

**Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
April 16, 2008**

**In Attendance:**

Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chairman  
Jon Chase  
Wayne Tinker, Secretary  
Evie Bottali

Paul J. Roche, Director  
Robin Matthews, Asst. Director-Rec  
Bob Schneider, Asst. Director-Parks  
Jane Byrnes, Recording Secretary  
Eileen Cipolla, Accountant

Meeting called to order by the Vice Chairman at 8:00 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:**

The agenda was amended to reflect the deletion of item (a) under Old Business. The agenda as amended was approved.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Tinker made a change to the March 18, 2008 minutes. Page five (5) under Aquatics, last paragraph, should read: “.....and great insight into the Aquatic Department. Ms. Gregory was a good selection for the position.”

The minutes as amended were approved.

**Financial Status**

**Revenue/Expense Report**

Ms. Cipolla reported that year-to-date revenue was down slightly due to outstanding payments. Ms. Cipolla stated that the expenses will level out by year’s end.

Ms. Cipolla reported that the Board of Finance had made no changes to the Department’s 2008-2009 Operating Budget. The Accountant also reported that the Annual Town budget meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2008 at 7pm at the Ridgefield Playhouse.

Ms. Cipolla did mention that the 2008-2009 Capital Budget had been reduced by the BOF. The Commission had several questions and comments regarding these changes. It was the suggestion of the Commission that Mr. Roche contact the Town’s Controller to see if budget requests can be reallocated. Some of these items included safety issues.

Ms. Cipolla reviewed the financial membership report. The numbers reflected a decrease in both wellness and recreational memberships; however, lap memberships continue to rise.

Mr. Roche reported that he had contacted the Controller, as suggested at the March meeting regarding the Department’s possible account overages.

**Membership-Asst. Director-Recreation**

Ms. Matthews summarized for the Commission the March year-to-year membership comparison report. This report was developed to show the retention rate and trends of all memberships. There was much discussion regarding additional advertising for the use of a monthly automatic payment system. The Commission also suggested that the membership fees remain the same.

Ms. Bottali stated that the marketing committee had met to discuss developing a program which would focus on the benefits of a P&R membership.

Ms. Matthews mentioned that the summer Adventure Camp revenue had been down, but the summer “specialty camps” was up significantly. There was much discussion regarding the current financial situation and the reasoning for low number of registrations. Mr. Chase stated that this decline is across the board and showing up in all facets of business.

### **Chairman’s Report:**

In Mr. Kearns’ absence, Mr. Roche reviewed with the Commission Mr. Kearns’ letter to Mr. Bob Alicia regarding the Ciuccoli Field proposal.

The Commission voted to schedule a “special meeting” with Mr. Rudy Marconi, First Selectman to review the Arts District proposal. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30, 2008 at 8pm. The Commission would also like Mr. Marconi to come prepared to discuss the Sturges Park issue.

### **Director’s Report:**

Mr. Roche reported on the following:

- Mr. Roche reported that he and Mr. Schneider have purchased three large trees for the Ballard Park project. Work continues on the installation of the new lights for the Park. These items were purchased with funds through the Friends of Ballard Park.
- Mr. Roche had attended the Connecticut Parks Association Legislative meeting in Hartford regarding several issues. They included; a Bill regarding the ability of Parks Department to receive donation’s from LLC companies, discussion regarding current issues related to pesticides on school grounds, and background checks for volunteers, etc.
- Mr. Roche is also working with the Town’s RACE program on environmental issues.

### **Assistant Director/Recreation- Robin Matthews**

- Ms. Matthews reported that she has been working with Ms. Towers and the marketing committee on several membership retention strategies and developing a membership retention analysis.
- Ms. Matthews mentioned that most of her project updates were covered above and during March’s meeting.

### **Assistant Director/Parks – Bob Schneider**

- The crews have been busy with school cleanup, along with parks and other Town properties.
- The crews have been working with Little League regarding work on the Windwing, Aldrich and Shadow Lake fields. Work on all baseball diamonds is also currently underway.

Mr. Chase questioned Mr. Schneider on the current field rotation schedule and how it would affect the fall high school sports teams and field allocation. Mr. Schneider reported that things are currently under control. It was suggested that the grounds subcommittee review the use of Scotts Ridge and other allocated fields before the fall

seasons begins. Mr. Chase also mentioned that SCOR should be advised of the Department's policy with regard to moving soccer goals.

- Mr. Schneider reported that he had attended a session regarding the use of organic supplies on fields and school grounds. It was the suggestion of the Commission that Mr. Schneider draft a letter to the First Selectman outlining the additional expenses, cost effectiveness, and additional manpower should the use of organic supplies take effect.

**Sub-Committee Reports:**

Buildings and Grounds – Wayne Tinker:

Covered above.

Long Range Planning, ADA Issues:

No current issues on these committees.

Rec Center Issues:

Ms. Bottali's report was covered above.

Budget and Policy:

Covered above.

Aquatics - David Thaxter:

In Mr. Thaxter's absence, Ms. Matthews reviewed a request from the subcommittee regarding Martin Park Beach fees. After some discussion, Mr. Chase made the following motion:

“**MOVE**, to accept the proposed increase in the annual Martin Park Beach membership fee (by \$5.00) which was submitted by the Aquatic sub-committee.”

The motion was seconded by Evie Bottali, and passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

Ciuccoli Field

Covered under Buildings and Grounds.

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

The next Commission meeting will be held at the Parks Garage site located on South Street.

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

**Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary**