



APPROVED

Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting

February 23, 2016

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman

Barbara Dobbin

Evie Bottali, Secretary-via phone

David Thaxter

Kim Hulber

Paul J. Roche, Director

Robin Matthews, Asst. Dir.

Robert Schneider, Asst. Dir.

Jane Byrnes, Secty.

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

Meeting called to order by Chairman at 7:35 p.m.

Recognition of Guest:

Mr. Justin Lawrence, Parks and Recreation Intern

Mr. Lawrence gave a brief summary of the activities and projects he has been working on since he started his internship at Parks and Recreation. Mr. Roche stated that Justin is doing a great job and brings many fresh ideas to the Department.

The Commission welcomed Justin.

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Roche asked that the "Barlow Mountain Pool Lift" item (a) be added to the agenda under New Business. Also, under Old Business, item (a), "Shadow Lake" to be added to the agenda. The agenda as amended was approved.

Minutes:

The minutes as presented were approved.

Financial Status:

In Ms. Cipolla's absence, Mr. Kearns stated that the Financial Status would be covered under the Director's and under the Budget and Policy reports.

Chairman:

Mr. Kearns reported that he and Mr. Roche had presented both the operating and capital budget requests to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Kearns mentioned that they promoted the outdoor pavilion request this year and we will wait to see if it is approved. Mr. Kearns stated that the pavilion will be used for additional space for summer programs along with other Town activities.

Ms. Dobbin thanked Mr. Kearns for the great job he and the sub-committee did on the Department's budgets this year.



Mr. Kearns mentioned some of the guidelines regarding e-mails.

In keeping with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Mr. Kearns reported that he is working with Don Sturges on the construction of a cabin in Sturges Park. Mr. Kearns will have more details in a few months to bring to the Commission.

Director's Report:

In Ms. Cipolla's absence, Mr. Roche reported that the Department is doing well with year to date revenue for January; however, there is a slight decrease in aquatics. After checking the February results, aquatics is currently showing an increase. Mr. Roche mentioned that he sees no concerns at this time.

- The Director has been working with the Tiger Ridge committee on the Ridgefield High School girls' softball field improvements. Mr. Roche mentioned that fundraising for this project continues.
- Mr Roche is working with the Town on the Recreation Center's project to expand the parking area. Mr. Roche mentioned that he received permission from Planning & Zoning for a Special Permit to do the project. The project will begin as soon as the weather permits.
- Mr. Roche mentioned that he had attended two public hearings with the Board of Selectmen on the Rail Trail project. The Commission discussed the Trail's plan, a grant to help with funding, family use for biking, and the concerns of other Town organizations.
- Mr. Roche asked for a volunteer from the Commission to represent the Department on a task force to discuss Lyme disease in Ridgefield. Ms. Bottali volunteered for this committee.
- Mr. Roche has been working with the Connecticut Legislative branch on bills regarding concussions in youth sports, crumb rubber and turf field issues.
- Mr. Roche is also working on the grant for the lighting of the Dog Park.
- Mr. Roche stated that he is working with a local Girl Scout on her Silver Star award project. Ms. Castagna will be installing a "Little Free Library" by the Recreation Center playground for our residents to use. Ms. Castagna will be working on fundraising for this project through the Friends of Ridgefield Parks and Recreation; she has already had one successful bake sale and is looking to do another.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

Ms. Matthews asked if there were any questions on her report. Ms. Matthews mentioned that she has been working closely with the intern and he is doing a great job with all aspects of the internship. Mr. Lawrence gave a complete review of his schedule and areas he's been working on. Ms. Matthews stated that the staff is getting ready for the new web-based upgrade to our RecTrac software program.

Assistant Director-Parks:

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- Mr. Schneider is working with the Director on the Tiger Ridge project and he will be meeting with the contractor on the new safety fencing. He is also working on the bleacher pads.
- The annual fields meeting is scheduled for Thursday night. There was a brief discussion regarding field usage and field availability.
- The winter maintenance on the equipment was delayed due to staffing challenges, but a solution has been reached and the equipment will be repaired by the Golf Course staff.



Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds – David Thaxter

Mr. Thaxter reported that we are still waiting for a meeting with the Branchville Civic group regarding some damage to the Branchville field. Mr. Thaxter mentioned that he had obtained a copy of the Branchville lease from the First Selectman's office and it was distributed to the sub-committee for review.

Mr. Thaxter reported that the sub-committee will be setting up a meeting with the SCOR representatives to discuss field use.

Members of the Commission have scheduled a meeting with Ms. Mary Lou Haney and Mr. John Adams regarding the Shadow Lake field naming request.

Aquatics & Programs –David Thaxter:

Mr. Thaxter had no new business at this time but will be addressing issues in the future.

Mr. Roche mentioned that the department is working on some suggestions to refresh the beach and increase its interest and revenue. The staff was suggesting an obstacle course for the beach area. Mr. Roche asked Kim Hulber to give the Department any suggestions she may have to help increase membership at the beach.

Annual Goals & Marketing Plans:

Ms. Bottali reported that the January results showed a growth in memberships, particularly in "All- Inclusive" memberships. Also, the total number of members increased versus December, with All Inclusive Family members continuing to gain share of total members. The Martin Park Beach Promotion that was offered last year will be repeated this year.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns mentioned that the Department is waiting to hear back from the Board of Selectmen with any questions they may have on the proposed budgets. Also, we are waiting to hear from Board of Finance to see if we need to meet with them on our budget requests.

Special Services Issues – Barbara Dobbin:

Ms. Dobbin reported that she is waiting to tour the facilities to develop a plan for the accessible porta-potties. It was mentioned going forward all projects must include dedicated funds to meet the current ADA requirements. This amount may run up to 20% of the total project costs. The Commission had a quick discussion on what effect this has for future project budgets.

Strategic Plan-Gina Carey

Ms. Hulber mentioned that the committee has received some input from the Commission regarding the development of the Strategic Plan; however, due to conflicts with committee members' schedules, work on the Plan has been challenging.

Old Business – Shadow Lake

Mr. Kearns mentioned that members of the Commission had met with members; Steve Zemo and Maureen Kozlark from the Board of Selectmen, regarding the Shadow Lake field naming request. The Board members agreed with the Parks and Recreation Commission's naming policy of Town Fields, and put the decision in the hands of the Commission. A meeting will be held with the family to offer suitable alternatives.

New Business: Barlow Mountain. Pool Lift

Mr. Roche reported to the Commission that the chair lift at the Barlow Mountain Pool is inoperable and will have to be replaced.



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RIDGEFIELD PARKS & RECREATION

Mr. Roche asked the Commission to approve the use of up to \$5,000 from the Special Services Account to purchase and install a new aqua chair lift. After much discussion regarding use and accessibility, Ms. Dobbin made the following motion:

"The Commission hereby approves the use of up to \$5,000 from the Parks and Recreation Special Services Account to purchase and install a new aqua chair lift for the Barlow Mountain Pool."

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Barbara Dobbin and seconded by David Thaxter at 9:10 p.m.

*Minutes Approved: _____
Evie Bottali, Secretary