

**Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
January 20, 2009**

**In Attendance:**

Phil Kearns, Chairman  
Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair  
Evie Bottali  
Jon Chase  
David Thaxter  
Wayne Tinker, Secretary  
Gina Carey

Paul J. Roche, Director  
Jane Byrnes, Recording Secty.  
Robert J. Schneider, Asst. Director  
Eileen Cipolla, Accountant  
Robin Matthews, Asst. Director

Guests: Mr. Joe Coyle, 14 South Shore Drive, Ridgefield, CT

Meeting called to order by the Chairman at 8:05 p.m.

**Recognition of Guests:**

Mr. Kearns introduced and welcomed Mr. Coyle.

**Approval of Agenda & Minutes:**

The agenda and minutes were approved as submitted.

**Financial Status**

**Revenue/Expense Report/Budget Summary**

The Accountant reported that year-to-date revenue is down; however, expenses are also down. According to the current reports, Ms. Cipolla stated that the Department feels confident that it will make projected membership revenue numbers for the month of January. The Commission had some discussion regarding the snow overtime expenses for the outdoor maintenance staff.

Mr. Kearns questioned the shortfall in the Wellness membership numbers. Ms. Cipolla stated that these numbers were mainly attributed to December; however, January numbers seem more optimistic. Ms. Matthews stated that a winter fitness flyer will be going to the public soon and that this should help increase membership numbers.

Mr. Roche stated that the Department has been asked to pay close attention to all expenditures as the Town may be faced with a possible shortfall in revenue. Mr. Roche stated that he is in the process of freezing some areas to cover any potential shortfalls the Department may experience. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding whether or not these cut-backs would be long-term and how they might affect the future.

**Chairman's Report:**

Mr. Kearns stated that his report would be covered under the sub-committees summaries.

**Director's Report:**

The Director reported on the following:

### Town Shelter Management Plan

Mr. Roche reported that the Town has designated the Recreation Center as the primary shelter and warming center for short-term emergencies such as: power outages, storm damage, and water supply interruptions. Parks and Rec will set up during normal hours using existing staff and use Shelter volunteers after hours in conjunction with the Red Cross. If power is out at the Rec Center, then Yanity Gym will be used (Yanity currently has a generator). Scotts Ridge Middle School will be used as a primary Shelter in major disasters running for a long periods of time.

### Strategic Plan

Mr. Roche reported that he and the staff are working on the completion of the first draft of the Department's Strategic Plan for the next three years. The Department will present the draft to the Marketing Committee as part of the Department's plan for developing a list of the outdoor facilities and incorporating them into the Town's GIS mapping system. This will help residents become better informed as to the location of and the amenities at the Town's parks, ball fields, water areas, and picnic facilities.

### Pool Drain Legislation

The Director updated the Commission on the status of the installation of drain covers in the pool in conjunction with the Virginia Graeme Baker Law. Mr. Roche stated that the drains have been installed in the Rec Center pool and that we are 100% in compliance with the Law. We are however, waiting for final approval from the Town's Board of Health Director. The Barlow Pool should also be completed within this week. Mr. Roche stated that Indoor Maintenance Supervisor, Peter Keeler, did a great job with this issue. The Commission questioned if there were any comments made by the members regarding the closing of the slide while the Center was trying to meet the regulations. Ms. Matthews stated that she had not heard of any problems in this area. The members seemed to be more interested in meeting the code requirements than the loss of the slide. There was some discussion regarding the final expense for this project.

### Spray Ground

Mr. Roche reviewed the proposed Spray Ground specs for the Commission. The Commission stated again, that most of the funding for this project would be made through the Friends of Parks and Recreation.

### Rec Center Trail Naming

The Director reported that the First Selectman and Town Counsel have confirmed that they are in agreement with the Ippoliti family regarding their request for naming of a trail after the Ippoliti family. After much discussion, it was suggested that the Director get in touch with the Ippoliti family and see if they would approve the possibility of naming the pond and the trail around it after the family. It was mentioned that the Town's legal counsel also be involved with this process.

