

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF NEW FAIRFIELD
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**MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 13, 2008**

**New Fairfield Town Hall Conference Room
7:00.m.**

PRESENT:

Ray Lubus, Chairman, Steve Burfeind, Bill Tripp, Mark Lamanna, Bill O'Keeffe, Melissa Luks Fidanza, Laura Anderson, Steve Merullo, Director Parks & Recreation, Lyn Sheaffer, Secretary.

John Hodge, First Selectman.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Ray Lubus.

MOTION

Mr. Tripp motioned to adopt the agenda. Mr. O'Keeffe seconded the motion. Additions:

Move waterfront up to number 5

Under New Business: 1. Field use spring season schedule, 2. Field fees policy

Under Old Business: 1. Budget proposal

Mr. Burfiend motioned to make the changes to the agenda. Mr. Lamanna seconded the motion vote taken

Bill O'Keeffe Yes

Bill Tripp Yes

Steve Burfiend Yes

Mark Lamanna Yes

Melissa Luks Fidanza Yes

Laura Anderson Yes

Motion carried.

Vote to adopt the agenda:

Bill O'Keeffe Yes

Bill Tripp Yes

Steve Burfiend Yes

Mark Lamanna Yes

Melissa Luks Fidanza Yes

Laura Anderson Yes

Motion carried.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Report from the Parks & Recreation Commission Chairman

Mr. Lubus reported the Commission has had a busy month. The budget has been presented, consideration of various proposals, including raising the boat slip fees. Analysis of budget with regard to revenue vs. costs. He reported a joint meeting with board of education on field use sub-committee with regard to field use fees. Field use scheduling. Mr. Merullo has been working at the beach, he will report at the appropriate time.0

4. Remarks from Director of Parks & Recreation

Mr. Merullo will report in each area.

5. Old Business

Boat slip consideration

Mr. Lubus reported the finance committee and the board of selectman came to them and stated Parks & Recreation cannot continue to run at a deficit. It was recommended we look at our boat slip fees. Currently they are \$1,000 per patron per year. What is being proposed is an increase the BOS recommended \$200 to \$1,200 per year.

Ms. Luks Fidanza had researched other boat slip fees in the area, New Milford was 1,080. Sherman was \$1,100.

Mr. Merullo reported

Girard's \$1950 for up to 20' 21-22' 2050; 23-25' \$2150
Chatterton Marina 1,900 up to 21-23' is \$2,000; 24-26' \$2,100.
Echo Bay flat fee summer \$2,600.

Mr. Lubus reported in 2006 there was a public hearing and there were quite a few issues reported. At that time the fee was \$900 and increased to \$1000, and he reported there has been substantial improvements In He also reported in the letter that was sent in 2005 it stated it was the Commission's intent to increase the fees another \$200-\$300 in the next two years.

Mr. Lamanna thanked the boat slip owners for coming out. He stated he was totally against raising the fees to support other Parks & Recreation activities. He felt they're pulling enough money out of the marina to substantiate other P&R activities. \$90,000 + that the boat docks generate goes back to the town fund. Mr. Lamanna does not feel it's fair to compare the town of New Fairfield to a commercial marina. He felt it is fair to compare us with other surrounding towns and we are about the same. He can justify going up \$100, but \$200 is too much in this tight economy. Mr. Lamanna also expressed concern about the Candlewood Lake Authority charges.

Mr. Lubus made full disclosure that He, Mr. Lamanna and Ms. Luks Fidanza were boat owners but he did not feel it was a conflict of interest.

Public Comment

Jim Mitchell – reported he felt our security was lax last year. New Milford charging \$1,050 from Memorial Day to Labor Day has 24 hour live security. He reported on the improvements made last year. Pruning was never completed. The gate was always a problem. Mr. Mitchell also reported if there is a charge per boater the town may get a rebate on the money they pay to have the lake patrolled. He asked the town to consider other possibilities. A per foot charge, a senior citizen price for people on fixed incomes. He did not agree with an increase.

Joel
He felt the original intent was for the marina to be an added recreational benefit for the taxpayers of New Fairfield. He stated they have never received a cost analysis on what it takes to run the marina. He asked if all the programs were also going to be raised 20% to cover the deficit like what is being asked of the boaters.

Mr. Merullo reported he was never asked for a financial on the marina. He stated he is working on one for the finance board and would be happy to make a copy available. He reported the gate was hit by lightening and the electronics were fried.

Mark Nichols – asked if there is any other program in P&R that funds other programs. Do we compare any other program to the private sector. Like a tennis club to tennis program.

Mr. Lubus stated we do analyze every program as to which are profit making, which are break even and which do we take a loss on. We sustain some that take a loss with others that are more successful.

Mr. Merullo reviewed the P&R yearly budget. He reviewed the expenses at the marina.

Mr. Nichols stated without total financials how can the board make an educated decision. Mr. Lubus reported some of that money goes into the town fund but we get money back in our capital improvement projects. Mr. Nichols stated he didn't feel it was fair to use the boat owners to fund those other projects.

Mr. Lamanna felt it was not fair to compare the fees with commercial for profit marinas.

Mr. Mitchell asked about the allocation from the dock replacement fund to build the turf stadium. Mr. Lubus reported yes that was used and now each year we ask the town for \$20,000 to replace that fund.

Mike Bellon – He felt some of the improvements should be amortized over the years, they are not recurring costs. He also felt the marina should not support other programs.

Dave Green – He stated he is a middle class person with 2 kids. Costs are rising everywhere, he enjoys boating with his family and he feels it is the wrong thing to do to raise the fees. He felt it was hypocritical for the town to work so hard to look out for the property owners on the lake to not incur any additional expenses and then come and raise the marina fees \$200.

Bill O'Keeffe – stated he was on the Commission when the boat slips were built. He stated we are also feeling increased costs and we have all worked to keep things reasonable and we still continue to do that.

Anthony Duardo- He asked what other increases are proposed in P&R. Mr. Merullo reported last year a 5% in program fees and a 20% in program costs leaving us a \$40,000 deficit. He stated the field use fee may go up 50% they pay \$20 per person the proposal is to go up to \$30 per person.

John Hodge, First Selectman.- stated the boat docks are not the only profit making center of P&R. It's a question of what's fair. P&R cannot continue to operate at a deficit. The marina fees must go up otherwise you have to sit her tonight and cut \$45,000 out of the budget. Going up \$200 will only cover \$30,000. In a certain point this was designed to generate money, it is an asset of the town and is being used as an asset of the town in the same way the cell tower is.

Mr. Merullo reviewed the programs that need to be funded that there is no charge. Programs including the Christmas tree lighting, The Turkey Run, We contribute to the parade. This year we had a grant for our movie program, next year we might not be so lucky and there is no charge for that program.

Ed Sbordona – asked the Commission to consider \$100 and then see where we stand next year after you evaluate all the other program fee increases.

Mr. Mitchell asked the Commission to consider Sr. Citizen discounts and consider a per foot charge. Why should a 16' boat pay the same as 24' boat. Ms. Luks Fidanza suggested premium spots be charged a higher fee.

Mr. Lubus asked for a motion

MOTION

Ms. Anderson motioned to raise the boat fees for the 2008 season. Ms. Luks Fidanza seconded the motion. The Commission discussed. Mr. Burfiend felt there should be an increase, however he would like to see the financials and they should look at amatorizing some of the improvements. He felt the deficit should be covered in proportion.

Mr. Merullo reported the Marina took in \$150,000. \$96,000 goes to the general fund. Left with \$54,000.

\$10,000 employees at gate. Beach made \$1,000 this year. \$45,000 for other expenses. Approx \$37,000 after all expenses. This year the town will take \$99,000.

Mr. Lubus stated the town takes \$99,000 but we are asking back for \$313,000 back for capital improvement projects.

MOTION

Mr. Lamanna motioned to have no increase to the marina fees. Mr. O'Keeffe seconded the motion. Vote taken:

Bill O'Keeffe	Yes
Bill Tripp	No
Steve Burfiend	No
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	No
Laura Anderson	No

Motion defeated.

MOTION

Mr. Lamanna motioned to raise the marina fee \$50. Mr. O'Keeffe seconded the motion. Vote taken:

Bill O'Keeffe	Yes
Bill Tripp	No
Steve Burfiend	No
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	No
Laura Anderson	No

Motion defeated.

MOTION

Mr. Lamanna motioned to raise the marina fee \$100. Mr. O'Keeffe seconded the motion. Vote taken:

Bill O'Keeffe	Yes
Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried.

6. Sub-committee reports

FIELDS

Mr. Burfiend reported on the joint sub-committee with Board of Education. The sub-committee will bring the recommendation to the policy committee, then they will bring that to the Board of Education.

Mr. Lubus asked for the endorsement of the Commission to go to \$30 and \$35 over the next 2 years.

Mr. O'Keeffe motioned to endorse the proposal to raise the field use fee to \$30 and then \$35 over the next 2 years. Mr. Tripp seconded the motion. Vote taken:

Bill O'Keeffe	Yes
Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried.

Mr. Lubus asked the commission to approve that out of the fees \$10,000 would be allocated to the Board of Education for field maintenance and \$10,000 for P&R field maintenance, the balance will go into the field replacement fund. The fees generated on grass fields will be thrown into the pool.

MOTION

Mr. Lamanna motioned to approve out of the increased fees 10,000 would be allocated to the Board of Education for field maintenance and \$10,000 for P&R field maintenance, the balance will go into the field replacement fund. The fees generated on grass fields will be thrown into the pool. Mr. Tripp seconded the motion. Vote taken:

Bill O'Keeffe	Yes
Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried.

WATERFRONT

No Report

PROGRAMMING

Ms. Anderson reported meeting with Ms. Coelho and Joanne about starting the Women's softball league in New Fairfield again as a P&R program. Ms. Anderson felt 4 teams are needed to make it work. Brewster would like to be a travel team. Ms. Anderson did not agree because of insurance, however, if they didn't get 4 teams it was a possibility. Mr. Lubus asked who would run it, Ms. Anderson felt Barb Coelho with a committee to help. Mr. Lubus felt other organizations are independent groups and apply to us for field use. Who is going to administer it.

Mr. Merullo stated Men's softball has an agreement to pay \$125 per team (6 teams), Mr. Lubus asked to see the agreement.

Mr. O'Keeffe left the meeting.

Mr. Lubus expressed concern that we just voted on a \$30 per person usage fee, how can we make exceptions. The Commission discussed.

The Commission discussed girl's softball. The also discussed having P&R running the women's softball league. There will be an out of town fee. Ms. Anderson felt a maximum number of out of town residents should be allowed. The Commission discussed the numbers and what would be an appropriate fee to charge. . The Commission felt it should be a \$100 program.

Ms. Anderson asked if someone wanted to sponsor a team as far as tee shirts could they put their name on the back instead of Parks & Recreation. The P&R logo would be on the front. The sponsor would buy the tee shirt. The Commission felt that wouldn't be a problem if they still paid the \$100.

MOTION

Ms. Anderson motioned to accept the new program, women's softball league as a Parks & Rec program charging \$100 per person, registration through the P&R office. Mr. Tripp seconded the motion. Vote taken:

Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried.

Mr. Lamanna asked about the agreement with men's softball at \$125 per team. Mr. Lubus stated this year it's at \$30 per person.

Mr. Lubus felt the Commission has to now address Flash Track because now they're having district meets. Mr. Hodge stated if you ask them to pay they are going to want exclusive use of the track. Mr. Lubus stated they said they were willing to pay a reasonable fee the question is are we willing to give them a fee that's less than the \$30.

Mr. Burfiend asked if there are other users that should come under a different category. Mr. Hodge felt there was no way to close off the track. The Commission discussed replacement of the track in 5 years. Mr. Lubus suggested \$20 a person, and include Bocce at \$20.

The commission discussed tennis. When there are organized teams playing or a clinic running there will be a charge, but no charge for the general public using the courts.

MOTION

Mr. Burfiend motioned to establish a special category to include at this point Flash Track and Bocce that would have a fee of \$20 per person. Mr. Tripp seconded the motion. Discussion

The Commission discussed when that would go into effect. They felt when the \$30 fee goes into effect.

Vote taken

Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried.

Ms. Anderson reported she asked Ms. Coelho what was happening with the after school program. She didn't know. The Commission discussed. Nothing has been done. Mr. Merullo felt there were issues beyond his expertise, he felt he needs help.

Mr. Merullo will make some phone calls. Ms. Anderson felt Ms. Coelho should be making the calls. The commission discussed. Mr. Lamanna felt Mr. Merullo could not take on more.

Mr. Hodge felt we should bid it out to the local providers and see what proposals come back. He was concerned about the liability issues.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Mr. Merullo reported he was spending all the \$20,000 for the septic at the beach. The total cost was close to \$33,000 and the extra money was going to come from the emergency repair fund. We cannot extend the septic sand beyond the 440 line so we now need to build a retaining wall to hold the sand. The sand is expensive approx \$14,000. Mr. Merullo asked for the approval to spend the \$20,000

MOTION

Mr. Tripp motioned to approve the expenditure of \$20,000 for the septic system at the beach. Ms. Luks Fidanza seconded the motion Vote taken

Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried

Mr. Merullo reported he had taken some trees down on the south side. He met with First light and he is going to take the south beach down to the concrete ramp, take the apple tree down. Once the first federal permit is secured he will work on the second to level the beach.

Mr. Merullo asked the Commission to approve expenditures of \$2850 for the HS survey; \$15,000 out of the concession/bathroom at rebel turf. Motioned by Bill Tripp, seconded by Laura Anderson. Vote taken

Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried

8. Minutes

MOTION

Mr. Tripp motioned to approve the minutes of 1/9/07. Mr. Burfiend seconded the motion. Vote taken

Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried

9. Adjournment

MOTION

Ms. Anderson motioned to adjourn. Mr. Burfiend seconded the motion. Vote taken

Bill Tripp	Yes
Steve Burfiend	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Laura Anderson	Yes

Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Lyn Sheaffer, Secretary Parks & Recreation Commission