

**Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting
June 14, 2011**

In Attendance:

Barbara Dobbin, Chairwoman
Evie Bottali
Phil Kearns
David Thaxter
Gina Carey
Wayne Tinker

Paul J. Roche, Director
Robert Schneider, Asst. Director
Robin Matthews, Asst. Director
Eileen Cipolla, Accountant
Jane Byrnes, Rec'd Secty.

Meeting called to order by the Chairwoman at 7:35p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda as submitted was approved.

Minutes:

Mr. Tinker made corrections to the minutes. On page four, first paragraph should read "There were some suggestions on how to market the memberships and possibly getting input from....." Also, same page and paragraph should read "Some of these included....."
Mr. Thaxter and Ms. Bottali also made some corrections to the minutes. On page three, under Aquatics, should read "Mr. Thaxter reported that he had walked Martin Park Beach this morning, and he was impressed and pleased with the way the beach looked and it is ready for the opening this weekend." Also on page three, sixth paragraph should read, "It was stated that the all inclusive section of the Plan was a draft, with the final bundle to be determined in November."
The minutes as amended were approved.

Financial Status:

Report/Budget Summary

Ms. Cipolla reported that there were two emergency issues: one, repair of the air conditioning system at the Rec Center costing approximately \$10,000 and second, a-problem with the boiler pump at the Barlow Mountain facility, costing approximately \$5,000 have added to the Department's current year-end deficit. The Commission asked Ms. Cipolla for her "best guess" in the number gap between revenue and savings, she stated that our expense savings, including expense freezing, should cover our expected year-end revenue deficit. Ms. Cipolla stated that the staff is doing its best to save on expenses. The Chairwoman also expressed her thanks to the Department for working so hard on the savings.

The Accountant also reported that the total current summer camp registrations numbers (includes specialty camps) are ahead of last year's. Ms. Cipolla mentioned that a big registration push may come in at the end of June, giving us an additional amount of revenue. She felt that residents may be waiting until the last minute before deciding on camp schedules for their children.

Martin Park Beach revenue numbers for the month of May are ahead of last year's actuals and slightly ahead of budgeted numbers.

Chairwoman's Report:

The Chairwoman had no report at this time.

Director's Report:

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

- Staff Goals

The Department is working on the development of the fiscal year 2011-2012 staff goals.

- Martin Park Beach

The Director reported that the staff did a tremendous job with the Martin Park Beach rescue and the Department received high praise from both the Ridgefield Fire Department and the First Selectman.

- Ciuccoli Field

The Ciuccoli Field renovation project is going well. Fundraising efforts continue to be successful and the site is beginning to look like a professional stadium.

- Skate Park

The Director stated that the Park may have some future challenges with fundraising; however, the Parks' Supervisor and he are working together to try to meet these challenges.

The Director reported that he is working with an outside vendor on a pilot program to have food sold at Martin Park Beach.

The Chairwoman questioned a recent notice regarding the Board of Education's decision to cancel staffing for the Recreational Summer Camp program here at the Rec Center. This program provides specially trained staff to meet the needs of the campers eligible for any recreational services through their Independent Educational Plan. After a lengthy discussion regarding the program, policies, children, financial obligations, and staffing, the Commission decided to have the ADA sub-committee contact the BOE to clarify this situation.

The Assistant Directors reports were mailed directly (and will be mailed in the future), to the Commissioners in their monthly package.

Questions - Assistant Director-Recreation Report:

Mr. Kearns asked how the new Youth Development Programs Supervisor was doing in the position. Ms. Matthews stated that Ms. Maiorano is currently in the office two or three days a week and she has done a great job in her first few weeks. There will be a press release and a bio on her in the new program brochure. Mr. Roche stated that she has jumped right in and will be a great asset to the Department.

Questions - Assistant Director-Parks Report:

There were no questions from the Commission regarding Mr. Schneider's report. A copy of his report is attached.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings and Grounds- Mr. Tinker & Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

No current issues to report at this time.

ADA Issues – Gina Carey:

The Department is waiting until July 1 to begin the process of installation of the front door entrance way electronic doors.

Aquatics-David Thaxter:

Mr. Thaxter reported that the Department had received good publicity on the recent Martin Park Beach rescue. It was also mentioned what a great job the staff did during this situation.

Ms. Matthews mentioned that Fire Chief Burford and the First Selectman were both very supportive and praised the P&R staff and Department on its handling of this incident.

Programs & Long Range Planning-Evie Bottali:

Membership Report:

Ms. Bottali reported that recreation memberships are leveling off; wellness memberships are ahead of last year's year-to-date actuals, but down to this year's budget. Lap memberships are down slightly but ahead of last year's actuals. There was some discussion regarding the lap membership numbers and the reasons behind this slight decrease. The Commission discussed the option of a possible member survey to help answer this question. There was also a discussion on the effect this decrease would have on our out of town memberships.

The Commission asked if the Department was working on filling the open Rec Marketing Program Development Supervisor's position and if the current job responsibilities were meeting the Department's needs. Ms. Matthews stated that they are currently interviewing approximately seven candidates for the position and Ms. Schroppe has been covering the work, and working specifically on the program brochure. It was stated that this position plays an integral part in identifying programs and memberships that generate revenue for the Department.

Ms. Bottali and Ms. Carey will meet next week to review the candidate interviews to date and discuss options, should the position not be filled by the time Ms. Schroppe leaves. Mr. Roche stated that he feels that Town Hall is supportive of this position.

Ms. Bottali summarized and reviewed the proposed Health Club Membership all inclusive package to the Commission. Some of the items discussed included:

- Reason to consider this type of membership package
- Various package options
- Examples of other health club packages and comparison
- Pricing options
- Revenue assumptions/estimates/impacts
- Current options/current programs

The Commission had some questions regarding what the impact would be on revenue/membership should they decide to incorporate an all inclusive membership package. They also had some questions regarding child-sitting revenue; the hours of operation and exactly what type of members/non-members are currently using this service.

The Chairwoman asked Ms. Bottali what she was looking for as a next step. It was decided that the Commission would look at the proposal and forward Evie their questions, comments and any concerns. A final decision would be made at the November Commission meeting and if approved, start up in January, 2012. It was also mentioned that member feedback may be needed before a final decision.

The Commission and Director thanked Ms. Bottali for her hard work in putting together this proposal.

Old Business: Spray Bay

The Director reported that he has spoken with a Foundation and a private donator regarding this project and that he will touch base with the committee regarding its thoughts on moving forward with the project.

New Business:

No current business.

Meeting adjourned 9:03pm

Minutes Approved: _____
Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary

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

