

**Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
July 29, 2008**

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman

Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chairperson

Evie Bottali

Wayne Tinker, Secretary

Gina Carey

Paul J. Roche, Director

Jane Byrnes, Recording Secty.

Eileen Cipolla, Accountant

Guests:

Fire Chief Heather Burford, Ridgefield Fire Department

Mr. David Zandri, 233 Danbury Road, Ridgefield

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

The Chairman welcomed and introduced guests.

**Approval of Agenda:**

The Chairman asked that both Old Business and New Business be moved up on the agenda. The agenda as amended was approved.

Old Business – Rec Center Trail Review

Mr. Zandri stopped by the Commission meeting to submit to the Commission his and his family's concerns regarding the paving of the Rec Center trail. Mr. Zandri felt that there was not sufficient public notice made to the neighbors regarding the paving of the trails. Mr. Zandri has several concerns regarding the closeness of the trails to his property and if the Parks & Recreation Department would plant sufficient screening.

Mr. Roche stated that he had apologized on behalf of the Commission regarding the notification to the neighbors, and that he has been working with the landscape architect on the screening issues. Mr. Roche also stated that he did not feel that the trail would have a high volume of use, and that currently it is used by the seniors and young families. The trail is being paved to allow access by handicapped citizens. Mr. Kearns felt that this is not an area that would be used by teenagers to hang out.

Mr. Roche stated that he will be happy to meet with Mr. Zandri on Thursday or Friday so he can have a chance to discuss with the architect the screening. Mr. Zandri agreed. The Commission thanked Mr. Zandri for his comments and questions.

New Business – Dry Hydrant Proposal

Chief Burford presented a proposal to the Commission requesting permission for the Ridgefield Fire Department to install a dry hydrant in the Recreation Center's pond.

Chief Burford submitted the following:

- Due to a loss of water from the Boys and Girls Club pond, the Rec Center's pond is a great source of additional water.

- With an increase in accessible fire protection water, it helps lower the Insurance Services Office rating for the Town thereby lowering insurance costs to taxpayers.
- RFD received a grant from Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to purchase and install dry hydrants.
- Rec Center is a prime location with easy access for fire apparatus and the pond has the depth and volume necessary to ensure adequate water flow. The pond is spring fed and has little weed growth.
- Town Highway Department would assist with the installation to help reduce costs.
- The Fire Department would like to begin the project this fall.

Chief Burford described the specifications for the hydrant and the installation requirements. The Chief also stated that the hydrant would be camouflaged to fit into the environment and with a flower box to hide the hardware.

The Commission had questions regarding installation, funding, environmental effects on the fish in pond, and if there were any possibilities for dredging.

Mr. Roche stated that the Department was looking into dredging the pond, and the effect this would have on the timing of installation. Mr. Roche stated that he is in full support of this proposal, however, would like to meet with Mr. Charlie Fisher, Town Engineer, regarding the dredging.

A discussion ensued regarding the possibilities of dredging the pond after installation of the hydrant.

After much discussion, Barbara Dobbin made the following motion:

*“**MOVE**, that the Commission is in favor of the Fire Department’s proposal to install a dry hydrant in the Recreation Center’s pond, and that the Commission would like the opportunity to explore dredging the pond prior to the installation.”*

The motion was seconded by Wayne Tinker and passed unanimously.

The Commission thanked Chief Burford for her presentation.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

The minutes as submitted were approved.

**Financial Status**

**Revenue/Expense Report**

Ms. Cipolla reported that overall year-to-date revenue was ahead of projected budget mainly due to swim lessons and total memberships.

Ms. Cipolla reviewed a financial report on the Barlow Mountain pool expenses. Ms. Cipolla summarized a meeting she, Phil Kearns and Peter Keeler had with the BOE representatives regarding the fuel oil and increased utility costs for Barlow pool. There was much discussion regarding the meeting and the future expenses at Barlow pool.

Ms. Dobbin had some concerns regarding the future fuel costs and how the Town plans to supplement the Department. It was also mentioned that Mr. Roche touch base with the Town Controller requesting an updated figure on estimated fuel costs.

A lengthy discussion continued regarding the future use, current users, future expenses and an upcoming meeting with the First Selectman regarding the pool at Barlow.

### Membership Report:

In Ms. Matthews' absence, Mr. Roche reviewed the June/July membership numbers. Recreation memberships were down slightly, however, lap and wellness were up.

Martin Park Beach memberships were up 5% from the previous month's report and drop-in fees were also up.

Summer swim lessons were reporting an increase in revenue and specialty camps were also up slightly.

Mr. Roche reported that Ms. Matthews did a great job putting together the summer camps this season.

### Chairman's Report:

Mr. Kearns reported that as suggested at the last Commission meeting, he had written the First Selectman regarding the school snow removal concerns for the upcoming season. Mr. Kearns stated that he has not heard from the First Selectman, but is meeting with him on another issue in August and he will check with him at that time.

### Director's Report & Assistant Director's Reports:

Mr. Roche reported on the following:

- The Director reported that the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, specifically the Country Fair was a big success and the weather was perfect.
- The Director reported that the first two CHIRP concerts have been very popular with over 2,000 people attending.
- Mr. Roche reported that he has been working on the trails and corresponding with neighbors regarding the shielding and privacy issues they may have with the paving of the trails near their property.
- New wellness equipment is being ordered for the fitness room. There were some questions regarding the digital television connection in the future.
- New boats have been purchased for the beach and the boats continue to be very popular.
- Work is being done on the relocation of the Skate Park.
- Ms. Towers is working on the fall program brochure. A new format is proposed.
- The outdoor maintenance department is still prepared to rest the high school lower field.
- Fields around Town are in good shape due to weather conditions.

Mr. Roche requested permission to attend the CRPA Fall Conference in West Dennis, Massachusetts on September 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Barbara Dobbin made the following motion:

*“**MOVE to** approve sending Mr. Paul Roche to the CRPA Fall Conference in West Dennis, Massachusetts on September 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.”*

The motion was seconded by Evie Bottali and passed unanimously.

**Sub-Committee Reports:**

There were no current issues facing the subcommittees.

Buildings and Grounds

Long Range Planning

ADA Issues

Rec Center Issues

Budget and Policy

Mr. Kearns suggested that the Budget and Policy sub-committee meet in September to bring Ms. Carey up-to-date on financial procedures. Ms. Cipolla will set up that meeting.

Aquatics

Ms. Bottali stated that the sub-committee has a meeting set in August and her report will follow at the September Commission meeting.

Ms. Dobbin questioned the Chairman if any updates had been made with the Sturges Park issue. Mr. Kearns gave a summary of the past events and stated that he is still waiting to hear from the First Selectman and the Town's attorney.

With no further business, the Commission adjourned at 9:40pm.

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

**Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary**