

**Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting
December 13, 2011**

In Attendance:

Gina Carey, Vice Chairwoman
Evie Bottali
David Thaxter
Wayne Tinker, Secretary

Paul J. Roche, Director

Robin Matthews, Asst. Director
Robert Schneider, Asst. Director
Eileen Cipolla, Senior Financial Accountant

Meeting called to order by the Chairwoman at 7:30p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda as submitted was approved.

Minutes:

The minutes as submitted were approved.

Recognition of Guests:

None

Financial Status:

Report/Budget Summary:

Ms. Cipolla stated that the budget sub-committee will be meeting each month prior to the monthly Commission meeting to discuss the department's financial situation. The sub-committee is hoping to get a better idea of the current issues before bringing them to the entire Commission.

Ms. Cipolla reported that the department is keeping a close watch on the department's financials. Ms. Cipolla mentioned that the new membership packaging and new promotions have brought up the membership numbers somewhat and January's numbers should be higher. The Accountant stated that the department has also had some expense savings to help meet the budget. There were some questions regarding the membership numbers for the month of November. Mr. Roche stated that the membership renewal letters were going to be mailed this week and they included the new membership rates, a personal letter from him and some new promotions. Mr. Roche mentioned that the department is looking to bring back old members and additional new members.

Chairwoman's Report:

Due to Ms. Dobbin's absence, a report was not available.

Assistant Director-Recreation Report:

Ms. Matthews gave a summary of the new membership rate packages and the recent promotions. Mr. Roche mentioned that the official roll-out of the new rates will be Friday; but many people have stopped by to review them already. The spin classes have been very well accepted and the staff is very excited with the response. Ms. Matthews also mentioned that the front desk staff is highly motivated and excited with the new pricing and membership packages. The excitement has helped morale with staff members. Ms. Matthews stated that the entire staff is on board and already "selling" memberships. Ms. Matthews also stated that Mr. Roche did a good job in getting the staff on board with the big change in membership packages. Mr. Roche stated that the staff truly pulled together to meet the deadlines, develop the membership packages and worked to get this out on time. Mr. Roche stated that there have

been questions from members regarding the change, but everyone seems to be supportive of the new plans.

Director's Report:

Mr. Roche reported that he has spent most of his time working with the staff on the new membership packaging and its promotion. Also, he has been meeting with the staff on the strategic action plan for the upcoming year. This project should be completed within the next few days. Mr. Roche also stated that he is working with the Friends of Parks and Recreation on a fundraiser for the Barn and the Skate Park called "Yes to Youth." Mr. Roche stated that Eileen Cipolla had received a promotion to Senior Financial Accountant. The Commission wished Eileen congratulations and that it was a well deserved promotion. Mr. Roche continued with thanking Mr. Schneider for his participation and stated that he is a real "go getter" when it comes to ideas for revenue producing.

Mr. Roche read a thank you note from a resident regarding the terrific work the staff did with the Town's Emergency Shelter.

Assistant Director- Parks Report:

Mr. Schneider reported that the outdoor staff is finally getting back on track after the clean-up from the recent storm Albert. They have been working on the baseball diamonds and athletic fields. Mr. Schneider mentioned that there was extensive damage done to fencing around Town properties. These repairs will be covered through insurance. Mr. Schneider is also working on the up-coming field scheduling meeting with the Town's sports groups. The installation of the Fountain's cover met with some funding "glitches;" however they have been resolved and the cover is now installed. Mr. Schneider also reported that he has met with the Ridgefield Volunteer Firemen regarding their Annual Carnival venue for the upcoming year. There was some discussion regarding parking issues and any opposition with the suggested site. Mr. Schneider mentioned that the Martin Park Beach project went well and he would like to lower the water level a little further to help the weed problem. Mr. Schneider also reported he had received an estimate for the blasting of the rock at the Beach.

Sub-Committee Reports:

ADA Issues, Buildings and Grounds:

No current issues for these sub-committees.

Mr. Roche mentioned that three bids on the entranceway doors varied greatly and the department was asking a local architect to review the vendors.

Programs & Long Range Planning-Evie Bottali:

Membership Report:

Ms. Matthews thanked Ms. Bottali for all the hard work and support she gave with the membership packaging.

The membership report was distributed to the Commission.

Aquatic Sub-Committee – David Thaxter

After discussions with Collene Gregory, Mr. Thaxter reported that the department and sub-committee are looking at exploring ways to enhance the water front activities at Martin Park Beach. Some of the suggestions included: standup paddleboards and adding changing areas.

Budget & Policy:

Ms. Cipolla asked for questions on the proposed 2012/2013 Parks and Recreation capital budget. Ms. Carey summarized the important points of the budget. After discussion the following motion was made by David Thaxter:

"To approve the 2012/2013 Parks and Recreation Capital Budget as presented."

The motion was seconded by Evie Bottali and passed unanimously.

There was a discussion regarding the proposed food vending at the Recreation Center. Mr. Roche stated that he will be in touch with the vendor this week to see where it stands.

The Commission discussed the meeting dates for the next calendar year. After a review of the proposed 2012 Commission meeting dates, the following motion was put forth and approved unanimously:

“To accept the 2012 Commission dates as stated.”

Old Business:

No current issues.

New Business:

No current business.

Meeting adjourned 8:20p.m.

Minutes Approved: _____
Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary

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