

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, June 14, 2010
7:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY ROOM

PRESENT:

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

1. Call to Order: Chairman Sean Loughran called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

Mark Lamanna made a motion to accept the agenda with the following changes:

- Addition of section “2b” to discuss Ball Pond
- Addition of section “4a” to discuss the Candlewood Watershed.

Fred Testor seconded the motion.

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

2. Public Comment

- Dog Park** - Joe Garufi provided updated information about the Dog Park. He reported that the fencing will be put in place beginning the week of 6/21 by Addressi Fencing. Signage is being finalized. The verbiage will be based on both the rules and regulations previously agreed upon by the Parks & Recreation Commission and also from researching signage at other dog park sites. Melissa Fidanza suggested that a phrase be added to the sign to indicate that abuse (by a dog owner) of these rules can result in revoking a dog owner’s right to use the park. Mr. Garufi agreed to add language to this effect. Based on suggestions from the Commission members, he also agreed to revise the first bullet of the rules to indicate that the dog owner “assumes” liability, as opposed to “waives” liability. The kiosk for the large sign is being built by an Eagle Scout. 2000 dog bags and holders have been ordered and benches will be added if/when donated. Chris Van Steen recommended that the Dog Park be closed in the case of major events such as Relay for Life.
- Ball Pond** – Sean Loughran referenced a recent letter in the Citizen News regarding keeping Ball Pond Beach open vs. returning it to its natural state. He said that this issue may resurface and could require a vote at a later date. Steve Merullo reported that the beach is in very bad shape from erosion and littering and he has locked the gate there. There was discussion about the costs associated with cleaning up the beach and where

this falls in the scope of other priorities. First Selectman John Hodge suggested that the Ball Pond group should take a similar approach as the Dog Fund and commit to maintaining the site if the town does the initial clean-up. The proposal by the BPAC last year was to turn the site into a park-like setting, as this is more likely to hold up than a beach at that location based on the elements. Sean Loughran said that this will be added to the July agenda for further discussion.

3. Approval of Minutes

Tom Edwards made a motion to approve the 5/10/10 meeting minutes. Melissa Fidanza seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0. Motion passed.

4. Chairman Comments

Chairman Sean Loughran suggested that a long range planning/brainstorming session should be added to next month's agenda.

A Fields committee meeting will be held on 6/21. It was previously agreed upon to increase the fee from \$35 to \$40 per child for sports. Due to the meeting timing, this will not go into effect for the fall season but should be in place for the spring. John Hodge pointed out that currently the Flash Track team doesn't pay for usage of the track.

Sean Loughran asked for clarity on the hours of the Sports Pavilion bathrooms. Steve Merullo replied that the hours are 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. and they're on a timer. Tom Edwards suggested adding a sign to the site, indicating the hours. The cost to clean the bathrooms 3 times per week is \$285/month.

- a. Candlewood Watershed – Sean Loughran had received an e-mail regarding the Candlewood Watershed asking for support from NF P&R. There is a group with an initiative in place to promote the preservation of the lake by reducing runoff. Supporting the initiative requires no funding from P&R. Mark Lamanna made a motion to support the initiative. Bill O'Keefe seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0. Motion passed.

5. Director Update

Steve Merullo informed the Commission that a new Recreation Director has been identified, and he thanked them for their support during the past few months.

He also reported that the swim docks, purchased through "D&D Pleasure & Power", will arrive by 7/4. They are slightly less expensive and made of better material than if they were ordered through Shoremaster. Regarding the boat slips, they are now all full.

6. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Marina: Steve Merullo reported that he's procured a new company to remove the weeds from the swim area. The company is Aqualogic, and they are endorsed by the CLA. They use a suction method to remove the weeds at a cost of \$950/day for 7

days. He asked if the Commission could approve funding this process through the 205 fund in order to move the process along as quickly as possible. Melissa Fidanza made a motion to approve funding of the weed removal through the 205 fund for the first 2 days of testing the process. Mark Lamanna seconded the motion.

After further discussion, Fred Testor made a motion to amend the motion and approve funding of the weed removal for all 7 days. Bill O’Keeffe seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0. Motion passed.

John Hodge pointed out that if the weevils end up working as time goes on, this type of weed removal process will no longer be necessary.

Mark Lamanna reported that the security cameras are in place. Installation labor had been donated. He noted that a trash can cover and light for the shed are needed, and the grounds need to be weedwacked.

Mr. Lamanna also raised the question of whether everyone using the marina could get a card, as opposed to having an access code issued, for better security. After discussion, it was agreed that a code was still a more viable option overall, but perhaps the code can be changed annually or monthly for better security.

Bill O’Keeffe asked that the Commission re-establish subcommittees at next month’s meeting.

- b. Fields: As reported earlier, there is a Fields Committee on 6/21. There may be a special meeting before then to go over some of the fees.
- c. Programs: Steve Merullo reported that the summer booklet is out. The movie schedule has been revised since last month’s meeting to accommodate Disney licensing requests. The Blind Side will now be shown on 6/25 at Rebel Turf Field. For Day Camp, each of the 5 weeks are full with 120 participants. Mark Lamanna said that he has a band committed to 1 beach concert in July or August.

At 9:25 p.m., Sean Loughran made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue. Tom Edwards seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0. Motion passed.

At 9:54 p.m., Tom Edwards made a motion to exit Executive Session. Fred Testor seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0. Motion passed.

Fred Testor made a motion to give a 3.5 % salary increase to Kelly Ferris, effective 7/1. Mark Lamanna seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0. Motion passed.

Steve Merullo informed the Commission that there is new organization which may be competitive with the Parks & Recreation programs. The organization is called "Ultimate Play" and is run by Andy Buchsbaum, a gym teacher at Consolidated School. There was discussion about how to handle field use fees for "for profit" organizations (Category 5). There was also discussion about how to handle town controlled fields (i.e. Memorial) and the High School fields in this situation. A special meeting may be held before next month's meeting to address further. John Hodge said he would discuss the policies for the High School fields with the Superintendent of schools.

Mr. Merullo recommended that some of the Parks & Recreation Commission members attend the 6/21 Fields Meeting on 6/21 to address their concerns.

7. Adjournment

Bill O'Keeffe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tom Edwards seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

Vote: 7-0-0. Motion passed unanimously. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 12, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Senior Center Community Room.

Prepared by Denise Coccozza, June 21, 2010