

NEW FAIRFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
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REGULAR MEETING

Minutes
Monday, April 12, 2010
7:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY ROOM

PRESENT:

Sean Loughran, Fred Testor, Chris Van Steen, Bill O’Keeffe, Steve Burfeind, Steve Merullo (Parks & Recreation Director), Kelly Ferris (Program Director), Denise Coccozza (Commission Secretary), First Selectman John Hodge, Selectman Susan Chapman

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Chairman Sean Loughran.

Bill O’Keeffe made a motion to amend the agenda by adding section “1a” to allow for comments by First Selectman John Hodge. Chris Van Steen seconded the motion. The members voted on the proposed agenda.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

a. John Hodge made the following comments:

- The 205 fund account has been increased by \$50,000 as of this week.
- The Public Health Commission approved water for the Rebel Sports Pavilion. A C/O is still needed from the town.
- Mr. Hodge encouraged the Commission to work on funding the summer movie series as there is nothing currently in the budget. Union Savings Bank had expressed interest in a sponsorship. Susan Chapman agreed and also added that the series has become an expected community event. Steve Burfeind made a motion to add the movie discussion to section “1b” on the agenda. Bill O’Keeffe seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

- The Recreation Director position has been posted and it will remain on the website until Thursday 4/15. To date there have been 3 internal applicants and 6 from the general public. Viable candidates will be contacted next week to schedule interviews. It will be a union position with a salary range of \$48,000 with the option to offer 15% less the first year.

- b. The members discussed the costs associated with the summer movie series and how to potentially reduce and cover the costs. Steve Merullo reported that the movie license cost is \$300, entertainment is generally \$250, the inflatable houses are \$500 and labor is approximately \$600. \$250 should also be included in the event of park fees, for a total per movie cost of roughly \$2,000. Food is offered through private vendors.

Fred Testor said that to reduce costs, he can most likely get the inflatable houses donated. Bill O’Keeffe recommended that entertainment be eliminated unless it can be sponsored or donated. Fred Testor made a motion to commit to 4 movie nights this summer using internal funds. Bill O’Keeffe seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

First Selectman John Hodge stated that one of the Selectmen has requested further insight into the oversight of the Parks & Recreation Department finances. He suggested that some commission members attend the next Selectmen’s meeting on 4/22 to address any related questions.

2. Public Comment

A resident boat launch user was in attendance to suggest adding a crosswalk leading to the boat launch area from the upper driveway at the north end of the Town Park. He believes that this is a safety concern. The commission members noted that given that it’s a state road, this would have to be approved through the state. Sean Loughran said he will follow up to inquire about the feasibility of doing this.

3. Approval of Minutes

Steve Burfeind made a motion to approve the 3/15/10 meeting minutes. Bill O’Keeffe seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0-0. Motion passed. Fred Testor abstained as he was not present for that meeting.

4. Chairman Comments

- a. Chairman Sean Loughran suggested that the Sports Pavilion bathrooms and concession stand usage should be discussed at this meeting. He also noted that Parks and Recreation is awaiting direction from Jay Waterman regarding procedures for accepting cash at various events/classes. The members discussed potential options such as a receipt process when cash is given at an event for late registration. Steve Burfeind suggested inquiring with other local recreation departments to see how they handle cash intake. Ultimately, Sean Loughran pointed out, the direction needs to come from the Finance office.

5. Director Update

- a. Marina: Steve Merullo reported that he's in the process of getting the arms in the water for the docks. There is a new hard drive in the security recorder. 1 porta potty was placed there this week and 1 more will be added by 6/1. The concession stand vendor is the same as last year, as they are under a 3 year contract. For next year credit card payments need to be addressed for boat slips. Fees may need to be increased due to the cost to P&R for credit card transactions. The members revisited the potential for opening up jet ski slips for \$550 (half the price of the boat slips). An ad could be placed in the Citizen News for a certain time frame. Bill O'Keeffe made a motion to open up 6 "jet ski only" slips based on a lottery system. Fred Testor seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Fields: Steve Merullo reported that dugouts are planned for after the marina is ready. A C/O will be ready in the next few days for the sports pavilion. He said that First Selectman John Hodge would like to have a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening. The porta potties will be removed when the sports pavilion opens. Meanwhile, the soccer and lacrosse clubs paid for porta potties to be added to the fields in the back due to the distance from those fields to the sports pavilion.

Steve Burfeind stated that NF Baseball has decided not to invest any funds into the Cashman Field improvements unless there is a good chance of the longer term project coming to fruition. The members acknowledged that Cashman Field needs work and attention regardless and this will be addressed at a later date.

Mr. Merullo said he received a request to make the playground swings wheelchair accessible by building a ramp. He will work on installing this.

Fred Testor provided an update on the sports pavilion concession stand. There was a Health Department meeting earlier during the week. The Health Department approved the refrigeration system and recommended adding a 3 bay sink eventually in order to approve the sale of certain items including hamburgers going forward. For now, class 1 and class 2 foods can be sold. This includes cold food, and ready to eat/commercially processed items. Also items heated within the last 4 hours can be sold (hot dogs, popcorn etc.). No cooking will be permitted inside the concession stand, also no grills outside for the time being. Licenses for separate groups will not be required.

Bill O'Keeffe recommended that subcommittees with regular meetings should be reinstated. He also expressed interest in being on the committee for interviewing the candidates for the Recreation Director position.

- b. Programs: Kelly Ferris updated the Commission on the status of the spring programs. The Flashlight Egg Hunt was a success with 42 3rd & 4th grade children participating. Response was good for the zumba and yoga classes and the babysitter class is

completely full. There was a regional recycle poster contest that resulted in 2 winners from New Fairfield. Girls' softball program has 130 participants, which is similar to last year.

Summer camp signups are starting to come in and Town Hall will remain open late on Thursday, 4/15 for camp registration. Weekly field trips for summer camp are not fully scheduled yet. Steve Merullo made a point to thank Kelly, with the help of Megan Loughran, for holding down the office during the past couple of months when the department has been understaffed.

Kelly informed the Commission that on 5/1, there is an event planned at Hidden Valley to celebrate its 50th anniversary. There will be entertainment and porta potties at this event, and attendance is expected to be high. The event is sponsored by Parks & Recreation in partnership with the Land Trust. Chris Van Steen made a motion to set a contribution limit of \$500 towards this event by Parks and Recreation, noting that if the Land Trust needs more funding, the Parks & Recreation Commission will set a special meeting to vote. Steve Burfeind seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schlosser, a NF teacher, will run the multi sports summer camp program internally that was previously handled by outside organizations. This was a popular program and will be more cost effective when handled internally. His pricing & payment terms are still being worked out but he will not receive more than 60% of the revenue as per Parks & Recreation policy. The 70/30 split rule for high school coaches is still in effect.

Fred Testor said that he is selling a large inflatable screen (9'x16') through Taylor Rental. The company paid \$1800 for it but he will be listing it on Craig's List for \$500 in the near future. He inquired as to whether Parks & Recreation would be interested in purchasing it for indoor movies, day camp movies, etc. The members agreed to table this discussion until the May meeting for a vote.

7. Adjournment

Fred Testor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill O'Keeffe seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 10, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Senior Center Community Room.