

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

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman

Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chairperson

Evie Bottali

Wayne Tinker, Secretary

Gina Carey

Jon Chase

David Thaxter

Paul J. Roche, Director

Jane Byrnes, Recording Secty.

Eileen Cipolla, Accountant

Robert Schneider, Asst. Director

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

Approval of Agenda & Minutes:

The agenda and minutes were approved as submitted.

Financial Status

Revenue/Expense Report

Ms. Cipolla reported that year-to-date revenue is down from projected budget. A discussion ensued regarding the Martin Park Beach and program revenue numbers and reasons behind their decline. Mr. Roche mentioned that our pre-school revenue numbers are down; however, the department is planning to study our shortfalls in this area. Ms. Cipolla reported that athletic field revenue is on target; however, Yanity Gym projected revenue numbers for future budgets may have to be revisited.

Ms. Dobbin felt that the number represented on the Town's budget report under "Administration" seems high. Ms. Cipolla stated that she will be meeting with the new Controller to address this issue next week.

Ms. Cipolla stated that she will be meeting with the Commission's budget sub-committee to begin discussions on the 2009-2010 capital budget requests.

Membership

Mr. Roche reported that both wellness and lap memberships reported an increase with recreation memberships down slightly. The Commission discussed Martin Park Beach memberships along with future budget requests.

Chairman's Report:

Mr. Kearns had no pending issues at this time.

Director's Report

Mr. Roche reported on the following:

- The Director stated that the installation of the Tiger Hollow irrigation system is moving along and the well should be large enough for the area. The Tiger Hollow Committee has agreed to contract and pay for the project from their funds. Parks and Rec will reimburse them for a small

amount \$10,000-\$15,000 on the project if expenses are higher than anticipated.

- Mr. Roche stated that he has discussed pricing for the dredging of the Rec Center pond prior to the installation of the Fire Departments request to install a dry hydrant. Mr. Roche feels that the pricing may be too high at this time to do the dredging project.

Mr. Thaxter questioned if the installation of the dry hydrant would have any adverse effects on the wetlands. Mr. Roche stated that this would not be a problem.

Mr. Chase asked if the fee for the dredging of the pond could be covered by the Town's account and not Parks and Rec. Mr. Roche stated he would check with the First Selectman.

- Mr. Roche mentioned to the Commission that he had received some complaints regarding dogs in Ballard Park and on Town athletic fields. Mr. Roche stated that it is difficult to enforce the prohibiting and cleaning up after dogs.

Mr. Chase stated that this issue has come up in the past, and the Commission stated at that time that they felt animals would not be permitted on Town fields and/or Town parks with heavy usage. He also mentioned that we should notify the Town's Sports Groups, reminding them again of our policy and a notice should be placed in the Town's paper identifying those "dog friendly" areas. Mr. Schneider summarized for the Commission that, due to requests from the Sports Group, the current fields have posted signs with "dogs prohibited."

Mr. Kearns suggested that Mr. Roche bring a formal request to the Commission at their October meeting.

- Mr. Roche reported that the Halpin Lane project has not had any further developments.
- Mr. Roche updated the Commission on the status of the Rec Center trail development. The bids have gone out this week for the paving of the trails around the Rec Center. Mr. Roche felt that the paving should be able to be kept within the budget estimates.

Mr. Chase asked if the High School and Scotts Ridge snow plowing issues had been resolved. Mr. Kearns mentioned that he, Bob Schneider and Paul Roche had met with the First Selectman and that the problem has been resolved satisfactorily. Parks and Rec will borrow a loader from the Highway Department.

Assistant Director-Parks:

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- Mr. Schneider reported that the crews are busy completing the school projects.
- The Asst. Director-Parks reported that the SCOR Labor Day Tournament went very well, with over 100 teams participating and the fields remain in good shape.
- Mr. Schneider stated that there are a number of tears in the seams of the Tiger Hollow turf carpet. The crews are busy repairing these tears. Some discussion ensued regarding the longevity of the turf and replacement plans.

- Mr. Schneider stated that the lower high school grass field looks good for the next spring season.
- Due to the extensive use of Ballard Park, Mr. Schneider mentioned that he is now treating the Park similar to that of an athletic field.
- The Asst. Director is working on his capital budget requests and is in need of replacing one of the Department's main mowers.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

In Ms. Matthews' absence, Mr. Roche reported on the following:

- The building is busy again, as fall programs are all in full swing.
- The Wellness Center has had some upgrades to the equipment and continues to be very busy. Ms. Dynia, Supervisor is busy developing the Wellness Series and promoting additional fitness classes. Mr. Roche stated that Ms. Dynia is doing a terrific job in this area.

Mr. Kearns asked the status on the Barlow Mountain fuel issue. Mr. Roche summarized the current status for the Commission. Mr. Kearns asked if the shortfalls in this budget area would be covered in the next year's budget. Mr. Roche stated that he is waiting for an official resolution from the Board of Finance. Ms. Cipolla will follow-up on this issue.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings and Grounds – Wayne Tinker

Mr. Tinker reported that the sub-committee met recently to review the Fields Allocation Criteria.

There were some questions regarding the use of the Tiger Hollow field on the weekends. Mr. Schneider stated that he has patrolled the area on the weekends and feels that the usage is not of concern. There was a discussion regarding a drop-in fee or perhaps developing a P&R program.

Long Range Planning, ADA Issues & Aquatics

No current issues at this time.

Rec Center Issues

Ms. Bottali reported that the committee is working on new enhancement programs and specialty programs to further the benefits of our memberships. The Wellness Series and Educational Series are currently scheduled. Some classes include: Men's Health, Ear Infections, Women's Health, Diabetes and Exercise. The committee is also working on a new statistic plan for the next year.

Budget and Policy

The subcommittee will be meeting over the next few weeks to work on the capital budget for 2009-2010. There was some discussion regarding the format, presentation and future requests from the department along with a discussion regarding the department's long range plans. The Commission decided to include Barbara Dobbin in the discussions for her input regarding the long range plans.

Mr. Chase asked Mr. Kearns if there were any additional changes on the status of the Sturges Park issue. Mr. Kearns stated that he has not heard of any news, but will follow-

up with the First Selectman before the next Commission meeting. Mr. Thaxter mentioned that he had noticed the neighbor's dogs running free in the Park.

Ms. Dobbin questioned if the upcoming television conversion would have any effects on the wellness center television. Mr. Roche stated that he had done some investigating and that they will be fine.

With no further business, the Commission adjourned at 9:10pm.

Minutes Approved: _____
Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary