

NEW FAIRFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
4 Brush Hill Road
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Telephone (203)312-5633 Fax (203)312-5636

REGULAR MEETING

Minutes
Monday, July 13, 2009
7:00 p.m.

TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM

PRESENT:

Sean Loughran, Fred Testor, Melissa Fidanza, Chris Van Steen, Tom Edwards, Bill O’Keeffe, Steve Merullo (Parks & Recreation Director) Denise Coccozza (Secretary), First Selectman John Hodge

GUESTS:

Dana Welles, Community Foundation
Joe Garufi, Dog Fund
Janet Simmons
Joe Moore

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Melissa Fidanza.

2. Public Comment

- a) Sean Loughran noted that the Dog Park and location should be discussed tonight. There is concern about the location with respect to the high school cross country trail.
- b) Joe Garufi stated that the Dog Park is planned to be located in the original proposed location behind the fences by Cashman Field. To follow up from last month’s meeting, he also pointed out fundraising opportunities for the Dog Park at the summer movies. This would consist of a PA announcement and donation baskets to be circulated at the dog-themed movies (Hotel for Dogs, Bolt).
- c) Resident Joe Moore expressed concern about the Dog Park location with respect to the children and athletes who would be in close proximity to the park. Bill O’Keeffe noted that he had similar concerns from the beginning stages of the project. Joe Garufi pointed out that the location would be near the bocce courts and wouldn’t interfere with the cross country trail. Parks & Recreation Director Steve Merullo said that the proposed setup would be safer than the current situation because there would be a specified area for the dogs. Mr. Merullo also noted that town meetings regarding the subject have been going on for a long time and it had been approved by a town vote. Based on the discussion, location is still a concern and will be addressed via an investigation by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education in the coming weeks.

3. Approval of Minutes June 8th

Tom Edwards made a motion to approve the June 8th minutes. Bill O’Keeffe seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 Yes, 0 No. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Chairman Comments

None

5. Vote: Dog Park Contract

Bill O’Keeffe made a motion to table the Dog Park vote until further clarification on location is available. Chris Van Steen seconded the motion.

Vote: 2 Yes, 3 No. Motion Failed.

Tom Edwards made a motion to accept the Dog Park contract. Fred Testor seconded the motion. Discussion ensued and resulted in several modifications to the contract that would protect Parks & Recreation from financial exposure in the event of the dissolution of the Dog Park. In that light, the verbiage agreed upon is as follows: “New Fairfield Dog Fund will provide to Parks & Recreation a fund balance equal to the annual operating expenses each year, commencing on April 1st.”

Tom Edwards made a motion to amend the previous motion to approve the Dog Park contract and therefore vote on it with the changes discussed this evening. Fred Testor seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 Yes, 0 No. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Tom Edwards made a motion to accept the contract as amended. Fred Testor seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 Yes, 0 No. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Melissa Fidanza made a motion to appoint a Parks & Recreation member to represent the Commission in the decision regarding location of the Dog Park. Tom Edwards seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 Yes, 0 No. Motion Carried Unanimously

Tom Edwards made a motion to appoint Fred Testor to serve as the Parks & Recreation representative in the Dog Park location decision. Bill O’Keeffe seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 Yes, 0 No. Motion Carried Unanimously

6. Director Update

- a). Waterfront – Steve Merullo reported that the docks will be changed at the end of the season when the old ones come out of the water.
- b). Playground – 75-80% complete. Installation will resume this week.
- c). Dugouts – Steve Merullo informed the Commission that due to excessive rain, construction of the dugouts was delayed. Pending favorable weather conditions, then dugouts will be drilled in the next week.
- d). Summer Camp – Mr. Merullo reported that the camp program is going well and filled to capacity and security has been effective. Melissa Fidanza inquired as to whether there is a staff member being trained in the event that Brian Stroh might not be here next year to head up the summer camp. Mr. Merullo responded that there is not currently a trainee in place in anticipation of that scenario, but that Barbara Coelho is well-equipped to manage the details of the day-to-day events related to the camp. First Selectman John Hodge informed the Commission that going forward, Alertnow will be implemented for summer camp families in the event of an emergency.

7. Rebel Turf Bathrooms

Steve Merullo reported that the project is out to bid, with a 7/24 deadline. The current proposal is for a 5:2 female to male ratio with bathroom stalls. Baby changing stations will be included with both male and female stalls. Construction should begin immediately pending DEP approval of septic setup.

8. Subcommittee Reports

a). Waterfront

- Ball Pond Advisory Board is looking to make some landscaping changes which would entail removing sand and adding topsoil, walkways and trees. Costs are still uncertain and the commission collectively agreed that more information was needed before committing any Parks & Recreation funds to the project. Bill O’Keeffe volunteered to act as a Parks & Recreation representative on this project. Mr. O’Keeffe and Steve Merullo will investigate further and report at the next Commission meeting.
- Town Park – Steve Merullo received a few phone calls regarding dirty conditions related to geese/seagulls. He is looking into options to rectify the situation including fencing and adding more sand. He is also looking into expanding the north beach. Mr. Merullo is also investigating rotating lifeguards to monitor the parking lot. The vendor at the concession stand is working out well.

b). Programming

- Steve Merullo reported that this past week the Board of Selectmen approved donations for the summer movie series totaling \$10,500. Mr. Merullo suggested appointing Denise Cocozza to start soliciting local businesses during fall 2009 for sponsorship of the summer 2010 movie series.

c). Fields – There is a fields fees meeting this week.

d). Other – Turkey Run & Fall Brochure should be added to agenda for next month's meeting

9. Adjournment

Bill O'Keeffe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tom Edwards seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.