



UNAPPROVED

Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Meeting

June 16, 2015

In Attendance:

Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair  
David Thaxter  
Kim Hulber  
Evie Bottali

Paul J. Roche, Director  
Robert Schneider, Asst. Dir.

Jane Byrnes, Comm. Secty.

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

Meeting called to order by Vice-Chair at 7:30 p.m.

**Recognition of Guest:**

Ms. Dobbin welcomed Mr. Rainer Gonet, President, Ridgefield Rotary Club, Ms. Catherine Scatterday and Ms. Holly Endee – Friends of Ridgefield Parks and Recreation- Ballard Park playground – Imagination Station committee chair persons.

**Approval of Agenda & Minutes:**

Ms. Dobbin asked that presentation of a grant award be added and moved up on the agenda. The agenda as amended was approved.

Mr. Roche introduced Mr. Gonet to the Commission. Mr. Gonet summarized for the Commission the Rotary's grant process. Mr. Gonet presented Ms. Scatterday and Ms. Endee with a check in the amount of \$5,000 for support of the Ballard Park – Imagination Station playground. Both Ms. Scatterday and Ms. Endee thanked the Rotary for their continued support on this project and on past projects.

The Commission also thanked Mr. Gonet and the Rotary for their support.

Ms. Scatterday and Ms. Endee updated the Commission on the current status of the playground project. The Commission thanked them both for their support and hard work with this project.

**Minutes**

There was a correction to the May minutes; on page one under "In Attendance" should read: Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair. The minutes as amended were approved.

**Financial Status:**

In Ms. Cipolla's absence, Mr. Roche reported that current numbers are ahead of projected budget and that memberships still remain strong. Summer camp and programs are also showing strong numbers and they are on track for year end. Martin Park Beach numbers are up; however we will

track them to the end of the season, as these numbers may be up due to our beach membership promotion that was held in March. Yanity Gymnasium revenue is down slightly, along with Skate Park. There was a discussion regarding the interest in skate boarding.

**Chairman:**

Ms. Dobbin reported that she had sent a letter to Mr. Marconi regarding the schedule for the Recreation Center's parking expansion. Ms. Dobbin also mentioned that she has a meeting this week with the Town's Controller, Kevin Redmond to discuss the department's overtime budget.

**Director's Report:**

- Mr. Roche mentioned that he has been working with a vendor for the Recreation Center and another meeting is set for the end of June.
- Mr. Roche gave an update on the current Ballard Park project – Imagination Station playground. Mr. Roche also discussed some of the options for the current playground equipment removal.
- Mr. Roche reported that the Spray Bay is opened only on weekends until school ends. There was a brief discussion regarding opening during the week; however, from past experiences a decision was made to only open during the weekends.
- The CHIRP concerts in Ballard Park have begun without any issues. Mr. Roche mentioned that there was some discussion regarding moving the Thursday concerts to the Recreation Center, however, as of yet no decision has been made.

The Commission asked for the timing on the Imagination Station playground installation. Mr. Roche stated they are looking for removal of the old equipment late July with an opening in September.

**Assistant Director-Recreation:**

Mr. Roche reported the following in Ms. Matthews' absence:

- The Martin Park Beach had no problems with the Triathlon.
- Spray Bay has a new coordinator Allison Romeo. New staff has been hired and the park will be open every day starting this Friday. Several birthday parties have been booked for both June and July.
- Adventure Camp registration continues to be popular, Messy Fun Camp started this week and registration numbers are high.
- The specialty camp registrations are slightly lower than expected but we will wait for the June numbers to come in.
- We have several new camps this summer including mountain biking and new science camps.
- The group exercise summer schedule starts on June 22. The wellness center continues to be very busy.
- The Skate Park is taking registrations for the summer camps.
- The new summer brochure was mailed out last week and a new birthday postcard has been printed.

**Assistant Director-Parks:**

Mr. Schneider reported the following:

- The crews are busy with Aldrich Park enlarging the baseball diamond.
- The Memorial Parade went well and Main Street looked great.
- The crews are getting ready for fall pre-work at the High School site.
- The crews were busy this week cleaning and sprucing up the Recreation Center grounds before summer camp begins next week.

- Mr. Schneider mentioned that he is adding additional carp to the Rec Center pond and looking into adding an aerator.
- Mr. Schneider mentioned that the Martin Park Beach slide was repaired and the beach has been cleaned with a new beach cleaner.
- Mr. Schneider mentioned that the air handler for the Recreation Center pool has rusted and will need repair. The repairs will be expensive and Mr. Keeler will be looking for bids for this project.

The Commission discussed some avenues for funding of this project.

- Mr. Schneider also stated that he has had some complaints regarding a soccer team playing on the Recreation Center field late Sunday evenings. He is planning to do some follow-up on this issue.

#### **Sub-Committee Reports:**

##### **Aquatics & Programs -David Thaxter:**

Mr. Thaxter reported that Martin Park Beach is in good shape and the Ms. Dynia is satisfied with the staffing. It was mentioned that the beach had a very busy weekend.

##### **Buildings & Grounds – David Thaxter**

Mr. Thaxter reported that the sub-committee had responded to a request from SCOR regarding replacement of soccer goals. Mr. Thaxter also mentioned that the sub-committee had received a letter from J. Casey Healy regarding the Field Use Criteria policy. Mr. Thaxter mentioned that Mr. Shofi was getting in touch with him regarding his correspondence and that a meeting would be set up in the near future to work with them on this issue.

##### **Annual Goals & Marketing Plans:**

Ms. Bottali presented the Commission with this month's membership report. The report reflects that overall memberships for May had a sales growth up 18% versus a year ago. The report also indicated that the all-inclusive memberships had a significant growth versus last year. Ms. Bottali and the Commission mentioned that the success of the new membership plan is reflected by this growth. Ms. Bottali also reviewed the Spin/TRX membership numbers; memberships were higher than last year for the months of February, March and April; however, May was slightly softer than last year. The Commission was pleased with the overall membership growth.

##### **Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:**

In Mr. Kearns' absence, the report was covered above under Director's Report.

##### **Special Services Issues – Barbara Dobbin:**

Ms. Dobbin reported that she spoke with Laurie Fernandez, Director-Human Resources on the status of the SPHERE Bus for transportation for our Out and About program and that they were looking into getting a grant to fund this request. Ms. Dobbin also mentioned that she will need to follow-up with Susan Bonistalli regarding her ideas for expanding the Out and About program.

##### **Strategic Plan-Gina Carey**

There was nothing to report at this time.

##### **Old Business:**

No old business to report.

**New Business:**

Mr. Roche asked the Commission to consider recognizing the Friends of Ridgefield Parks and Recreation's 30+ years of service to the Town of Ridgefield. Mr. Roche discussed the many projects the Friends have completed; these included, Governor Park, Richardson Park, Spray Bay and most current the Imagination Station – Ballard Park playground. Mr. Roche asked the Commission to approve funds for a suitable plaque similar to the others in the lobby of the Recreation Center.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Huber motioned to:

“Hereby approve the spending of up to \$2,000 in recognition of the years of service and dedication the Friends of Ridgefield Parks and Recreation have given to the Department and to the Town of Ridgefield.”

The motion was seconded by David Thaxter and passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn was made by Kim Huber and seconded by Evie Bottali at 8:30p.m.

\*Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evie Bottali, Secretary