

UNAPPROVED

Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Meeting

March 17, 2015

In Attendance:

Gina Carey, Chair  
Barbara Dobbins  
David Thaxter  
Kim Hulber  
Evie Bottali  
David Shofi

Paul J. Roche, Director

Robin Matthews, Asst. Dir.  
Robert Schneider, Asst. Dir.  
Eileen Cipolla, Acctg.  
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 Chairwoman at 7:26 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda & Minutes**

The agenda and minutes were approved as presented.

**Financial Status:**

Ms. Cipolla reported that the total number people using the monthly pay service continue to rise, totaling approximately 35% of our overall memberships. The Commission had some questions regarding the snow overtime account. Ms. Cipolla mentioned that she had spoken with the Town Controller who said it would come under the Town's responsibility. Ms. Cipolla mentioned that the Board of Finance meeting is tomorrow evening and the Town meeting is scheduled for March 30 at East Ridge Middle School.

The Accountant reported that the Department is in good shape financially and that normally March is a very busy month for program registrations.

**Chairwoman:**

Ms. Carey reported that the First Selectman has put together a new committee made up of the Chairmen from the various Town committees. Ms. Carey stated that the committee is called the Economic Development Commission. Ms. Carey will be going to the first meeting later this month and will report back to the Commission at the April meeting.

**Director's Report:**

- Mr. Roche gave an update on the current Ballard Park project – Imagination Station playground and the status of current fundraising. He mentioned that the committee has presented at several Town committees and fundraising is moving along nicely. The web-site is up and we have had many donations made on-line for the project. The committee has applied for several grants and they are working on reaching out to other prospective donors.
- Mr. Roche reported that he is working with LINC on the negotiations with CL&P on the installation of the accessible trail.

- The Director also reported that he has testified at the Connecticut Legislative Branch on several issues concerning pesticides, background checks for sports coaches, etc.
- Mr. Roche read some thank you notes received from members regarding the Parks and Recreation staff. Mr. Roche stated that the front desk staff is doing a great job now that all positions have been filled. He also mentioned that the recreation section is doing a good job with classes and activities.

#### **Assistant Director-Recreation:**

Ms. Matthews asked if there were any questions on her report.

- Ms. Matthews also reported that she has gotten in touch with area colleges to see if there are any students looking for internships at Parks and Recreation. Ms. Matthews mentioned that she has one student interested in helping with various programs and activities at the Center. There was a discussion regarding the importance of internships at the Center and reaching out to all areas colleges.
- Ms. Matthews reported that Kathy Fassman had applied for the New England ADA training day to be held at the Recreation Center. Our Department was chosen as the site. Ms. Fassman has been working with Tony Philips on this event. The Commission wanted to send their thanks for Kathy's hard work.

#### **Assistant Director-Parks:**

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- The crews were able to do additional painting of the Recreation Center due to the prolonged winter weather.
- This weekend will have a kick-off day for the lacrosse season at the high school. High school sports begin next Monday. Baseball has been practicing inside due to winter weather conditions and the crews are two weeks behind on preparation of the grass fields. Mr. Schneider is working on bids for the basketball courts at the high school.
- OSHA stopped by the garage for an inspection and the department did a great job with only minor infractions.
- The crews will be working on the playground inspections as soon as the weather permits.

The Commission asked if there were any issues with the field use schedule. Mr. Schneider mentioned that there were no current concerns.

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

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

Covered above.

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

There was some discussion regarding the Branchville Civic Association lease, which was an item on the Board of Selectman's meeting agenda. The Commission wanted to know if there were any concerns regarding the baseball field.

##### **Programs & Long Range Planning-Evie Bottali:**

Ms. Bottali reported that total membership remains strong with growth versus last year in All Family, Lap and Family Recreation. Ms. Bottali mentioned that about 30-45% of current month membership sales (depending on membership type) are renewals or lapsed memberships.

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

After meeting with Susan Bonstalli, Out and About Supervisor, Ms. Dobbin gave an explanation and summary on the approved funds allocated for the Out and About program. Ms. Dobbin mentioned that this program has been running successfully for the past 15 years. The Committee will be looking at the future program needs and program expansion. Ms. Dobbin mentioned that

one of the biggest challenges with the program is the cost of transportation. They will also be contacting Tony Philips at the Social Services Department for his assistance.

Ms. Dobbin also mentioned that the sub-committee would like the Commission's approval to transfer \$25,000 to the Imagination Station – Ballard Park playground surface account.

Ms. Dobbin and the Special Services Sub-Committee hereby requests:

"The Approval of the Commission to allocate \$25,000 from the Special Services Fee account to the Imagination Station – Ballard Park Playground to be used for the surfacing of the playground."

The Chair asked if there were any questions or discussions for the sub-committee, hearing none, the motion was seconded by David Thaxter and unanimously approved.

The Commission also discussed the future ideas for non-physical ADA activities for the Recreation Center and facilities. The committee will work with the Social Services Department in Town to follow-up on ideas. The Commission discussed hands on equipment in the hallway of the Recreation Center something similar to the Children's Museum.

**Aquatics-David Thaxter:**

No current issues, just waiting for spring.

**Strategic Plan-Kim Hulber**

No current issues.

**Old Business:**

Election of new slate of officers.

The Chairwoman asked for a motion to elect the proposed new slate of officers:  
David Thaxter made the following motion:

"The Commission hereby elects the new slate of officers as follows."

Ms. Carey asked if there were any objections having none; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The Commission Officers are:

Phil Kearns, Chairman  
Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair  
Evie Bottali, Secretary

**New Business:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Barbara Dobbin seconded by David Thaxter at 8:30p.m.

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