

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
Wednesday, December 7, 2011

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman John Fontana called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Parks and Recreation office of Town Hall, 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 David A. Lapreay and Assistant Superintendent of Parks Michael Manware.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Kanute made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to accept the Minutes of the November 2, 2011 as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

a. Bob Borkowski, Southington North Baseball. Mr. Borkowski announced that last Monday his board approved two things for which he is now seeking Park Board approval:

- 1) Concession stand. They wish to get it up to code, get the stairs inside fixed and install outside stairs. They will get all the necessary permits. Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte, to approve the request provided all necessary permits are obtained. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) Lights. There have been problems with the light quality for some time. The league secured bids and awarded the bid to Musco Lighting. Pete Romano will be the general contractor for the project. Mr. Borkowski would like Chairman Fontana to come to a meeting with Musco sometime next week. Chairman agreed to do so. There was no need for a motion as it was discussed at the last meeting. The project would come back to the board in any case. Mr. Borkowski said the material costs were negotiated with Musco but approximately 33% is for installation and they are seeking some help from the town. Chairman suggested that he have a meeting including Mike Manware and ask Pete Romano to attend as well to discuss the project.

b. Dawn Miceli re Ice Rinks. Ms. Miceli approached the board regarding installing a temporary ice rink at Memorial Park. Bristol and Meriden have them and they work out great. There is a \$7,000 fee to install it. They are not looking for taxpayers to pay for it. They already have half the amount from donations. There is a tremendous amount of interest in it. Mike Domian stated that he puts one in his back yard every year and it works really well and people enjoy it. The proposed rink would be about 10' deep and when it freezes it is solid. The size is 96 ft. by 104 ft. The location suggested is Memorial Park along Woodruff Street by right field; it is a shady area. They have already spoken with the Water Department and the Fire Department about filling it up and there is no problem with that. Discussion followed on location and lighting. There are some lights at Memorial but no one was sure if they were separate from the other lights. Commissioner Kanute believed there are three breakers that control the lights. People could park near the concession stand that could be run by civic groups, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc. similar to how the drive-in movies operated. Mr. Lapreay suggested the old ice rink area at Recreation Park. There is parking and lights. However, there are cracks in the asphalt that would have to be fixed before putting a liner down. Ms. Miceli said the group was considering Memorial Park since there are other things going on at Recreation Park (such as the drive-in movies, etc.) so they thought they should give the other side of town something. The Town Attorney was consulted regarding the project and liability issues. He gave his blessing to the project. There is actually less liability than when there was skating on the pond. Ms. Miceli noted that Bristol had their rink for 12 years with only

one injury. Meriden said they had no maintenance on their rink. Mr. Manware commented that if it snows, it would still need to be plowed. He asked if they had given any thought to where it would be stored when it is broken down. They had not. The Highway Garage was mentioned but it was doubtful they had space for it. This is something that still needs to be figured out. Chairman directed Mr. Manware to check out the suggested site at Memorial and see if it would be a good spot for the rink. Mr. Manware commented that he and Steve Wlodkowski had been talking about bringing ice skating back to town and this might be a good start. Ms. Miceli asked who the checks should be made out to. Can the funds be flowed through the department? Mr. Laprey said he would talk to Emilia Portelinha on how to handle it.

Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner LaPorte to give permission to put a temporary skating rink at Memorial Park for one year. Motion carried unanimously.

At this time Commissioner LaPorte commented to Ms. Miceli, a member of the newly formed Blue Ribbon Parks Committee, that he was concerned that neither the Assistant Superintendent of Parks, the Highway Superintendent nor anyone from the Park Board was asked to be on that committee since they are most familiar with the town's parks. Mr. Manware stated that he just heard that he has been placed on the committee as a non-voting member.

c. Matt Shea – Proposal for Elite Soccer Camp. Mr. Shea is proposing to run an Elite soccer camp sponsored by Under Armour. He needs fields and suggested that Recreation Park would be a good location. The camp would have two sessions from 9 to 2 and then another session later for older kids. It would be for one week in the summer, five days all together. Timing would be either late June after school is out or in late August. Under Armour would give tech tees. The charge would be \$120 per child. Chairman Fontana said last year we had a problem in that a camp was held and someone else made a lot of money, and the board got flack for it. They are, after all, using our fields. Mr. Laprey said there is another soccer camp at Recreation Park but he would need to check the dates to make sure they would not conflict. Commissioner Kanute suggested that Mr. Shea come back when he had a complete plan. Commissioner Fasulo agreed and stated that he should bring a budget; how many kids will participate, how many coaches and what will be paid to them. Commissioner LaPorte stated that we would probably have to charge a facility fee. Since kids from other communities would most likely attend the camp, Commissioner Kanute felt that Southington kids should get something, such as a discounted fee. Mr. Shea was asked to come back in January with more information and the board would consider giving their approval at that time.

d. Rachel Wache re Book Depository. Ms. Wache is from the American Legion Auxiliary and gave some facts and figures about the book depository that is near the YMCA back parking lot. The book drop is for any old books, textbooks, videotapes, etc. They receive \$.03 per pound which does not sound like a lot, but it has been very successful, and 100% of the money goes back to the community. It is also considered a "green" project since it takes books out of the trash. So far the project has produced about \$4,000 in 2-1/2 years. The library received \$1,000 through the Southington Education Foundation for a reading program for preschool to second graders. Kelley and Plantsville schools each received \$500 for their libraries, and \$1,000 went to the YMCA for an after school reading program. Ms. Wache said they are now in the process of talking with leadership people at Southington High School about doing a program for high school students, some who are at 3rd and 4th grade reading levels. It would be ongoing special books for this special reading group.

The book depository is so successful that she would like to have another drop point on the other end of town. After driving around looking for the best location, she believes that the drive-in is the best spot, on the grassy area next to the sign. Mr. Manware said there is room for it. Ms. Miceli stated that she supports the program and believes it is a great location. Commissioners agreed. Motion was made by Commissioner LaPorte, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to approve the placing of a book depository

at the drive-in location as discussed. Motion carried unanimously.

e. Kiley Palmer – SVMFL. Mr. Palmer said he questioned the election process that happened a couple of weeks ago. He was questioning the By-Laws rules regarding the dates that names needed to be submitted for elections. He was not at the meeting when the elections took place, but he believed the Executive Board cannot change the By-Laws (they extended the application time by one week because of the storm). October 25th was the deadline for names but then Storm Alfred happened. Todd Verdi, president of the league, addressed the board at this time. He stated that they run their meetings by the Roberts Rules of Order which supersedes their By-Laws. They set their meeting well in advance of the required 48 hours. He stated that it was a unanimous decision to extend the date. It was left to the membership to accept the names on the board or not. They were approved. Everything for the remainder of the year was taking place at that meeting. Commissioner Kanute then gave a summary of what occurred at the meeting since he attended. He did agree that it was a democratic process and the names were accepted by a wide margin.

Commissioner Fontana said he spent five hours on this today, reading the By-Laws, speaking to lawyers and trying to understand it. It is very confusing, especially regarding the members being allowed to vote under different circumstances. He stated that the Park Board would be getting everyone's By-Laws in the office for review. Some discussion followed regarding the notice requirements for incorporated entities. Mr. Verdi commented that their By-Laws are a work in progress. They had a committee of five people reviewing them to see what needed to be changed. Commissioner Fontana added that according to Roberts Rules you can still nominate someone "from the floor" at the annual meeting so that would cover nominating someone who missed the application deadline.

Chairman said he had a meeting with the Town Manager and Dave Lapreay. No amendments will be done unless they come before the Park Board. He felt that for the sake of the kids we do not need any infighting. Mr. Palmer stated that following this discussion tonight he is satisfied. He just wanted clarification on the process. Commissioner Kanute said the Executive Board cannot suspend last year's By-Laws; it is against Roberts Rules – check with an attorney. Two people from the Executive Board said they did not vote that way. The group needs to have minutes and attendance lists. It was suggested that they be posted on the league's website. Also, the meeting schedule needs to be posted.

Discussion followed regarding weight limits. The league needs to look at weights and set limits. It is unreasonable to have a 200 lb. kid in the same division as kids that are 115 lbs. It is just not safe. Commissioner LaPorte suggested that the voting structure needs to be reviewed. He would like to see the Player Agent, Cheerleader Person, and perhaps one vote per team to be fair rather than the general membership voting.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

- a. Appointment Letter for Joanne Palmieri to Park Board. Everyone congratulated Commissioner Palmieri on her reappointment.
- b. Park Board Commissioners List. This is the current list of board members and their contact information.

Chairman Fontana reported that he met with Garry Brumback and Dave Lapreay was invited to join them. They decided that:

1. The facilities belong to the Town of Southington. We need their minutes on record. Any time they amend their Rules and Regulations they have to tell the Park Board first.
2. There will be no more renting out fields unless they request permission from the Park Board first.
3. We will be auditing all the leagues financial statements. They must submit them if they are receiving town funds.

Discussion followed on weight limits. The board will demand that the weight limit be changed. It cannot say "unlimited". Commissioner Kanute said he has information from 10 towns on weight limits, ages, etc. He felt that there should be a separate meeting to discuss the issue.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Laprey reported that the last middle school dance still made a profit, though small. He is staying with seven chaperones; it seems to be a good ratio. Upcoming season programs are all booked through the school system. They are all filled up. Commissioner Palmieri asked about a Special Needs Program she read about. Mr. Laprey said two women have been doing the program for a few years now. Holiday programs were completed: Santa in the Park had over 200 kids, downtown lighting went well; Christmas in the Village.

Mr. Laprey wrote a Mission Statement for the website; it was in the packet for review and any comments. Several people stated that it was very good.

Mr. Laprey plans to do a survey which will be put on Facebook and some may get mailed. He'd like to get some feedback as to what people would like to see, what programs they like or don't like. He will send the survey to the board before putting it on the website. Some questions pertain to parks, too. He wants the public's opinion on what they would like to see changed, any problems, etc.

Out of towners with the leagues has always been an issue. Some other towns allow up to three per team but they pay extra money for it. If we allowed it, it could bring in more teams. Commissioner Kanute believes that it is an advantage to the town to make our programs stronger. As an example, he said that Meriden Youth Wrestling started here. After being on wrestling programs here, they went out and started their own teams. Anyone who graduated from Southington and moved away can still play. If you own property or pay taxes in town you can play. Out of towners are playing now; we can't check everyone. However, if caught Dave Laprey would get the team out (not just a forfeited game). Commissioner Kanute said we could allow three on a team, make a roster and the coach can check the roster. Motion made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to approve Dave Laprey's suggestion of each team allowed only three out of town players provided it doesn't push any Southington kids out, and they would have to pay an additional \$50 to play. There will be a cut off date for rosters and no additions allowed. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Laprey reported that the proposed budget for next year is due to the Town Manager by January 13. Before the next meeting he will get something out to the board which can be reviewed at the next meeting. After discussion, it was decided to have a budget workshop at 6:00 p.m. and then have the regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. on January 4, 2012.

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

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS REPORT:

Michael Manware reported that Christmas decorations were set up on both town greens and town hall. Flags installed in downtown Plantsville. They spent a lot of time cleaning up after the storm. Made some playground repairs this year. Wear and tear requires replacement of parts; it is expensive. Commissioner Kanute agreed and said we need to have maintenance of these items in the budget.

Mr. Manware had some discussions with Steve Wlodkowski in light of the Blue Ribbon Parks Committee. He is now a member but with no vote. He reviewed the items on the written report for park improvement areas, including: Memorial Pool bathhouse – fix or replace the building; tennis courts at Memorial and Recreation. Mr. Manware is meeting with a company called Exact Turf; they have a tennis court replacement program. He will find out more about it. Fencing issues and alternatives in park. It

looks like a lot of unnecessary fencing; there are a lot of other ways you can do it. At the last meeting we discussed moving the playground area at memorial. Recreation Park front grove – the red pines are dying out from a disease. We took 8 out last year and an additional 8 will be taken out this year.

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

REPORT ON PARKS: No specific reports.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Future Audit of Leagues' Financials – already discussed.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary