

**Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Meeting  
October 18, 2011**

In Attendance:

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

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 7:30p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:**

The agenda as submitted was approved.

No guests to introduce.

Due to timing issues, the Chairwoman asked that the Business Items/Reports be moved up on the agenda.

**Assistant Director-Recreation Report:**

Ms. Matthews reported that she is working with her staff on filling in the gaps in the program section. Ms. Matthews also reported that the Oktoberfest community event was a great success with over 400 people attending throughout the day. The department had a "candy corn" contest which collected e-mail addresses from attendees. The department offered an e-mail coupon to those who gave their e-mail addresses. Overall the department felt the event was a success and is planning to host two other events. The Director mentioned that the goal of this event was to promote memberships and obtain e-mail addresses for future notices on programs and activities. The Commission mentioned that the event was scheduled at an opportune time, but we should maintain a balance between program and revenue. They also asked if Ms. Matthews had a total number of new members received from this event. Ms. Matthews mentioned that she does not have the final numbers, but she will report to the Commission at next meeting.

There was a discussion about obtaining the e-mail addresses from the sports groups.

A pre-school fair is scheduled tomorrow at the Center and the department will host tours, program signups and class information for those attending.

There were no other questions on Ms. Matthews' e-mailed report.

**Assistant Director-Parks Report:**

Mr. Schneider provided photos of his recent projects. These projects included:

- A new entranceway, kiosk, new dog watering stations and improvements to the drain have been done at the Dog Park.
- The department did some safety improvements on the school grounds and playground areas.
- The department also did some drainage repairs at Richardson Park, along with garden improvements.
- The Tiger Hollow turf project was completed and the field looks great. The department also did some surface improvements on the cross-country trail at the high school.

- Mr. Schneider described for the Commission the Martin Park Beach dam project and mentioned that it was a great success. Mr. Schneider feels that the siphoning system will help solve the weed problem. Mr. Schneider would like to install the siphon permanently.

Ms. Bottali mentioned that the Tiger Hollow facility had been left in a mess after the recent SCOR tournament. Mr. Schneider explained that he is working with the high school to resolve the situation. He also stated that the Parks and Rec staff did its job in cleaning its areas of responsibility.

**Sub-Committee Reports:**

**Aquatics-David Thaxter:**

No current issues.

**Buildings and Grounds- Mr. Tinker:**

No current issues to report at this time.

The Commission asked if there was any up-date from the Volunteer Firemen regarding the East Ridge Middle School field issues. After a discussion, it was decided that the sub-committee would contact the Volunteer Firemen in writing, regarding this issue.

Ms. Dobbins asked Mr. Schneider to look at the vines that are overgrown on the Rec Center trail.

**Minutes:**

There were several changes to the minutes; which included:

On page (3) three under "Questions-Assistant Director-Recreation Report", second sentence, correction to the spelling of Andrea Maiorano name.

On page (3) three under "Hurricane Irene" add the following sentence; "The Commission identified the need for a generator at the Recreation Center and the Commission will work with the Fire Chief to request this item on the Emergency Operations Center capital budget."

On page (2) two, third paragraph should read: "The Commission was in agreement that a Town sinking fund is recommended."

On page (2) two, under Chairwoman's Report, should read: "Ms. Dobbins reported on a comment she had received from a member regarding the condition of the facility and the outage of the televisions in the Wellness Center."

The minutes as amended were approved.

**Director's Report:**

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

- The Director is working with the staff on the second half of the department's strategic plan. A meeting is scheduled for Thursday. The department has also held some focus groups to help meet our goals and where to head in the future.
- The Director reported that he will be attending a Connecticut legislative meeting regarding the pest management laws. He mentioned that a SCOR representative had been invited to attend the meeting. Again, it was stated that Connecticut needs to get the support of the sports groups behind this issue.
- Mr. Roche reported that the painting at Lake Windwing had been completed and the buildings look great.

The Commission mentioned that for aesthetic purposes, the Guild of Artist would be painting the side of the Parks and Rec building that faces the Guild of Artist.

- Mr. Roche continued stating that only two bids had come in for the vending at the Rec Center. A brief discussion ensued regarding the bids.
- The maintenance staff will be doing some work around the building including; painting the locker rooms and lockers. Mr. Roche stated that during the winter months, the outdoor maintenance staff will refinish the lobby furniture.
- The Town's fall event this past weekend went very well, and Parks and Recreation did a great job with the haunted hay ride. Staff members volunteered to help with the event.

The Commission asked when the spin equipment was arriving and when the program would begin. Mr. Roche mentioned that the equipment is in the United States and will be shipped out this week.

**Programs & Long Range Planning-Evie Bottali:**

**Membership Report:**

Ms. Bottali reported that memberships are soft across the board. Ms. Bottali reported that the sub-committee is working on a revised membership report which will give a clearer financial picture.

Ms. Bottali presented the committee with the revised membership pricing package requests. After a review of the plan, the Chairwoman asked the sub-committee to present an executive summary so that the Commission can vote on this issue at the November meeting. The Commission would like to have the revised membership package plan in effective by the first of the year so it can correspond with the 2012 promotions. This item will be added to the November agenda.

The Commission thanked Ms. Bottali for all her hard work.

**Financial Status:**

**Report/Budget Summary**

Ms. Cipolla stated that her financial report reveals some areas of concern in membership; however, overall expense savings is covering revenue concerns. Ms. Cipolla mentioned that she had received an e-mail from the Town's Controller regarding the department's soft revenue. Mr. Kearns mentioned that he will respond to the Board of Finance as Chairman of the Budget Sub-Committee. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the department's coverage of revenue deficits.

**Budget & Policy:**

Mr. Kearns stated that the sub-committee will begin the 2012-2013 capital budget process early next month.

**ADA Issues:**

The Chairwoman asked Mr. Roche for a follow-up on the automatic doors for the front entrance. Mr. Roche stated that the Department has received two prices and is currently waiting on the third. An electrician has been contacted and the project should begin shortly.

The Commission asked if Parks and Rec had jurisdiction of the barn across from Ridgebury School. The Assistant Director-Parks responded no.

**Chairwoman's Report:**

There was a discussion regarding keeping the members and staff up-to-date on the various department events, activities, new programs, new equipment, etc. and the importance of getting

the word out to them. Mr. Roche mentioned that the department is working on this process now through weekly information meetings.

The Commission also recommended running various videos on the plasma screen for our new equipment, classes and programs. It was also suggested that the department host two free Town events for all residents and one event free for members and a small fee for non-members.

Ms. Dobbin reported that the televisions in the Wellness Center have been repaired and are all working.

Ms. Dobbin would also like a follow-up sheet to be added to the Commission package which would include all outstanding sub-committee and Department issues. This would help keep items from falling through the cracks.

The Chairwoman also asked the Commission for suggestions on a replacement for the open Commission position. It was decided that she and Mr. Roche will write a job description which would include the talents the Commission is looking for to fill the position. It was mentioned that they are looking for someone with a marketing/business and/or youth education background. The Chairwoman and Director will get together to develop the description.

The Commission asked if the Buildings and Grounds sub-committee needed any additional members until the open Commission position is filled. The sub-committee mentioned they could wait until the position is filled.

**Old Business:**

No current issues.

**New Business:**

No current business.

Meeting adjourned 8:45 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.**