## **Assistant Director-Recreation:**

### **Membership**

Ms. Matthews reported that the Department is still following the downward trends for our Recreation and Wellness memberships. Our Lap memberships however, are continuing to rise. The current December membership numbers are reflecting a downward trend a little less than last year's numbers. There was a discussion regarding class enrollments and future programming. Ms. Carey questioned what were the current advertising promotions for our summer camps and programs. Ms. Matthews stated that the Department is planning on the following: mailing of an informational post card, developing a small brochure, working with outside businesses, attending the annual camp fair and the possibility of hosting our own camp fair with our Independent Contractors. Mr. Kearns asked if we were still promoting our camps through the school Family Fun nights. Ms. Matthews stated yes. Ms. Bottali stated that she has seen several advertisements in the Ridgefield Press regarding discounts on the outside camps. It was suggested that P&R may want to look at doing some direct mailing or e-mails to help promote summer camps.

## **Assistant Director-Parks:**

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

Mr. Schneider stated that at the suggestion of the budget sub-committee, he has been looking into negotiating with vendors on prices for bulk purchases.

The Assistant Director also stated that he is working on a "Time Study Report-Branchville Train Station" for the First Selectman.

Mr. Schneider is also working on the employee training sessions as per OSHA inspector requests.

The Town's sports groups field requests are currently coming in and they seem to be on schedule to that of last year's. The meeting is scheduled for early February.

There still has been no progress with the dam at Martin Park Beach. Mr.

Schneider is waiting for the Town's engineer to repair the gate valve so the pond's water level can be lowered.

The department has been working on the installation of the computer system and time clock in the new garage. Mr. Schneider is also working on the ice problem on the roof and working on the overhang.

The department has met with Ms. Manners on the 2009 CHIRP season. Mr.

Roche reported that two high school students will be working the sound system.

## **Sub-Committee Reports:**

### **Buildings and Grounds- Mr. Tinker**

Mr. Tinker reported that the Sub-Committee had met to discuss a possible increase in the user fees for athletic fields. The Committee would like to raise the fee \$3.00 across the board effective July 1, 2009. The Committee also discussed making changes in the "Field Use Criteria" which will take effect August, 2009. Mr. Tinker stated that Mr. Schneider will notify the Town's sports groups of these changes.

Mr. Coyle asked to speak; however, as an observing guest, the Commission asked that Mr. Coyle hold his questions and speak with Sub-Committee Chairman, Mr. Tinker after the meeting.

**Rec Center Issues – Evie Bottali**

Ms. Bottali reported that the Committee is currently reviewing the first draft of the Department’s proposed Strategic Plan.

**Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns**

Review and Approval of 2009-2010 - Operating Budget-Eileen Cipolla

Ms. Cipolla submitted, for the Commission’s review and approval, the proposed 2009-2010 Operating Budget. There was a brief discussion regarding the current economic issues and P&R’s role in the Town’s total budget cuts. Following these discussions; Mr. Chase made the following motion:

“**RESOLVE**, to accept the 2009-2010 Operating Budget as submitted by the P&R Commission’s budget sub-committee, for presentation to the Board of Selectmen.”

The motion was seconded by Evie Bottali and unanimously approved.

Mr. Kearns mentioned that the Sub-Committee had received positive feedback from the Town Controller and First Selectman regarding the presentation of the P&R 2009-2010 capital budget.

Ms. Cipolla and Mr. Roche thanked the sub-committee for their time and hard work in submitting this year’s budget.

Aquatics

Mr. Thaxter reported that Ms. Gregory is doing a terrific job in marketing the Barlow Mountain Pool.

Long Range Planning

Nothing to report at this time

ADA

Nothing to report at this time.

With no further business, the Commission adjourned at 9:05pm.

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary

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