



## Commission Meeting Minutes

**UNAPPROVED**

**September 21, 2021**

**Meeting held via Zoom**

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Phil Kearns, Chair  
Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair  
Gina Carey  
Evie Bottali  
Pete Nichols  
Kim Hulber

Dennis DiPinto, Director  
Robert Schneider, Asst Director Parks  
Kathy Fassman, Marketing  
Eileen Cipolla, Accountant  
Amy Platt, Admin Office Manager

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

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

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Barbara Dobbin made a motion to amend the agenda and move the Guest Eagle Scout presentation to the top of the agenda and approve agenda. Seconded by Pete Nichols. Motion carried.

### **RECOGNITION AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

- Eagle Scout candidate Ian Nolan shared his project to build bat boxes for Sturgis Park.  
Motion made by Gina Carey to approve the building of bat boxes for Sturgis Park. Seconded by Barbara Dobbin. Motion carried.
- Eagle Scout candidate Madeleine Gonley shared her project for Flag Retirement Collection. Miss Gonley will connect with Mr. DiPinto for an approved location to place a collection box in the lobby of the Recreation Center.
- Karen Sulzinsky, guest
- Lora Wishod, guest

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Barbara Dobbin to approve the minutes of the July meeting. Seconded by Pete Nichols. Motion carried.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Ms. Cipolla provided the monthly financial report. Projected revenue and expenses are on-target.

### **BUSINESS UPDATES**

**Chairperson's Report** – Phil Kearns

- Nothing new to report.



#### **Director's Report – Dennis DiPinto**

- Wellness Center Renovations are complete including new flooring circuit equipment and entry doors; Indoor Maintenance staff did a great job keeping the project on-schedule.
- Annual pool closure for new HVAC rooftop install, cleaning and maintenance was carried out as planned and on-schedule.
- Work continues with the Tiger Hollow/Scott's Ridge turf replacement project. Scott's Ridge is scheduled to be completed end of September. Tiger Hollow is scheduled to be completed early November. The track surface is paved, and replacement fence fabric is complete.
- Construction on the additional parking spaces at the Rec Center began this week.
- Mr. DiPinto with Planning & Zoning last week to discuss long-term parking study plans. Expecting costs very soon.
- Parks & Rec has agreed to a 3 yr. contract with RAC at 2.5% increase each year. Re: 10 yr. Plan - RAC is pleased we're thinking of the future of Barlow and will come back to P&R with their priorities. Mr. DiPinto proposed a short-term collaboration on the gutter tile project which is showing some wear.
- New Aquatics Coordinator Kelly Joyce begins on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Marketing/Programs – Kathy Fassman**

- Summer camps were all well attended.
- Fall program participation has good numbers so far.
- August 28: End of Summer Rec Party had approximately 500 attendees
- October 22: Halloween Howl is planned with hayrides, story tellers and pumpkin stroll
- November 2: Family Fun Day with Rec swim and activities for families
- Winter program booklet will be ready to mail in December.
- Price increase is planned for FY2022. Ms. Fassman will schedule time to meet and discuss recommendations at the end of next week with members of the Budget & Policy and Marketing, Promotion & Membership subcommittees.
- Ms. Carey shared that a postage price increase is coming soon.
- Ms. Carey asked if P&R is selling Drop-ins and Punch cards to non-members. Ms. Fassman confirmed that both are being offered.
- Mr. Kearns requested an update on the afterschool program. Ms. Fassman confirmed approximately 50 students are currently enrolled. COVID restrictions and staffing shortages have impacted participation.

#### **Assistant Director-Park – Robert Schneider**

- Finished repaving a large section of the Rec Center walking trail this month
- Completed Martin Park Pickleball courts
- Working with the athletic teams to reallocate field space during the Tiger Hollow/Scott's Ridge fields closure
- Spray Bay is closed now for the season, and maintenance and repairs will continue this winter.



- Fall athletic fields maintenance is underway.
- Past storm caused drainage issues in Ballard Park; Breeches in the archway will require more work and is currently being assessed.
- Mr. Kearns thanked the Parks and Building Maintenance staff for setting up for the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS** – Evie Bottali

##### **Marketing, Promotion and Membership**

Covered in the overview by Ms. Fassman

##### **Aquatics & Programs** – Barbara Dobbin

Covered in the overview by Ms. Fassman

##### **Budget & Policy** – Phil Kearns

Reviewed the monthly budget; Subcommittee will regroup at a later date to discuss FY2023.

##### **Buildings & Grounds** – David Shofi

- BOE field agreement contract has been updated for the next 5-years.
- Received a complaint by a neighbor indicating the noise coming from Martin Park Pickleball courts was a problem and causing concern to them.
  - A meeting was put in place to provide the neighbor with an audience for the neighbor to share their concerns. P&R had put in plans to expand usage of the courts after the summer season was over at the beach, including offering lessons.
  - Several discussions have been had internally and with the neighbor, and plans were adjusted while further investigation takes place.
  - P&R has adjusted the hours of play to start later at 9am on weekdays and 9:30am on weekends. Lessons were relocated to Governor Park.
  - It's the intent of the subcommittee to continue to look into the matter and by the October meeting provide the Commission with the finding and recommendations.
- The Pickleball community has a high level of concern, including the need for playable courts during the fall when RHS courts are not available, but is being patient with the investigation.

##### **Special Services, Community Outreach and Customer Experience**

Nothing new to report.

##### **Strategic Planning and Annual Goals**

Nothing new to report, but updated plans are due in January so will schedule a time to meet soon.

##### **Old Business**

No old business to report.



### **New Business**

- Ridgefield ECDC ARPA letter was shared with the Commission which outlines a plan to spend potential funds the town will be receiving over the next 2-years. Funds have not been distributed or confirmed yet, but projects within Ballard Park are recommended, including: Gazebo repairs, CHIRP stage improvements, additional lighting & replacing clock on Main Street. ECDC will present to the BOS, and is looking for P&R to support the suggested areas for improvement.
- Ms. Dobbin asked if we are limited to the arts & culture sector – if so, this is a good list. However, trees in the park are an asset that should be considered.
- Mr. Shofi suggests we consider the impact on the park-like setting and agreed new landscaping should be considered.
- Mr. DiPinto will draft a letter to the ECDC that outlines the Commission's support of the improvements in order of priority.

Motion by Barbara Dobbin to support the Ridgefield ECDC ARPA initiative with the following priorities: repairs to the gazebo, required stage improvements, additional lighting, and replacing the Main Street clock. Improvements would be in keeping with P&R standards for lighting and aesthetics. P&R would be kept apprised of developments and included in final decision making. Seconded by Pete Nichols. Motion carried.

With no further business, Kim Hulber moved, and Pete Nichols seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm. Motion carried.

**Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at 6:30 PM via Zoom.**