

**Minutes of the
Special Meeting of the
Parks and Recreation Commission**
July 27, 2010

In Attendance:

Barbara Dobbin, Chairwoman

Phil Kearns, Vice Chairman

Wayne Tinker, Secretary

Evie Bottali

Jon Chase

Gina Carey

Paul J. Roche, Director

Robin Matthews, Asst. Director

Eileen Cipolla, Accountant

Jane Byrnes, Comm. Secty.

Meeting called to order by the Chairwoman at 8:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda & Minutes:

The agenda and the minutes of the June meeting were approved as submitted.

Financial Status

Report/Budget Summary

Ms. Cipolla reported that net revenue had come in short of budget; however expenses were also down, keeping revenue numbers lower than the Commission anticipated and reported earlier to the Board of Selectmen.

The Commission had a lengthy discussion regarding the P&R snow overtime account. The Commission would like to speak with the BOS regarding a change in how the Department reports its overtime. The Commission would like its snow overtime budget to be handled similar to that of the Highway Department.

The Commission questioned whether or not there were any comments received from members regarding the recent fee increases.

They also discussed the new corporate membership campaign.

Chairwoman's Report:

The Chairwoman stated she had received a thank you note from Justine Butler regarding the tennis court dedication.

Ms. Dobbin also stated that the committee had met to discuss and review the job description for the open P&R position.

Director's Report & Assistant Director-Parks:

Mr. Roche reported that he is working on the following projects:

- The Friends of P&R recently received a grant from the Anne S. Richardson Fund for the Barlow Pool project. To date, the committee has

received approximately \$98,000.00. Mr. Kearns again mentioned that Mr. Roche should be in touch with the First Selectman regarding that the current fund raising trends may exceed the projected matching funds. Mr. Roche reported that the proposal outlines the fact that additional funds will be used for cosmetic improvements such as: painting, drain repairs, etc. Mr. Roche did notify the First Selectman and Controller.

- The Director gave a full report on the several projects that the Friends of Ridgefield Parks and Recreation are currently working on.
- The Skate Park is slightly ahead of projected budget for 2010 season.

Parks

Mr. Roche reported in Mr. Schneider's absence:

- **Pesticide Applications**
The Director and Commission discussed the future diverse effects on the Town's fields due to the recent State Legislation regarding the "no use" policy of pesticide applications on school grounds. There was much discussion regarding the effects and the possibility of a greater number of insects and erosion problems with the fields. Ms. Carey mentioned that she had notice a difference already in the shape of the some fields. The Commission discussed the resting of additional fields in the future. This will be covered at the sub-committee level.
- **Fields**
Mr. Roche reported that although the weather has been hot, the fields are currently in good shape for the start up of fall sports.
- **July 4th**
The fireworks went well this year and the crews did a good job with cleanup.
- **Outdoor Staff**
Mr. Roche reported that the new maintenance equipment schedule is working well and crews are managing time better.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

Ms. Matthews reported:

- The State-wide lifeguard competition held at Martin Park Beach was a great success, with Redding P&R winning. The Senior Luau was a great event again this year, with over 120 seniors attending.
- P&R and the VNA will host a Heart Health Event.
- Ms. Matthews is working with a new company on their corporate membership program.
Phil Kearns asked that we keep track of those members who are participating in corporate membership program.

- Ms. Matthews is working with Founders Hall on a new “Pickle Ball” program and also working on the fall window painting event.
- Ms. Matthews is working with Robin Telesco on the new after school program entitled “After the Bell.” It was suggested that an e-mail blast go out to all program members informing them of the new classes.
- Ms. Matthews reported that the fall brochure is currently at the printers and will be mailed out shortly.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings and Grounds- Mr. Tinker

Mr. Tinker stated that the sub-committee met to discuss the Youth Football program in Ridgefield. It was decided that P&R would give the organization a one-year exemption from the criteria to play for the 2010 season. Bob Schneider will contact the organization on the decision. The sub-committee also discussed SCOR’s recent request to use the RHS lower grass fields for their annual tournament. It was the decision of the sub-committee that at this time due to field overuse, SCOR’s request would be denied. Bob Schneider will be in touch with the organization.

Programs & Long Range Planning-Evie Bottali

Ms. Bottali reported that the sub-committee is working on upgrading the CLASS software program. Ms. Bottali mentioned that she and Robin Matthews are working with the Town’s IT Department to review the costs of the updates.

Ms. Bottali reported that Wellness memberships are up slightly, Rec Center memberships were a little soft and lap memberships down. There was some discussion regarding the public’s response to the fee increases and if the members had any comments regarding new equipment. The Commission stated that the Wellness Center looks great with the added new equipment and the amenities and maintenance projects.

Barbara Dobbin mentioned that there may be a need for a special membership promotion if we continue to see the softening in memberships. The Commission also discussed the non-resident fee increases and if there had been any comments from those members.

Ms. Bottali mentioned that the Department will be doing additional membership renewal reminders.

Mr. Roche mentioned that the recreation staff has pitched in to help cover the open position responsibilities. Amanda Maiorano has worked with Evie Bottali to do some additional advertising. Mr. Roche thanked Ms. Bottali for spending a great deal of time working with the Department to fill the staffing holes.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns stated that the sub-committee will review the snow overtime and Skate Park account for the future budget. Ms. Dobbin also suggested that the sub-committee look into how the Department reports all positions for future staffing.

ADA Issues – Gina Carey

Ms. Carey stated that the Commission had co-sponsored the 20th ADA Birthday Celebration earlier this evening at Ballard Park. The event was a great success.

Aquatics-David Thaxter

In Mr. Thaxter’s absence, Ms. Bottali reported that the sub-committee is still negotiating with Ridgefield Aquatics Club on their annual contract. There was a lengthy discussion regarding additional hours, contract length, rental increases, annual maintenance costs and the mission of the department. The Commission agreed on the following:

- To propose to the RAC: a two year contract, 1200 hours fixed, @ \$68/hour a 2.5% increase and any additional hours must be compensated to P&R.

Mr. Roche will discuss this proposal with the members of RAC.

Old Business

No current issues.

New Business

No current issues.

The Commission adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Minutes Approved: _____

Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary

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