

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the November 19, 2014 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on November 19, 2014, 10th Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Joe Andreana
 Dave Winston
 Lyda Ruijter
 Althea Brown
 Beth Cooper

Staff: Kevin Murray
 Laurie Albano

Guests: Chris Kuczo – Babe Ruth
 Tom McIntosh – Babe Ruth
 Rich LoRusso – Babe Ruth

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Joe Andreana, Chair.

Ms. Brown will be a few minutes late.

Review of the October 15, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Ruijter made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Winston

YES: Mr. Winston
YES: Ms. Ruijter
YES: Mr. Andreana
ABSTAINED: Mrs. Cooper

Mrs. Cooper abstained because she did not attend the October 15, 2014 meeting.

Staff Reports

Laurie Albano – Recreation

- Ms. Albano reported to the Commission on the results of the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee meeting, giving them a list of items that were approved and denied. See attached.
- Ms. Albano informed the Commission that Jeff Goodman, President of Stamford American Little League, was denied by the Internal Committee his request for new sign at Northrop field. Mr. Goodman will be attending the December Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to appeal the decision.
- Recreation is partnering with a vendor to do Bubble Ball. They are starting to do some exhibitions and hoping to get a small league together. Also thinking of doing this in the Recreation Department as a revenue generator.
- There are some Rec fee increases, which Ms. Albano sent to Director Orgera. The City is doing a comprehensive fee review. Ms. Albano suggested adding a \$100 non-resident camp fee surcharge over and above the regular camp rates. In addition, Ms. Albano suggested charging \$2 Sport Pass to the Youth Programs and charging for open swim.
- Terry Conners Rink is doing well. The Engineering Department gave an estimate of \$400,000 for the roof replacement. Still waiting for Engineering to give an estimate for doors and doorframes. There is no information on the rink floor.
- Ken Smith's vacant Operator position has been posted and closed, waiting on Human Resources to set up the test.
- Terry Conners Ice Rink will be having on December 5th and 6th a very large event, Northeast Synchronized Skating.
- Santa Horse Carriage Ride at Cove will take place on December 5th & 6th.
- Winter brochure is out. Winter registration opens on December 9th online and in office on December 10th.
- Along with the IT Department, Recreation is prepping specs for new Recreation Software that is web based and hosted. Field scheduling module may need to be a separate product.
- There will be no Westhill High School pool from April 1st through summer. Ms. Albano is looking for an alternative pool, but is not too hopeful. Will be losing revenue from the spring and summer lessons.

Kevin Murray – Parks

- Mianus River Park dedication took place on November 6, 2014. The Mianus River Park is now home to an Urban Oasis.
- Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach volunteer clean-up day took place on Friday, November 14th, it was a success. Net weight of 5 tons of debris were pulled out of old Cummings Park Pond and surrounding shoreline.
- Copy of Capital Budget requests for FY 15-16 was given to the Commission.
- Newman Mills/Riverbank Park has been approved as a designated parking permit only area for spring 2015. Cummings Park closing for 10:00 p.m. is also in effect. Signs will be up as soon as possible.
- Pet Waste Disposal Receptacles in City Parks is a winter project that we will be working on with the new MS4 Program. The City of Stamford has been issued a permit by the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental protection (DEEP) regarding stormwater discharges to Long Island Sound. Section 6 of this permit requires the City to install signage, pet waste baggies and disposal receptacles in recreational areas where dog walking is allowed. They will start to install these stations in December.
- City had a K-Park walk through on November 4th with prospective bidders for the shoreline repairs.
- Looking to upgrade all approved City park signage in 2015. Mr. Murray stressed a couple of main areas that he would like to see, the beach areas on the pavilions showing the rules and regulations clearly printed in a format where it can be seen, and bullet point major rules that we need to enforce. Mr. Andreana suggested that on the signs first put up what people are allowed to do, and followed with what is not allowed. Mr. Murray will put a sketch together and have the Commission approve it.
- Once again staff will be attending both the inflation party on Saturday, November 22nd and the Thanksgiving Day Balloon Parade on Sunday, November 23rd.
- Mr. Murray gave the Commission an updated Park Projects Report from the Engineering Department.

Old Business

Rich LoRusso – Update on Cal Ripkin Charter.

- Mr. Rich LoRusso stated that last year at the Commission's request Babe Ruth took out a Charter for Carl Ripkin. The league did not play a single game because they were told they did not need it. The Charter cost \$800 and there is no way to get the money back. Mr. LoRusso stated that the league cannot hold a Charter that they

don't use; they cannot block the Charter without putting teams.

- Mr. LoRusso informed the Commission that if Charter is not being used, he will be giving it up.
- Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission cannot ask or force Mr. LoRusso to do anything that is not consistent with his program.

Rich LoRusso – Babe Ruth Middle School Program.

- Mr. LoRusso stated that the Middle School Program is a Babe Ruth Travel Program; the Board of Education does not give any money to the program.
- Mr. LoRusso stated that Darien played in the Babe Ruth Middle School League last year, but at no time there was not a Stamford Team on the field.
- Mr. LoRusso requested that the Babe Ruth Middle School Program be allowed to play with three non-Stamford based teams.
- The Commission discussed the possibility of allowing Darien and possibly Greenwich or two or more schools to play in the program. Ms. Albano stated that if this is approved, the games should be home and away, everything should not be hosted in Stamford, this is part of the Field Policy.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to allow Babe Ruth Middle School Program, formerly known as Stamford Youth Baseball run their program from March through May with their Stamford Middle School Teams and be allowed to have no more than three (3) non-Stamford teams. Additional teams will need to be approved by the Commission.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

YES: Mrs. Cooper
YES: Ms. Ruijter
YES: Mr. Andreana
ABSTAINED: Mr. Winston

Lisa Coggins – Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach – Follow Up Discussion Regarding Parking Area Off of Soundview Avenue.

