

**Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
June 17, 2008**

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman

Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chairperson

Jon Chase

Wayne Tinker, Secretary

Evie Bottali

Gina Carey

David Thaxter

Paul J. Roche, Director

Robin Matthews, Asst. Director-Rec

Bob Schneider, Asst. Director-Parks

Eileen Cipolla, Accountant

Guests:

Ms. Debbie Zandri-Oliver

Marilyn Walton, 23 Tanton Hill Rd., Ridgefield

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

The Chairman welcomed Gina Carey, the newest Commissioner.

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda as submitted was approved.

The Chairman recognized guests Ms. Zandri-Oliver and Ms. Walton. Ms. Zandri-Oliver asked to be added to the Commission's agenda for their July meeting. Ms. Zandri-Oliver has concerns and questions regarding the P&R trail that runs close to her parent's property. Ms. Walton also expressed her concerns regarding privacy. The Commission stated that they would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or concerns she may have regarding the trail development. Ms. Zandri-Oliver should contact Ms. Jane Byrnes to be added to the agenda for the July meeting.

Mr. Kearns summarized for the Commission and its guests the trail proposal. P&R received approval for the original special permit and funding from an approved State Grant. This proposal had gone before the Planning & Zoning and the Wetlands Commission. Mr. Roche stated that he had agreed to provide screening to help ensure the neighbors privacy. A brief discussion ensued. Mr. Kearns thanked Ms. Zandri-Oliver and Ms. Walton for stopping by and stated that the Commission looks forward to seeing them in July. Mr. Roche mentioned that he would meet with the landscape architect to review the screening and asked if Ms. Zandri-Oliver and Ms. Walton would like to join them.

Approval of the Minutes:

The Commission made a correction to the minutes of the May, 2008 meeting. On page one, third paragraph, last sentence should read: "Ms. Dobbin stated that the department should respect the cuts made to the school maintenance budget, define what those cuts are, and work within them." The minutes as amended were approved.

Financial Status

Revenue/Expense Report

Ms. Cipolla reported that overall year-to-date revenue was down slightly. Ms. Cipolla stated that the expenses as of the end of May are ahead of projected budget.

Ms. Cipolla mentioned that she would forward via e-mail, to the Commission the final budget listing the approved cuts for P&R. There was a lengthy discussion regarding these cuts and also the cuts made from the capital budget.

Ms. Cipolla mentioned that Martin Park Beach revenue is up slightly from last year's revenue numbers. The Accountant also mentioned that swim registrations were up for the summer session and this should help with year end revenue. Registrations for Adventure Day Camp are down; however specialty camp revenue is showing a higher revenue number. There was a brief discussion regarding camp revenue and the effects of the economy and other Town camps have had on our numbers.

Due to the equipment cuts from the P&R budget, Mr. Schneider also requested that the Commission contact the First Selectman regarding the snow removal issue at the High School and Scotts Ridge Middle School. There was a lengthy discussion regarding this issue and the Commission agreed that the First Selectman should be made aware of the issues facing the Department.

Chairman's Report:

Mr. Kearns had no specific issues at this time.

Director's Report

Mr. Roche reported on the following:

- The Director is currently working on the final plans for the 300th Anniversary Celebration, specifically the Country Fair.
- The Director reported that the first two CHIRP concerts were moved inside due to weather conditions; however tonight's concert was held outside.
- 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.

Assistant Director/Recreation- Robin Matthews

Ms. Matthews reported on the following:

- Ms. Matthews has been working with other Town organizations on special events. These include: Share the Road, Family Fun Nights, Post Grad Party, and the Senior Luau.
- The Skate Park summer lessons began this week and were well attended; however, trick camp enrollment is down. Ms. Caponetti is working on the Graham Dickinson Day with several special events planned for the day's activities. Fund raising continues with the SPIRIT Committee and youth groups.
- Martin Park beach opened successfully, the kayaks, boats, etc have been used by several Town groups. As mentioned above, swim lessons were up and Ms. Matthews reported that the department is planning a Community Swim Day in August.
- The Wellness Center's new supervisor, Joyce Dynia has come up with some new suggestions for future wellness equipment. Ms. Matthews

reported that Ms. Dynia has stated that classes are still well attended and she will be working on the summer programming and the health and wellness series.

- The pre-school program is currently taking in fall registrations. The Messy Fun summer camps are very successful. The sunrise and sunset (before and after camp) program has increased registrations.
- Ms. Matthews is also working on the fall instructor contracts, special fall events and wrapping up of the spring programs.
- Ms. Matthews is reviewing the hiring of summer staff and current budgets with her Program Supervisors. Ms. Matthews is also looking into changing in the format for the fall program brochure, changing the e-mail blasts, a new attractive news letter and better internal communications. She will be working with the front desk staff on additional customer training and better program knowledge.

Membership-Asst. Director-Recreation

Ms. Matthews reported that both recreation and wellness memberships reported a slight decrease; however lap memberships continue to rise.

Ms. Bottali questioned if the department felt any effects from the Boys and Girls Club's new facility and programming. Ms. Matthews stated that she has spoken with several other P&R departments who are also experiencing lower memberships.

Assistant Director/Parks – Bob Schneider

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- Mr. Schneider reported that youth sports are winding down and summer clean up has begun.
- The outdoor maintenance crews are busy with renovating the fields for summer. Work on the Scotland and Barlow Mountain fields will continue. Both fields should be in good shape for the upcoming fall season.
- Mr. Schneider reported that renovation continues at the high school lower grass fields.
- Mr. Schneider has notified all school principals regarding the recent budget cuts and their effects on school grounds.
- Mr. Schneider is working on several upcoming events including; July 4th fireworks, 300th Anniversary, lighting project at Tiger Hollow, Volunteer Firemen's Carnival and Martin Park Beach fencing.

There was some discussion regarding the SCOR fall warm-up tournament scheduled for this September.

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

Aquatics

With no further business, the Commission adjourned at 9:35pm.

Minutes Approved: _____

Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary