



UNAPPROVED

Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting

May 15, 2018

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman
David Thaxter
Gina Carey
Kim Hulber
Barbara Dobbin
David Shofi
Evie Bottali

Dennis DiPinto, Director-Via Phone
Robin Matthews, Asst. Dir-Rec
Bob Schneider, Asst. Dir-Parks

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 Phil Kearns at 7:30 p.m.

Recognition of Guests:

No guests to recognize.

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda was approved as presented.

Minutes:

Ms. Dobbin made a correction to the April, 2018 minutes. On page two, under Director's Report, third paragraph, should read: "Ms. Carey also mentioned.....sponsored by DEEP regarding the swamp dam near Fox Hill." Also, page two; under Assistant Director's Report, third paragraph should read; "Ms. Matthews mentioned that things are going smoothly and members have been kept well informed." The agenda as amended was then approved.

Financial Status – Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns reported that revenue continues to be soft in the areas of programs and aquatics and that membership has shown a slight rebound in revenue. Mr. Kearns mentioned that due to the extended school year, our camp season must be shortened by one week which has a large impact on our revenue. Mr. Kearns also mentioned that the dance program is one of the largest programs which have impacted the revenue numbers. The Department will be meeting with the dance instructor in early June to discuss the future plans for this program. The department has plans to do a long term evaluation of all programs. The Commission will continue to keep a close eye on the revenue situation.



Page 2
Minutes, May 15, 2018

Chairman's Report – Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns reported that the Director has reached out to Town Hall regarding the parking expansion and he reports that the project has been sent out to bid. The First Selectman has stated that construction should start late spring early summer. A brief discussion ensued regarding the number of spaces and the staging area.

Mr. Kearns stated that the Parks and Recreation budget had been approved at the Town Meeting last week; which included two trucks, and ADA walkway and the pool resurfacing.

Mr. Kearns reported that the Director has met with Ms. Manners, CHIRP and Jess Wilmot, Parking Authority regarding the summer concerts in Ballard Park. Mr. Kearns stated that the Director has taken the community service recognition section of the Strategic Plan regarding our co-sponsored events very seriously. He has asked CHIRP for additional publicity on all concert publications.

Ms. Carey questioned what the Town was doing with the Schlumberger property with regards to a proposal of an outdoor venue for concerts. A brief discussion ensued regarding this property.

Director's Report- Dennis DiPinto

The Director reported that he attended a recent building renovation committee meeting. The renovation had been on hold due to a delay with ordering supplies. Kim asked how this hold up was going to affect the summer camp program. Mr. DiPinto did not feel that it would have any effect on the camp, as the general locker rooms would be completed for camp usage.

Mr. DiPinto stated that he has met with Barbara Dobbin regarding the Community Out Reach program plans.

Ms. Dobbin reported on some of the items discussed including:

- Funding for events – In next year's budget
- Drone options
- Publicity - Approach ways to get additional publicity regarding our community events
- Policy - For profit organizations review with Budget & Policy sub-committee

The Director mentioned that he had met with the CHIRP representative and the Town's Parking Authority Chair regarding this season's concert series. Mr. DiPinto said that he mentioned he would like to see additional recognition for Parks & Recreation's involvement with co-sponsoring the CHIRP concerts. Mr. DiPinto will meet with the CHIRP sound director before the first concert to be sure that the rules of sound checks are within reason and followed.

The Director reported that Parks & Recreation has been invited to attend the "InRidgefield" new initiative to market the Town of Ridgefield. The Director and Kathy Fassman will be attending the reception on Friday.

The Skate Park Supervisor and Director have met to discuss challenges with staffing.

Visited Martin Park Beach and reviewed the ADA mat placing and see how the beach is looking for the opening day at the end of the month.



Page 3

Minutes – May 15, 2018

Met with both Assistant Directors as scheduled twice a month to keep the communications open and to follow up on various spring projects.

Mr. DiPinto asked Mr. Schneider to summarize the Ridgefield Volunteer Firemen's request for use of the East Ridge fields for its annual carnival. Mr. Schneider reported that he had met with Tim Pambianchi and the RVF were told that they could not hold their carnival on the ER fields due to field damage. Mr. Schneider mentioned that the Department had given the RVF several other options for usable sites for its carnival. Mr. Schneider mentioned that they did not want to use the other options. Mr. Schneider mentioned that the RVF may not have the carnival if it can not be on the ER fields.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the damage done to the fields in past years when the carnival was held on the fields, and the hardships for the softball teams to hold games when the fields were damaged and unplayable.

The Recreation Center parking expansion will add 20-23 parking spaces at the end of the field parking area. The Director was assured by the First Selectman that the project will begin late spring/early summer.

Mr. DiPinto mentioned that the tennis courts at Governor Park are in need of repair and due to the expense to refurbish the entire area; Mr. DiPinto thought that the Department may just do some minor repairs of some of the cracks until funding can be added to the budget. Mr. Schneider is waiting for some quotes on addressing the worse areas.

