



Town of Ridgefield Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 6:30 pm
Meeting held via Zoom
UNAPPROVED

PRESENT: P. Kearns, B. Dobbin, D. Shofi, K. Hulber, E. Bottali, P. Nichols, D. DiPinto, E. Cipolla, B. Schneider, K. Fassman, A. Platt

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription. A recording of the meeting will be available for 45 days post.

Meeting called to order by Chair at 6:33 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

David Shofi made a motion to amend the agenda to allow guest Karen Sulzinsky the opportunity to address the Commission at the start of the meeting after approval of the July minutes. Seconded by Barbara Dobbin. Motion carried 6-0.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kearns introduced guest Karen Sulzinsky

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by David Shofi to approve the July minutes. Seconded by Pete Nichols. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT FROM GUEST

Karen Sulzinsky of 24 Great Pond Rd. ask how to turn the pickleball situation into a happy outcome for everyone involved. Ms. Sulzinsky expressed appreciation for the Parks and Recreation mission and feels it would be a win if pickleball courts were to be relocated/painted in the Recreation Center parking lot. Ms. Sulzinsky asked that the Commission consider her request in future discussions and thanked the Commission for listening.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Eileen Cipolla provided the monthly financial report. Trending ahead of budget, but keeping a close eye on additional expenses associated with building repairs and pool mechanics. Mr. Kearns advised that we continue to be diligent about recording program-related expenses.

BUSINESS UPDATES

Chairman's Report – Phil Kearns

Spent some time with the Buildings & Grounds and Budget & Policy subcommittees over the past month and will share more details during the subcommittee reports.



Director's Report – Dennis DiPinto

- Rolled out new workplace values to the staff and will be meeting with the leadership team internally; Focusing on two values for the first couple of months (Accountability & Communication).
- Approved hourly wage increases for our lifeguard staff to be in line with area aquatic facilities.
- Bob and I attended post-fireworks meeting with Rudy and other town directors to discuss some minor damage to the Tiger Hollow turf and possible recommendations for a new location for next year's fireworks.
- Met with Jake and the contractor for the Gov Park tennis court replacement project which is slated to begin in summer 2023 (minimal disruption to the spring and fall tennis schedule). Previous bids were higher than expected, and next steps are to engage a design architect and put the project back out to bid in December or January.
- Met with the head of Human Resources to review job openings within our senior staff and the staff restructure plan that we will discuss in Executive session a little later. Interviews started last week to fill these positions.
- Met with our Parks Maintenance staff to discuss and answer questions about the new Parks Foreman position.
- Attended several meetings with the Buildings and Grounds subcommittee and the town's land use attorney representing the claims against Martin Park pickleball courts.
- Attended a Lunch & Learn for staff hosted by Amy and Beth on our rec software reporting capabilities.
- Took part in the PZC Special Hearing for the claims against Martin Park pickleball courts earlier this month and the hearing will continue on October 11th.
- Attended monthly revenue meeting at Town Hall.
- Met with Jill Bornstein on our leadership coaching work over the past few months, and expect those sessions to be wrapping up this fall.

Marketing & Programs – Kathy Fassman

- OctoberFit promotion: Early morning and evening Premium Fitness classes are FREE during October to boost participation
- Enrollment numbers are strong for the USA Sports and tumbling programs this fall; Glee Glub and Science programs are also proving to be popular offerings.
- No New Years' Fitness promotional offer in now that membership is on the rise
- New residents receive a postcard mailing highlighting a variety of our offerings at the Rec Center
- Halloween window painting will take place this fall with downtown businesses.
- Halloween Howl/Pumpkin Stroll have been canceled this year; Funds will be reallocated towards the Family Fun Day on November 8th.

Asst. Director Parks – Bob Schneider

- Interviews are underway for open Building Maintenance Supervisor and Parks Maintainer Foreman,



- Drafting the Capital budget for the next fiscal year,
- Reviewed our camera surveillance system at the Rec Center to ensure everything is in good working condition after a few cameras had gone offline,
- Rec center: Hot tub repairs are in the works,
- New Barlow Mountain Pool cleaning service is in-place.
- Expecting three new Parks trucks to be delivered soon, but need to identify funds to cover the additional expenses caused by inflation.
- Closing down Martin Park & Spray Bay for the season and completing necessary maintenance before winter.
- Edging and adding clay to the Town's baseball fields to ready them for the fall season.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Marketing, Promotions & Membership –Evie Bottali

Nothing new to report - covered under Ms. Fassman's report

Aquatics & Programs – Barbara Dobbin

Nothing new to report - Kudos to the Martin Park Beach staff this summer for keeping the facilities clean and enjoyable.

Budget & Policy – Phil Kearns

- Will begin work on the Capital budget in November and Operating in early December this year.
- Attended FOIA training session for Town employees and Commissioners.
- Committee will create a list of guidelines for donation requests received by P&R for memberships by area non-profits for silent auctions, etc. The new guidelines will be reviewed at the October B&P subcommittee meeting.

Buildings & Grounds (B&G) – David Shofi

- Members of the committee were present for the PZC special hearing on September 13th and presented the special permit application for the Martin Park pickleball courts.
- During the special hearing, PZC requested more information on noise abatement/mitigation. P&R agreed to come to the October 11th continuation meeting with more information.
- The subcommittee will meet again in executive session on September 21st.
- Anyone wanting a copy of the committee's presentation at the September 13th PZC meeting can request a copy from Ms. Platt.

Special Services, Community Outreach and Customer Experience – Kim Hulber

Nothing new to report.

Strategic Planning & Annual Goals – Phil Kearns

Nothing new to report



NEW BUSINESS:

Executive Session: Mr. DiPinto to discuss department staff restructuring

At 7:38 pm Phil Kearns moved to enter into Executive Session seconded by David Shofi. Pete Nichols, Barbara Dobbin, Kim Hulber and Dennis DiPinto were invited to join them. Motion carried 6-0.

Returned to public session at 7:52 pm. Mr. Kearns confirmed no votes were taken during Executive Session.

With no further business, David Shofi moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 pm. Pete Nichols seconded the motion and the motion carried 6-0.

REMINDER: Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 18, 2022 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.