



UNAPPROVED

Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting

September 15, 2015

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman
Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair
Evie Bottali, Secretary
David Shofi – VIA Telephone
David Thaxter
Gina Carey

Paul J. Roche, Director
Robin Matthews, Asst. Dir.
Robert Schneider, Asst. Dir.
Eileen Cipolla, Acct.
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 7:30 p.m.

Recognition of Guest:

The Commission introduced and welcomed Bob Alicea, 49 Pine Mountain Road, Ridgefield and Michael Colin, Mr. Alicea's intern and Mr. Jon Chase, 64 Canterbury Road, Ridgefield, a past Commissioner.

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Kearns asked that item "New Business, (a) Governor Park – Lights" be moved up on the agenda. The agenda as amended was approved.

New Business – Governor Park Lights

Mr. Kearns introduced Mr. Alicea.

Mr. Alicea gave a presentation on a proposal for Governor Park. The following were included in the presentation:

- New LED lights for complex
- Installation of safety netting
- Construction of press box and storage area

Mr. Alicea explained in depth the need for new lighting for the entire complex and discussed costs.

Mr. Alicea stated that there have been several recent problems with foul balls hitting parked cars in the area.

Mr. Alicea also reviewed the need for storage space and a press box for the baseball field.

The Commission had several questions regarding the lighting of the field and field scheduling. The Commission also questioned Mr. Alicea on his future fundraising plans if he doesn't get the support of the Town of Ridgefield. The Commission also had some questions regarding the future budget impact on the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Commission asked to look at the storage/press box plans.



Mr. Alicea also discussed the need to find a location to develop a softball field in order to reduce the likely conflicts that will result over night game scheduling between the softball and baseball field at Governor Park once the baseball field is also lighted. He suggested that one option for the development of softball fields might be at the Recreation Center property. The Commission instructed Mr. Alicea to bring the matter of a potential additional location for softball to the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Commission.

Mr. Alicea mentioned that he is looking for the Commission's support to move forward with the lighting, netting and storage area before he goes to the Planning and Zoning Board.

The Commission thanked Mr. Alicea for his presentation.

A lengthy discussion ensued, and as is customary, the Commission decided to table this item to take some time to review the proposal. There was particular concern expressed in the discussion over approving the lights for the baseball field without at the same time also having a plan in place for how to deal with the likely conflict between softball and baseball for night time use of the fields. The Chairman will be in touch with the First Selectman regarding the source of funding of the any town contribution to the baseball field lighting in terms of whether it will be placed on the Park and Recreation capital budget. The Commission will invite Mr. Alicea to meet with its Buildings and Grounds sub-committee on the lighting and storage/press box plans and options for field development. The issue will be brought back to the Commission at the October meeting.

Minutes

Mr. Thaxter had a correction to the July, 2015 minutes. On page two, under "Buildings & Grounds" should read: "It was reported that a question received from the American Legion Baseball team....."

The minutes as amended were approved.

Financial Status:

Ms. Cipolla reported that year-to-date revenue is above budgeted numbers and year-to-date expenses are slightly over budgeted numbers due to timing.

Chairman:

Mr. Kearns had no new business to report at this time.

Director's Report:

- Mr. Roche mentioned that bridge work will begin this week on Route 35 and there may be some traffic issues for our members.
- The Ballard Park Imagination Station playground is moving along great; however, there have been some additional expense with the installation of a stone wall. There were some questions regarding funding and what additional funds would be needed.
- Mr. Roche reported that the Spray Bay had a very successful season this summer. Birthday parties were very popular and brought in additional revenue.
- The CHIRP summer concerts were also very popular due to favourable weather conditions.
- The Newtown Parks and Recreation Department held its monthly meeting at our building and toured our site for suggestions for their new Center.
- The LINC trail committee is meeting this week and things are moving forward.



- The Parks and Recreation Department was recognized with an award from the American Red Cross for its service to the community.
- There has been a request for a deer hunt in Sturges Park and this item will be referred to the sub-committee for review.
- There was a recent article in the Ridgefield Press discussing the Department's help with saving the milk weed to help with the butterfly population.
- The Skate Park seems to be picking up with the inclusion of scooters.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

Ms. Matthews asked if there were any questions on her August/September report. The Commission asked about challenges with the on-line registration. Ms. Matthews mentioned that the Department is working with the public to help make this procedure smoother. Ms. Bottali will touch base with Ms. McKnight regarding the process and the use of our software. The Department is looking to increase the number of on-line registrations during high volume times.

Ms. Matthews reported that a transition is currently underway from one fencing program to our new program and things are going smoothly. We currently have some registrations, but are looking to promote the program. The Commission suggested demos in the hallway, e-mail blasts, and school participation-gym classes. Ms. Matthews mentioned that she will be working with the marketing section on this program.

Assistant Director-Parks:

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- o The outdoor crews have done some major improvements to Aldrich Park, Governors field, improvements to the High School cross country trail, assisted with installation of the new bleachers and irrigation at Lake Windwing over the summer months.
- o The Ridgefield High School tennis courts have been resurfaced.
- o As mentioned, the CHIRP concerts were well attended.
- o A few of the last large events at Ballard Park will be the Relay for Life scheduled for this Saturday and the pumpkin weigh in will be Sunday the 27th. The carnival is scheduled for next week here at the Recreation Center front lawn area.
- o There was a discussion regarding the recent field damage.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds – David Thaxter

Mr. Thaxter reported that the sub-committee had discussed some scheduling conflicts that American Legion had encountered.

Mr. Thaxter also stated that they will be meeting with SCOR this week to talk about Onalfo Field.

Aquatics & Programs -David Thaxter:

Mr. Thaxter reported that Martin Park Beach had a great season; the only issue of concern to look at going forward would be the vandalism in the parking area. There was a discussion regarding the installation of cameras. Mr. Thaxter stated that the ice cream vendor worked out well and there was also a pizza vendor towards the end of the season who also did well. The Commissioner mentioned that we did have some public concern with the water quality which was incorrect.



Annual Goals & Marketing Plans:

Ms. Bottali reported that both July and August membership numbers exceeded budget. All-Inclusive memberships continued to show strong growth versus last year. The sub-committee will meet with Ms. Fassman to discuss marketing events for this fiscal year.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns reported that we continue to show very positive numbers.

Mr. Kearns also mentioned that it has been brought to the sub-committee a request to change in the fee for the Lap membership. The sub-committee is proposing raising the Lap membership by \$5.00/month, from \$35/month to \$40/month. Mr. Kearns also explained that we would like to include Yoga as part of the of the SPIN/TRX add-on to the Lap, Wellness or All-Inclusive memberships. Mr. Kearns gave a brief presentation on the current versus the new proposed Yoga proposal for the Commission, along with a price increase comparison for the Lap membership. Mr. Kearns asked for a motion to approve the above.

After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Thaxter made the following motions:

- (1) "The Commission hereby approves the proposed increase in the Lap membership fee from \$35.00/month to \$40/month, an increase of \$5.00."

The motion was seconded by Gina Carey and passed unanimously.

- (2) "The Commission moves to include Yoga as part of the SPIN/TRX add-on to the Lap, Wellness or All-Inclusive memberships."

The motion was seconded by Gina Carey and passed unanimously.

Special Services Issues – Barbara Dobbin:

Ms. Dobbin updated the commission on the Town's Social Services Department's request to provide handicap port-a-johns at all Town parks and fields. Ms. Dobbin mentioned that she had done some research and found that we are required to place a minimum of one handicap port-a-john at each site. Ms. Dobbin will meet with Mr. Schneider to discuss adding the cost into the field fees and to correspond with the Director of the Social Services Department advising him of the cost and that it would be added into the next year's budget.

Strategic Plan-Gina Carey

There was nothing to report at this time.

Old Business:

No old business to report.

New Business:

Covered above.

A motion to adjourn was made by Gina Carey and seconded by David Thaxter at 9:40 p.m.

*Minutes Approved: _____
Evie Bottali, Secretary



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