Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Special Meeting
May 25, 2011

In Attendance:

Barbara Dobbin, Chairwoman	Paul J. Roche, Director
Evie Bottali	
Jon Chase	Robin Matthews, Asst. Director
David Thaxter	Eileen Cipolla, Accountant
Gina Carey	Jane Byrnes, Rec'd Secty.
Wayne Tinker	

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

Guests
Jamie B. Telegadis, 172 Mimosa Circle, Ridgefield, CT
Lili Schroppe, 48 Barry Avenue, Ridgefield, CT

Ms. Dobbin introduced guests and welcomed guests to the meeting.

Approval of Agenda:
The agenda as submitted was approved.

Minutes:
Ms. Bottali made a correction to the April, 2011 minutes. On page four, first paragraph, should read: "Ms. Bottali reported that both recreation and wellness membership levels were soft; while April lap memberships were above April of last year (in addition, actual revenue exceeded budget)." The minutes as amended were approved.

Financial Status
Report/Budget Summary
Ms. Cipolla reported that year-to-date revenue is down. Ms. Cipolla also mentioned that year-to-date expense savings are expected to cover the revenue deficit.

Chairwoman's Report
The Chairwoman had no report at this time and any current issues would be covered under the Director's report.

Director's Report:
Mr. Roche reported that he is working on the following projects:

The Director reported that the Department has hired two new employees; Andrea Maiorano and Andrea Coles. Both will be great assets to the Department.

- Building Activities
  The staff is currently working on the development of the new spin room. The bids for the equipment and construction costs are out, and the program should be up and running by September.
- Outdoor Fitness Garden
  Mr. Roche mentioned that the Fitness Garden had its grand opening ceremony in early May. The equipment was installed last fall and the flooring has been installed. Mr. Roche stated that the opening ceremony was well

attended by Founders Hall members, the First Selectman, Commissioners, and the Goldstone Family and Couri Family.

- 911 Memorial
  The Director mentioned that the sub-committee has received over $38,000 in donations to-date and the project will begin construction soon.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Department's involvement with specific fundraising projects.

- Ciuccoli Field
  The Ciuccoli Field renovation project is going well. Fundraising efforts continue to be successful. The crews have installed new sod, a new scoreboard has been installed, and the project as a whole, is very impressive. Mr. Roche invited the Commissioners to visit the site.
- Skate Park
  The Director stated that the Park is doing well and that he is meeting with the Supervisor weekly to review budget and expenses. Mr. Roche reported that there may be some future challenges with fundraising; however, the Parks' Supervisor and he are working together to try to meet these challenges.
- Spray Bay
  The Director reported that he has spoken with a Foundation regarding this project and that he will touch base with the committee regarding its thoughts on moving forward with the project.

Assistant Director-Parks

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

- Mr. Roche reported that the "IPM" program is currently in progress on the Town's athletic fields. Mr. Roche mentioned that the fields will show some damage and they may have to have additional resting times due to this program.
- The crews are busy with Main Street plantings and clean-up for the Memorial Parade on Monday.
- New sand has been purchased and spread on Martin Park Beach, along with the clean-up. The beach will be ready for opening this weekend.
- The approved capital fencing projects are currently underway.
- Ms. Manners has 21 CHIRP concerts scheduled for this year in Ballard Park. There was some discussion regarding Parks and Recreation's role with staffing of these events.
- The spin room construction is currently underway and will be ready for opening by September 1st.
- The crews have been busy with spring cleaning of the Recreation Center outdoor grounds.
- The Firemen's Annual Carnival is scheduled for next month, the agreement letter has been sent and the same rules apply as last year.
- The Fitness Garden opened this month, and the crews laid the rubberized flooring.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

Ms. Matthews reported on the following:

- Ms. Matthews reported that she has been working with Andrea Maiorano, the new Youth Program Supervisor, developing program strategies. Ms. Matthews has also been working with Caitlin Stanton, the Head Camp Coordinator on the various camp activities and interviewing for staff. The staff is also working on revising the staff manual. The camp coordinator will be attending the Memorial Parade to promote our summer camp program.
- Ms. Matthews discussed the new proposed security issues.

- Ms. Matthews is also working with the staff on the Department's Strategic Plan.
- Ms. Matthews also mentioned that training for the Martin Park Beach staff and the summer camp staff has begun.
- The Wellness Supervisor has been working on developing several new wellness series programs for the upcoming season. We have also been reviewing the new spin program which will begin in September.
- The Pickleball tournament is currently underway with over 51 participants and 7-10 volunteers.
- Ms. Matthews also mentioned that her staff is working on information for the upcoming fall program brochure which will go out in August.

Mr. Roche stated that Ms. Matthews has been "burning the mid-night oil" and working on weekends. He continued by saying, "Robin has done a great job filling in for the various positions." Mr. Roche thanked Ms. Matthews for the good work she is doing.

Sub-Committee Reports:
Buildings and Grounds- Mr. Tinker & Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:
No current issues to report at this time.

ADA Issues – Gina Carey:
Mr. Roche stated that the automatic doors for the front entrance have been approved as a capital project for 2011-2012 and that installation will begin after July 1.

Aquatics-David Thaxter
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 seemed ready for the opening this weekend.

Programs & Long Range Planning-Evie Bottali:
Membership Report
Ms. Bottali summarized and reviewed the Executive Summary section of the 2011-2012 Marketing Plan. Ms. Bottali mentioned the details involved in the development of the plan. Some key points covered included:

- Defining some key areas for revenue growth.
- Strategic growth in the aquatic area.
- New youth programming and enrichment classes.
- Developing a list of the top priorities for the first half of FY 2011-2012.
- The development of an all-inclusive membership option.

Ms. Bottali covered the above in detail and asked that the Commission review the summary, along with reviewing the entire Marketing Plan (the Plan will be e-mailed to them tomorrow). Ms. Bottali asked that the Commission forward her any questions, comments, suggestions and opinions on the Plan. Ms. Bottali and the sub-committee would like the Commission's suggestions as soon as possible so a formal presentation can be made at the next meeting.

The sub-committee would like feedback from the other Commissioners to help develop the package for the new all-inclusive membership. It was stated that the all inclusive section of the Plan was difficult to determine what areas should be bundled together.

The Commission also discussed at length, promoting and selling the monthly membership payment program. It was suggested that this be published in the next program brochure and promoted at the front desk. There was also some discussion regarding adjusting revenue streams should the monthly payment program be popular.

The Commission stated that Lili Schroppe put together the deck and did a great job in getting the important issues developed. Ms. Matthews and her staff also did a great job coming up with the ideas that have been added to the Plan. The Commission stated that the challenge will be in implementing the Plan and assuring that the Department stays on track.

There were some suggestions on how to market the memberships and possible getting input from the public on what they are looking for in a Rec Center. Some of theses included; advertising the benefits of classes and memberships and making the public aware of all the facilities. It was mentioned that a focus group or possibly interviewing members face to face may be helpful.

The Commission Chairwoman suggested that in order to concentrate on specific Commission issues; such as the Strategic Plan, that during the monthly meetings, the Assistant Director's reports be written and submitted in the package. If there are any questions, the Commissioners can ask at the meeting.

Old Business
No current issues.

New Business
No current business.

Meeting adjourned 9:00pm

Minutes Approved:_____
Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary

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