

UNAPPROVED

Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting

May 19, 2015

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman
Barbara Dobbins, Vice Chair
David Thaxter
Kim Hulber
Evie Bottali
David Shofi
Gina Carey

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

Recognition of Guest:

None

Approval of Agenda & Minutes:

Mr. Roche asked that Imagination Station – Ballard Park Playground be added under old business, the agenda as amended was approved.

Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Financial Status:

Ms. Cipolla reported that current numbers are ahead of projected budget and that memberships still remain strong. Summer camp and programs are also showing strong numbers and they are on track for year end. The Commission discussed projected budget numbers for the future.

Chairman:

Mr. Kearns reported that he had attended a few meetings with the Town's Human Resources Director.

Director's Report:

- Mr. Roche mentioned that he has been working with a vendor for Martin Park Beach who will sell ice cream and other natural snacks. The Commission wanted to be sure the vendor was going to have set hours each day for the members' convenience.
- Mr. Roche gave an update on the current Ballard Park project – Imagination Station playground and mentioned that this has been a very successful month for fundraising. The Friends of Parks and Recreation is looking for an approval from the Commission for specific funding. This will be covered under Old Business.

- Mr. Roche also discussed some of the options for the current playground equipment removal.
- Mr. Roche reported that the budget had been passed by the voters and all items were approved.
- The Director mentioned that work has begun on the Lounsbury House formal garden.
- Mr. Roche also stated that the bike trail had been approved by the voters and the trail will go from the Recreation Center and run all the way to behind the Town's transfer station. Mr. Roche mentioned that the final plan is to hook up with the current rail trail.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

Mr. Roche reported the following in Ms. Matthews' absence:

- The Director stated that he has been meeting with the recreation staff and programs are going along smoothly. Summer camp training will be held next week.
- Mr. Roche mentioned that we are looking to expand the tumbling program to Saturday mornings as there has been a great deal of interest.

The Commission had some questions regarding the building rental and building space restrictions.

- The Spray Bay will be ready to open this weekend and we have had several birthday parties scheduled for this season.

The Commission questioned the use of Yanity Gymnasium during the summer months. Mr. Roche stated that the gym is used as a backup space for our outdoor summer camps if the weather is inclement. Mr. Roche mentioned that the windows are being replaced in the gym which will help with summer weather conditions. Mr. Roche also mentioned that basketball continues to use the gym during the summer months.

Assistant Director-Parks:

Mr. Schneider reported the following:

- The outdoor crews have been very busy during the past few weeks with several Town events.
- The CHIRP concerts will be starting up soon so clean up work at Ballard Park has begun.
- The crews were busy this week with the Martin Park Beach upcoming opening weekend.
- Next week clean up work will begin at the Recreation Center to get ready for this year's summer camp programs.
- The Dog Park needed some work due to the harsh winter weather. Mr. Schneider said that we may put down woodchips next year because of the heavy foot traffic.
- The Barlow Mountain pool equipment has been repaired and everything is working well. There were some concerns regarding the locker room maintenance, but they did not warrant any further review.
- The Spray Bay is ready to open this weekend with all elements in good working condition.
- The outdoor crews were also busy reseeding the fields that the crews did not get to this fall.
- There were several Eagle Scout projects; one at Shadow Lake picnic area and Lake Windwing. The Boy Scouts also had their annual maintenance weekend held at Sturges Park.
- The department had a request from the Ridgefield High School girls softball for assistance with dug out and water access. We also had a request for use of Aldrich Park field for older baseball play.

Ms. Dobbin wanted to thank the outdoor crew for the great job they did in hanging the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra banners on Main Street.

Ms. Carey had a question regarding who is responsible for maintaining the driveway wall and sidewalk in front of the Venus building on East Ridge Road. She mentioned that the wall had some damage after this severe winter weather and looks like it may be in need of repair. Mr. Roche and Mr. Schneider will follow up on this for Ms. Carey.

Kim Hulber mentioned that she had followed up on the soccer group she discussed at last month's meeting. Mr. Schneider mentioned that he has not had any new requests for field space at this time.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Aquatics & Programs -David Thaxter:

Mr. Thaxter reported that aquatic summer staff is currently completing their season training for Martin Park Beach and the Recreation Center pool. The only issue that is still outstanding at Martin Park Beach is the anchors for the floats, but they should be ready for the opening this weekend. The beach looks great and we should have a successful season.

There were some concerns from users regarding the condition of the locker rooms at the Barlow Mountain pool; however, Mr. Thaxter and Mr. Roche visited the area and did not see any issues or concerns. Mr. Thaxter also summarized for the Commission the pump mechanical issues that were recently resolved at the Barlow Mountain pool.

Buildings & Grounds – David Thaxter

The Commission asked if there were any developments with the field use issues. Mr. Thaxter responded that two recent issues have come up; baseball has requested an answer on the field use question and an e-mail answer was sent to them. Also, an inquiry involving the Branchville field lease was resolved.

Annual Goals & Marketing Plans:

Ms. Bottali presented the Commission with this month's membership report. The report reflects that overall memberships for April had a sales growth up 20% versus a year ago.

The report also indicated that the all-inclusive memberships had a 15% growth versus last year. The Commission discussed the importance of the promotions and the effects they have on membership numbers. The Commission also discussed the growth of memberships in the future. Ms. Bottali stated that now that we have a complete year of data due to the new software system, we will be able to track memberships more closely and in more detail.

The Commission also discussed the monthly payment plan memberships versus the paid in full memberships and how this affects revenue numbers. Ms. Bottali also reviewed the Spin/TRX membership numbers; memberships were higher than last year and the seasonal decline this year was softer than last year.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns reported that the recent Town Meeting regarding the budget went well and everything in the budget for the department passed the Town vote.

Special Services Issues – Barbara Dobbin:

Ms. Dobbin reported that she will be following-up with Laurie Fernandez, Director-Human Resources on the status of the SPHERE Bus for transportation for our Out and About program. Ms. Dobbin also mentioned that she will need to follow-up with Susan Bonistalli regarding her ideas for expanding the Out and About program.

Strategic Plan-Gina Carey

Ms. Carey stated that she will be reaching out to the sub-committee in the near future and will try to have a report by the next meeting.

Old Business:

Mr. Roche discussed the Imagination Station project's funding and current status. He asked the Commission for an approval for spending for the rubber ADA safety surfacing. After a brief discussion, Barbara Dobbin made the following motion:

"The Commission hereby confirms the authorization of \$482,694.00 in expenditures for the Imagination Station – Ballard Park Playground project including specific funding approval in the amount of \$111,199.00 which represents the expense of the rubber ADA safety surfacing."

Mr. Kearns asked if there were any objections having none; the motion was seconded by David Shofi and passed unanimously.

New Business:

Nothing to report at this time.

Economic Development Council:

Ms. Carey gave a quick summary on the Economic Development Council's recent meeting. Ms. Carey mentioned that the Council's next topic up for discussion would be parking in the downtown area. Ms. Carey asked for the Commission's thoughts, concerns and any questions they may have on this topic that she could take back to the Council.

Motion to adjourn was made by Barbara Dobbin seconded by David Shofi at 8:45p.m.

*Minutes Approved: _____
Evie Bottali, Secretary