairman Fontana believed that the Park Board should have control over the trees. He does not believe that people should be able to put lights or whatever without asking permission. It could get out of hand.

Downtown flower baskets were discussed. Mr. Egidio said that Winterberry Gardens wanted to donate 3 or 4 pots but we would have to buy the holders and take care of them. Four holders cost a little over \$1,000 and the department doesn't have the manpower to take care of them. Mat Florian paid for the holders. Everyone agreed that the flowers look gorgeous, but Mr. Egidio said he does not have the staff or the money to take care of them.

Mr. Egidio said he would write a letter to the Board of Water Commissioners regarding the Mill Street Greenway. He believes that eventually when they are done, they may consider giving the site to the town, meaning it would come to the Parks Department to maintain. He does not have the manpower to take care of that area. He spoke with the Town Manager about this. It would be like giving them a "heads up" that we don't want it. Question arose about filling another position. There is no money in the budget. Chairman Fontana told Mr. Egidio to write the letter; he would go along with it.

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

REPORT OF PARKS: Crescent Lake. Commissioner Kanute reported that with the heavy rains we have had there is some erosion. Mr. Egidio also noted that there is some erosion where the kayaks go in and another area. Needs some processed stone. The rutted areas will be taken care of as soon as it dries out. Commissioner Kanute stated that he has been checking, and on an average weekday afternoon there are more than 20 cars there. Pools. Commissioner Palmieri

commented that the pools are in high operation. Over 300 at Memorial on Monday, 265 on Tuesday and 204 on Wednesday. Mr. Egidio said there were more than 400 one day at Community Pool. He said it clears out around 4 p.m. and the next group comes in from 6-8 p.m. so it is not overcrowded.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner LaPorte, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary