

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
Wednesday, December 1, 2010
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; Commissioners Michael Fasulo, David Kanute, Joseph LaPorte, Joanne D. Palmieri; Director of Recreation William J. Masci, Asst. Supt. of Parks David A. Lapreay.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Fasulo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kanute, to accept the Minutes of the November 2, 2010 meeting as written. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS:

1. Park Board Commissioners List. This is a list of the current commissioners with addresses, phone numbers and terms of office.
2. Letter from DECD re Drive-in Theater Redevelopment Project. This was a routine letter regarding the \$200,000 grant for the project and the financing plan and budget. Commissioner LaPorte said the Engineering Department sent what was required. The State requires progress reports on how the money is being spent. It is all set.
3. Appointment Letter. This is the official appointment letter to David Kanute as a member of the board for a four-year term.
4. Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2011. Discussion followed on certain dates that conflicted with other meetings. It was the consensus to have no scheduled meeting in July, and to change the dates of the August and September meetings to the Tuesday, i.e., August 9 and September 6. Mr. Masci will revise the list and email it to everyone.

VISITORS:

1. John Myers and Kelly Berkmoes – S.T.E.P.S. Program. John Myers gave a brief history of how the program got started. A \$125,000 grant from the Drug Free Communities group allowed them to have a coordinator. He feels that Parks & Recreation should be part of the STEPS program since there are many youth groups in the various town programs. If the Park Board endorses the STEPS program, it would allow the members to speak to youth, leagues, groups, etc. in a big way. The program uses the Developmental Asset approach. The more assets the kids have, the better off they are.

Kelly Berkmoes, Youth Coordinator for the STEPS program, handed out a packet of information on the program and highlighted some of the statistics. There are 40 internal and external developmental assets which are crucial for the healthy development of youth. The goal is to have between 31 and 40 assets. A survey of Southington's 7th, 9th and 11th graders last year (about 1,400 kids) was eye-opening in that the average assets were only 19.8. Ms. Berkmoes also distributed two handouts that could be used for asset-building strategies – one for departments who employ youth and one for coaches. There was some discussion about the effectiveness of handing out the flyers to coaches versus face-to-face discussion.

It was the consensus that the Park Board endorses the program. Suggestion was made to send a letter to all the leagues, and to schedule a meeting of all coaches with John Myers and/or Kelly Berkmoes as a speaker to make everyone aware of the program and encourage participation.

2. Jim Sarantides – Southington Girls Softball League. Mr. Sarantides, president of the SGSL, presented handouts and reviewed the highlights. Information on what the league accomplished this year was reviewed. A draft calendar of events for 2011 was distributed. Opening ceremonies are scheduled for April 30. Mr. Masci noted that SGSL or the Western LL would have to pay for custodial fees for registration; Northern LL paid last

year's fee. A list of major unanticipated repairs and expenses was also discussed. Chairman Fontana stated that items related to the actual buildings, which belong to the town, would receive consideration at budget time. Anything inside the buildings would have to be covered by the leagues. Mr. Sarantides was instructed to give the budget request to Mr. Masci for inclusion in the proposed budget – a one-time allotment. When the budget goes before the Board of Finance, someone from the league should be present to respond to any questions.

Mr. Sarantides spoke about a tree in the middle of the park that he is concerned about. Mr. Laprey said he works with a tree company through our Highway Department. He will look into it and see if it needs to be taken down.

The board thanked Mr. Sarantides for the comprehensive reports and for keeping them informed. The league is also taking good care of the fields and it is appreciated.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS:

Dave Laprey reported that there is not much going on in the parks right now. Crews are getting the Town Greens ready for the holidays. Tree lighting is this Friday with opening ceremonies at 5:30 p.m. Some discussion followed regarding a neighbor's report of tree cutting going on in the woods at Crescent Lake. Mr. Laprey was called and he checked it out but did not see or hear anything when he arrived but would check it out again. Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, to accept the report of the Assistant Superintendent of Parks. Motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Masci reported that there is an extensive list of trips and more are coming. He spoke with the Town Manager about the graffiti on the Rails to Trails as discussed at the last meeting. He suggested planting some prickly bushes as a prevention measure. Mr. Weichsel thought it was a good idea. In the spring we will plant some and see how it goes. Commissioner Palmieri commented that when she was in San Francisco they had many trails lined with art work, and there was no graffiti anywhere, even in bad neighborhoods. Why couldn't we have groups do art work on the buildings? Of course permission from the owners would be needed. It might be worth looking into. Mr. Masci will check with a couple of property owners to get their reaction. Mens basketball – Durham has only 5 teams and they are looking for more variety. Mr. Masci will survey our people to see if they are interested in inter-city play. It would still be considered a Southington program so there shouldn't be a problem with being charged a fee if they played here.

Mr. Masci asked if anyone had received a request to use the Showmobile on Friday night. It is all cleaned up and locked for the winter. No one indicated any knowledge of such a request. Bow hunting got 13 deer. Kayak rentals. Collinsville Canoe & Kayak is interested in receiving an RFP when we are ready to do it.

Budget. Mr. Masci said the budget is due to the Town Manager by January 14, so the board could have a workshop on January 5th. Commissioner Fasulo said it is possible to be ready if the board receives the budget information ahead of time, which Mr. Masci agreed would be done. Dances. Mr. Masci said if the PTO decides not to do the refreshments he has someone who is willing to take it over. The last dance had 252 kids so it was a manageable number for the chaperones and police.

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

REPORT ON PARKS:

Drive-In. Commissioner LaPorte said the permit for the pavilion should be issued this week following many things that had to be done first. The work can be done during the winter. The bid was \$60,000 more than planned. Mastrobattisto was selected as the contractor. Mr. Masci asked about the marquee. Does the board want to allow anyone to use it before the drive-in theater opens? Discussion followed on who might want to use it, how long the message would be up there, and how much time it would take for staff to change the lettering.

Without a bucket truck, it is labor intensive, using ladders and putting the message on both sides of the marquee. It was the consensus of the board not to take any ads at this time. It could be used for town event announcements, such as the Kids Series or the Apple Festival, things that don't change every week.

Dog Park. Mr. Masci reported there were no broken sprinkler heads after the fireworks show. Some calls had come in asking if the dog park was closed for the winter. The park does not close for the winter.

Crescent Lake. Discussion followed on the amount of monitor hours and whether or not there was a need at this time. Comments were made about the cameras and their efficiency. They are not the greatest but are good enough for the purpose; new ones would be too costly. Mr. Masci said he spoke with Mark Sciota about the monitoring, and the board should expect a letter from him on the subject. Motion was made by Commissioner Kanute, seconded by Commissioner Fasulo, to change the policy at Crescent Lake to open and close only until further notice, beginning Monday, December 6, 2010. Motion carried unanimously.

Safety Net – Babe Ruth Field. Commissioner LaPorte said we have been trying to get Call Before You Dig up there so that the poles could be installed. If not this week, then they will be there next week.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Budget. Already discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION & ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Palmieri made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and to go into Executive Session excluding the press and the public at 7:58 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Fasulo. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berardinelli
Recording Secretary