

NEW FAIRFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
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Telephone (203)312-5633 Fax (203)312-5636

REGULAR MEETING

Minutes
Monday, October 19, 2009
7:00 p.m.

TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM

PRESENT:

Sean Loughran, Bill O’Keeffe, Mark Lamanna, Fred Testor, Melissa Fidanza, Chris Van Steen (arrived 7:15), Tom Edwards, Steve Burfeind, Steve Merullo (Parks & Recreation Director – arrived 7:34), Denise Coccozza (Commission Secretary)

GUESTS:

Scott Roberti, New Fairfield Baseball

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Sean Loughran.

Bill O’Keeffe made a motion to move Public Comment down in the agenda to follow Chairman Comments due to Steve Merullo’s planned arrival at 7:30. Melissa Fidanza seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of 9/14/09 Minutes: Steve Burfeind made a motion to approve the 9/14 minutes. Melissa Fidanza seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-2. Motion passed.

3. Chairman Comments

- a) 2010 Calendar – the members agreed to leave the current meeting schedule in place for calendar year 2010 (2nd Monday of each month unless it conflicts with a holiday, in which case the meeting will occur on the 3rd Monday). The venue will be changed to the new Community Room at the Senior Center if available.

Bill O’Keeffe made a motion to move the meeting time from 7:00 to 7:30. Mark Lamanna seconded the motion.

Vote: 7-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

- b) Blackberry purchase for Parks & Recreation employees - Sean Loughran received an e-mail from Patty Mota requesting authorization for Steve Merullo & Barb Coelho to each receive a Blackberry with push to talk & e-mail capabilities to be paid for by Parks &

Recreation. The state pricing for the phone is \$49.00 with a \$20.00 per month data plan. The members discussed whether it was necessary for both Barb and Steve to have this functionality; and whether it should be paid for by Parks & Recreation vs. Buildings & Grounds. Sean suggested discussing further upon Steve Merullo's arrival.

- c) Long range plan – Sean Loughran informed the Commission that a FY 2011 plan as well as a 5-year plan will need to be developed and voted on by December. He suggested that the members begin thinking about what should be included in the plan. Some of the examples discussed were baseball fields, a Gazebo near the playground, and potentially a long-term replacement plan for the playground. Steve Burfeind noted that the group will need an updated status of the current year. A special meeting may be needed to specifically address the long range plan in detail.
- d) Sports Pavilion – The pavilion with the bathrooms is coming along according to schedule. Some minor changes were made to the final approved plan, including adding a step as well as a window for the concession stand.

4. Public Comment

Scott Roberti was in attendance to follow up on the proposed expansion of the Cashman infield to accommodate Babe Ruth baseball games and high school practices. He reported that the softball program does not have an issue with the proposed changes as long as the mound would be portable and not permanent. Mr. Roberti stated that NF Baseball would purchase a portable mound.

Bill O’Keeffe questioned whether the increased usage would pose a safety issue with hard balls flying into Komlo field. Scott Roberti suggested that installing a “clamshell” backstop would rectify a majority of that risk.

Some of the other challenges discussed were field prioritization, potential effects on U9 soccer with the increased dirt on the field, timing, resources and who would cover the associated costs. Next steps: Steve Merullo will price out the project and secure outside labor to assist. At the 11/9 meeting if the costs and funding are in place, the commission could vote on the project and the work could begin before the weather becomes an obstacle.

5. Director Update

- a). Dog Park – The project was tabled at the last zoning meeting. The last location discussed was between the softball field and bocce courts. It has recently come to light that an alternate location may be available on land that the town leases near the dog kennels.
- b). Sports Pavilion Bathrooms – Steve Merullo reiterated that the project is on schedule. The Dept. of Public Health approved and the site visit is complete. Items discussed relative to the pavilion included:
 - Potentially having a grand opening in early November
 - Fred Testor asked if drains would be in the floors. Steve Merullo replied that the architect had drains removed from the plans due to lack of necessity.

- The bathroom main doors will be automated to open and close each day. All entrances aside from the bathrooms will require keys for access.
- An in-depth discussion focused on how to address the various clubs' access to the concession stand and press box. There may be challenges with multiple groups requesting access at the same time and security could be a concern if too many people have a key that can be duplicated. There was some conversation around charging a fee to use the concession stand as is the process at the Town Park. A food license will be required for clubs selling prepared food items. For the remainder of this fall sports season, the high school team using the lower Rebel turf field will have the first right of refusal to utilize the facility. Clubs outside of high school teams will not have access to the press box this fall. Additionally, selling of only prepackaged food will be permitted for the remainder of 2009 in the concession stand. Whichever team wishes to utilize the concession stand will need to sign in and out through the Parks & Recreation department. Between now and the spring season, a separate meeting will likely need to occur to fully outline a long term process.