- Ms. Coggins stated that Friends of Cummings and West Beach did a clean-up last Friday. Tyler Theder, Regulatory Compliance and Administrative Officer for the City/MS4 Program was there. Mr. Theder sent a letter of support to the Commission regarding the removal of 13 parking spaces along Soundview Avenue at the northern portion of Cummings Park.
- The Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach is in the process of becoming an Association and will file for a 501 (c) 3 over the winter.

- Mr. Andreana stated that the City does not have funding in the Budget at this time to dig up a parking lot, seed it, and move fencing. This area will be included in the Master Plan design. Ms. Coggins explained that she is looking for the approval of the change and once they are incorporated as a non-profit or association where they can raise funds, they will coordinate with the City and make it happen.
- Mr. Andreana asked Ms. Coggins to come back to the Commission with a set of plans, with full details so the Commission can address the actual plans of what is going to be. The Commission cannot give the approval to close the parking lot, if there is no funding to do it and the plans.
- Mr. Murray brought to the attention of the Commission that this request may need approval from other Boards since the location is on Soundview Avenue. Mrs. Cooper agreed with Mr. Murray and stated that the Commission needs to make sure if other Boards need to approve this request after the Commission's approval. Mr. Winston suggested that Ms. Coggins contact Mani Poola, City Traffic Engineer regarding this issue.
- Mr. Andreana asked Ms. Coggins to come back to the Commission when she has the funding for the project and the plan.

Review of Old Policies and Procedures.

- Commission reviewed and discussed a set of old Parks and Recreation Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Ms. Albano stated that currently there is a new set of Policies for Terry Conners Ice Rink. New Policies are focused on accounting controls.
- Mr. Andreana asked the Commission to go over the old policies for Terry Conners Ice Rink and highlight the changes.
- Ordinance and Park Regulations defines that vending is permitted at Troy Field on Cove Island. Vending on Cummings Park is restricted to the parking areas adjacent to the number one ball field with lights, trucks are not permitted in any other part of Cummings Park. After the Master Plan is completed this may change.
- The section on fines has been revised based on the 2012 Park Regulations.
- Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Murray to present with his report next month a list of all the parks with the new closing times.
- Fund Raising: Commission should request from sponsoring organizations for their most recent Financial Statements. Ms. Albano stated that the Commission will need to seek legal opinion to see if this can be done.

- Mr. Andreana asked the Commissioners to think about some of the things that were talked about and list the items without discussion and prioritize them.

New Business

Discussion of Fees.

- Commission discussed the weekend/non-resident fees. The Commission is in favor of increasing the weekend non-resident park fee and the annual non-resident park fee. Currently the fees are \$20 per day and \$225 for annual, good only Monday thru Friday. The Commission can only make a recommendation and forward to the Board of Representatives Parks & Recreation Committee. It was recommended that Mr. Andreana submit a letter to Representative Joe Caterbone, copy Marty Levine and Director Orgera requesting item to be placed on the Agenda.
- Ms. Albano stated that a regulation will have to be set that if you are a resident you can still buy a pass for \$20, but if a resident comes to the park without a pass they will have to buy a non-resident pass. The resident will be able to trade the non-resident one day pass for a season pass at the Government Center, but the Commission recommended that they do not get a \$30 refund, as it would be very cumbersome to do so.

Mr. Winston made a motion to change the cost of the daily non-resident park pass from \$20 to \$50.

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimously Approved

Ms. Ruijter made a motion that the out of town park season fee, Monday thru Sunday, be \$500.

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimously Approved

Discussion of Commission's Mission & Vision of the Parks.

- Commission discussed the Mission and Vision of the parks:
 - ❖ Synthetic vs. Natural Grass Fields.
 - ❖ General vs. Dedicated Funds.
 - ❖ Clarify Parks & Recreation Commission in parks planning.
 - ❖ How does Parks & Recreation Commission play a role in Budgets?
 - ❖ Informed on any plans or proposed park changes, playgrounds, infrastructure.

- ❖ Planning Capital Projects in parks.
- ❖ Advocate needs of Parks (manpower) and Recreation (programs).
- ❖ Recreation Department Facility.
- ❖ Restricting park usage, permit only?
- ❖ Identify parks vs non-park green space.
- ❖ Planning for future park/green space for growth.
- ❖ Enforcement Officers.
- ❖ Investigate Grant opportunities.
- ❖ City Swimming Pool.
- ❖ Tree Policy – cut down/replace.
- ❖ Review possibly increase role with SoundWaters, Young Mariners, etc.
- ❖ Role and Policy regarding public, private/Park Coalition.
- ❖ Interaction with:
 1. Groups for park advocacy i.e. Friends of Groups
 2. Quasi-Public Groups.
- ❖ Make/raise public awareness of offering benefits of parks.
- ❖ Conveyance of Cubeta – Lease expires in July.
- ❖ Vision of parks thru 2025.
- ❖ Field usage across all sports.
- The Commission will continue discussing at the December meeting.

Mr. Andreana requested that discussion regarding park's policies and procedures be placed on the December 2014 Agenda.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 17, 2014. Tentatively there will be a Public Meeting to discuss Lione Park.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mrs. Cooper

Seconded by Mr. Winston

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Margarita Arenas

November 24, 2014