With the approval of the Parks and Recreation budget by the Town, the Director summarized for the Commission the resurfacing plan for the pool.

Mr. DiPinto mentioned that he attended a Town revenue meeting where he reported on the Parks and Recreation revenue shortfalls.

The Director mentioned that he and the Accountant have been looking closely at the operating budget numbers as well.

The Commission asked if there were any questions from the Town regarding the revenue numbers. Mr. DiPinto said that they were not surprised at the numbers.

Mr. DiPinto thanked the Commission for attending the Town Budget meeting and stated that all P&R items had been approved.

Mr. DiPinto will be looking at some basic staff training tools on customer service and customer experience in the near future and looking for staff training in all areas.

The Building and Grounds and Aquatic sub-committees met to discuss some of the issues that the Ridgefield Aquatics have brought regarding improvement to aquatic facilities.

Mr. Thaxter summarized for the Commission the request from RAC regarding a competitive indoor swimming facility. On June 4 the sub-committee will have another fact finding meeting with the First Selectman and RAC.

The Director is working on his individual goals along with the staff to work on their macro-goals as they relate to the Strategic Plan. He is hoping to have this completed and in-line with the Plan by early July.



Page 4
Minutes, May 15, 2018

The Friends of Parks and Recreation Governor Park Press Box project is winding down but is on budget.

Mr. DiPinto reported that the Institute for Human Centered Design had visited the Recreation Center and other Parks & Recreation sites for the Town-wide ADA study.

Assistant Director-Recreation- Robin Matthews:

- Ms. Matthews reported that the staff is busy with staff training, orientation and opening the beach up for the summer.
- Ms. Matthews reported on her plans for the next steps with the dance program. She is meeting in early June with the instructor to discuss the program.
The Commission asked Ms. Matthews if the Department had an evaluation plan for programs and what are the goals for meeting with the dance instructor. A discussion ensued regarding our program criteria and rebuilding of this program. It was suggested that we set up a feedback session with comments from the participants.
Ms. Matthews mentioned that the program has always been very successful and she is waiting to meet with the instructor after her medical issues have subsided around early June.
- Summer camp revenue numbers seem on target and staffing is good.
Lifeguard staffing is low, but the supervisor seems to think it will level out.

Ms. Hulber mentioned that she has had several great comments from members regarding our after-school lead person Ms. Emily Jennings. Ms. Matthews reiterated that she is doing a terrific job.

Assistant Director-Parks – Mr. Schneider reported:

- Mr. Schneider mentioned that the RVF carnival was covered above along with the building renovation.
- The crews are working on soccer field repairs.
- Crews are working on getting the Martin Park Beach ready for its opening this weekend.
- Working with Town Purchasing on tractor equipment bids.
- Ordering spring supplies and playground mulch.
- Filed permits to replenish fish in pond at the Rec Center to help with algae.
- Working with State on some water issues at the baseball fields.
- Working with Scotland School PTO on its basketball court renovation.
- Fence repair at Scotts Ridge field.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds – David Thaxter

Mr. Thaxter mentioned that he has concerns regarding the building renovation project delay and he is concerned about the possibilities of future change orders. Mr. Kearns gave a summary of the recent overages.

Aquatics & Programs –David Thaxter:

Mr. Thaxter mentioned that he and Mr. DiPinto will be meeting with the First Selectman and representatives from Ridgefield Aquatics Club in June regarding the Barlow Mountain Pool facility.

The preliminary preparation is completed at the Martin Park Beach and Ms. Dynia is looking at getting some additional paddle boards and kayaks. There are some



Page 5
Minutes, May 15, 2018

challenges with staffing, but Ms. Dynia is still continuing to search and will use the P&R marketing supervisor's help.

Annual Goals & Marketing Plans- Evie Bottali:

Mr. Kearns mentioned that he will be working with Evie Bottali to gather input from the Commissioners on developing more extensive and revised reports for tracking memberships. Mr. Kearns asked for volunteers from the Commission to join Ms. Bottali and him on developing criteria.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

Covered above.

Special Services Issues & (Community Out Reach) – Barbara Dobbin:

Covered above.

Strategic Plan – Gina Carey

Ms. Carey reported that the sub-committee is currently reviewing the Director's goals. Ms. Carey will meet with the Director next week to insure that we have good solid goals for his direct reports that align with the calendar year and the Strategic Plan.

Mr. DiPinto mentioned that he had spoken with a representative from American Legion Baseball regarding their recent requests. Mr. Schneider summarized some past history of how team programs are formed and Mr. Kearns summarized the Commission's philosophy on all-inclusive play.

Old Business:

No old business.

New Business:

No new business.

A motion to adjourn was made by Barbara Dobbin and seconded by Gina Carey

Meeting adjourned 9:15pm.

Minutes Approved: _____

Evie Bottali, Secretary