Fred Testor made a motion to approve the following policy: For the remainder of 2009, the press box will be open only for high school varsity and subvarsity games. Any other requests will need to be approved by Parks & Recreation. Tom Edwards seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-1-0. Motion passed.

c). Turkey Run 11/22/09

- T-shirts – As advertised in the fall brochure, all runners who register by 11/13 will receive a shirt. The 11/13 cutoff date allows for enough lead time to receive the shirts.
- Turkeys – In the past, these have been purchased through the Food Center. Last year \$299 was spent on 15 turkeys last year. In an effort to reduce that cost, Bill O'Keeffe volunteered to investigate a less expensive route.
- Other food items – Bill O'Keeffe offered to pick up the bagels. Steve Burfeind said he will pick up all other items needed at Shaw's.
- Water bottles – Steve Merullo may be able to secure at a low cost and will pursue.
- News-Times – Mark Lamanna will be the contact person

d). Tree Lighting 11/29/09

- Refreshments – Coffee will be purchased this year so that the adults have an option besides hot chocolate. It was discussed that the hot chocolate could be made at the senior center and brought over. Fred Testor offered to provide large containers and water for hot chocolate through his rental company and see if a volunteer from the Booster Club will handle making the hot chocolate. Cookies last year were made by the Commission members and there was discussion about doing this again.
- Entertainment – Mark Lamanna suggested renting costumes to have volunteers wear in order to entertain the children while they're waiting in line. The members discussed and agreed to stay away from Disney type characters but potentially

Frosty the Snowman could work. This will be discussed further at the next meeting. Music will be provided by the New Life Community Church and the high school band/chorus. Diane Montuoro will paint a winter scene as a backdrop for the Gazebo.

- Volunteers should arrive by 3 pm.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a). Waterfront

- Ball Pond – Steve Merullo reported that he’s working on obtaining a quote from a third party to execute the project proposed last month by the BPAC. Bill O’Keeffe pointed out that the Commission had previously voted not to take action on Ball Pond. Mr. Merullo replied that if it can be turned over to a third party it might be acceptable depending on the pricing. Once the quote is received, this will be added to a later agenda for discussion.
- Swim Docks – Mr. Merullo acknowledged that the approved plan included replacing half of the docks this year and half next year at a total cost of \$30K. Meanwhile, he came across “EZ Docks”, an alternative option which would be more costly up front (\$80K) but in the long-term it might be more cost-effective and little maintenance. For example, the docks would not need to come out of the water or need painting, and they’re splinter-free. He will lay out the short and long term pricing comparisons for the next meeting.
- Marina – There were 3 non-paying/partially paying residents this year. Steve plan to give them until the end of the season to pay in full or forfeit their chances to renew for next year. He is also still looking into jet ski spaces at the marina. Boats have until Sunday 10/25 to come out of the water. He invited the commission members to join him on Sunday 10/25 at 8 a.m. to look at the docks to determine how much space is available for jet skis and consider how much to charge for use of this space.

b). Budget Season – Mr. Merullo reminded the Commission that budget presentations will begin in January and as such, upcoming projects should be discussed and prioritized to be included in those presentations. In addition to the projects mentioned earlier under “Chairman Comments”, he also mentioned the following: Toilet replacements at the beach house, roofs over the bocce courts, fencing around the playground. He stated that the playground is still in good shape with regular maintenance. Mr. Merullo will bring detailed budget numbers from the past few years to the next meeting. He reported that in FY ’09 Parks & Recreation lost (\$34K) but if the \$99K from the docks’ revenue hadn’t been taken out P&R would have been profitable. Steve Burfeind reviewed the past 3 years’ final profit/(loss) figures:

FY '07: (\$43K)
FY '08: (\$10K)
FY '09: (\$34K)

c). Blackberry Discussion – Sean Loughran revisited the Blackberry conversation from earlier in the meeting. Bill O’Keeffe questioned whether the phone coverage should be through Parks & Recreation or Buildings & Grounds. Steve Merullo reported that his and Barbara’s current phones are paid for by the town (P&R) and he has been exceeding his minutes. Upgrading to a Blackberry and bundling both plans together would cost \$49 per phone and an additional \$20/month per phone. Total incremental costs for the year for both Blackberries would be approximately \$500. The Commission members agreed that it would be beneficial for Steve to have internet access to facilitate communication on the road. Whether it is necessary for Barbara to also have the same functionality was discussed and the concensus was that it depends on the difference between individual vs. bundled pricing. Steve will get more specific information and present to the Commission.

7. Adjournment

Bill O’Keeffe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fred Testor seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Vote: 7-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 9, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room.