

**Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission**
February 23, 2010

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Vice Chairman
Evie Bottali
David Thaxter

Paul J. Roche, Director
Robin Matthews, Asst. Director
Eileen Cipolla, Accountant
Robert Schneider, Asst. Director

Meeting called to order by the Vice Chairman at 8:15 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

The Vice Chairman asked that item (a) Under Old Business – “911 Memorial” be moved up on the agenda. The agenda as amended was approved.

Guests:

Mr. Stephen Zemo – 911 Memorial Committee
Mr. Chris Curnan – 911 Memorial Committee

Mr. Kearns introduced and welcomed guests.

As requested, Mr. Zemo came back to the Commission with a site plan and summary for the proposed 911 Memorial.

The following questions were discussed:

- Is the drawing to scale; if so, the Commission thought the original proposal was much smaller and placement was more towards the southern corner?
- Is there any additional maintenance involved with this structure and surrounding area?
- Are the families involved with the event aware of the exhibit?
- What future impact is there on the site for P&R with regards to future development?
- Can the site be developed to have a “more park-like setting?”

The Commission was satisfied with the answers to the above. The plan had the approval of the Commissioners present; however, they wanted the 911 Committee to enhance the area by having a more “park-like feeling.” The Commission also wanted to touch base with Commission Chair regarding her insight as to what she agreed to at the original site meeting.

Without a quorum, the vote will be moved to a special meeting set for February 25, 2010. The Director and Asst. Director will walk the site on Wednesday.

Mr. Zemo thanked the Commission for its support.

Minutes:

Mr. Thaxter had a correction to the minutes of the January, 2010 meeting. On page four, “Aquatics – David Thaxter”, should read “Mr. Thaxter reported that Collene Gregory had submitted the Ridgefield Parks and Recreation as a candidate to host the Connecticut Lifeguard Competition.”

The minutes as amended were approved.

Financial Status

Report/Budget Summary

Ms. Cipolla reported that budget revenue is down; however, the Department is monitoring expenses to cover revenue deficits. Additional budget discussions will be covered under the sub-committee’s report.

Chairwoman’s Report:

Due to the absence of the Chairwoman, there was no report available at this time.

Director’s Report:

Mr. Roche reported he is working on the following items:

Barlow Mountain Pool

- The Pool Committee fundraising project is moving along with the development of a fundraising brochure, presentation and grant requests. To-date the Committee has received over \$54,000 in pledges.

Building Accessibility

- The Director reported that he had met with the sub-committee regarding the development of the “Vision Plan” that will help support the goal that all P&R facilities/parks are made accessible.
- The Commission reviewed the proposed “Vision Plan” that focuses on Accessibility and Practicality. The Plan includes proposed sites by order of priority, with the most important being the doors at the Rec Center. The Director stated that two projects have already been completed, those being: the Rec Center Trail and the access to Ballard Park. The Committee would like to announce the Vision and Accessibility Plan to the Town during a 20th anniversary celebration of the National ADA program in July. The Committee is considering moving the July 27, 2010 Commission meeting to Ballard Park to make the announcement.

SPIF

- The SPIF Valentine’s Dance was held at the Rec Center on Thursday the 18th with over 100 senior citizens attending.

Strategic Plan

- The Director reported that due to weather scheduling conflicts, the second quarter staff goals meeting will be held tomorrow.

Outdoor Fitness Program

- The Director reported that he had met with his committee to develop a plan for the development of an outdoor life fitness trail/area to help foster exercise for adults and seniors. The Director presented a site plan for the proposed area. The Commission discussed calling this plan the “outdoor accessible exercise area.” The Commission encourages the Director to add this to the list of Department achievements.
- The Commission also discussed expanding programming to meet the needs of these particular age groups and Founders Hall involvement with new programming.
- The Director mentioned that the committee is looking for funding to come from both private donations and partial from the Town.
- The Commission had some questions regarding responsibility for liability, staffing, flooring and site maintenance. The Director mentioned that the area would be similar to that of a children’s playground.

The Director reviewed several complimentary letters received from various organizations and members regarding staff and services at P&R.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

Ms. Matthews reported that she is trying to meet with her Supervisors to gather information for the upcoming spring/summer programming. March 1 begins summer camp registrations.

The Assistant Director reported on a new theatre program.

The Annual Egg Scramble is scheduled for March 27 with a snow/rain date of the 28. P&R does this joint event with the Rotary Club.

The Asst. Director stated that she will be attending the CRPA Quarterly Conference in Hartford, CT tomorrow, along with Collene Gregory.

Ms. Matthews reported that she and Meredith Towers are working together with the Marketing Sub-Committee gathering information for future reports. A meeting is planned for Friday, February 26.

The Commission questioned the results of the three month membership promotion. Ms. Matthews stated that approximately 80 people had registered. The Commission suggested that Ms. Matthews follow up with a call to those who purchased the promotional memberships to get feedback on future memberships.

Membership Report

The Assistant Director reported that memberships are still on the upward trend; however as she has mentioned in the past, we are seeing a leveling off of the numbers.

The Commission would also like to focus on developing a survey to touch base with those lap and wellness members whose memberships have lapsed.

Assistant Director-Parks:

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- The outdoor crews are busy working on winter clean-up and snow removal.
- The crews are also working on indoor maintenance projects such as painting at the Recreation Center and the garage, along with installing lighting on the outside of the garage.

- Mr. Schneider mentioned that the Annual Fields Meeting went well and all teams seemed satisfied with the outcome. Mr. Schneider stated that there may be some future challenges with football should the team split.
- Some of the staff members have attended various outside seminars including repairing of mowers and an arbor class, there has also been in-house cross training of the staff (to help with time management).
- Mr. Schneider stated that the Department has come to an agreement with the High School with regard to the running of summer camp programs at Tiger Hollow. There was a brief discussion regarding disbursement of revenue from these programs.
- The Assistant Director reported that the sub-committee had come to an agreement for another year, with the Rebels regarding compliancy with the Criteria for Field Use Agreement. The Commission thanked Mr. Schneider for his continued support and for making good progress with this situation.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Programs & Long Range Planning-Evie Bottali

Ms. Bottali stated that due to weather related scheduling conflicts no new meetings were held; however, the staff continues to gather pricing and membership data so that the sub-committee in conjunction with the staff can develop alternative pricing and membership packages for consideration. There was also some discussion regarding the possibility of offering personal training and the current market trends.

Mr. Kearns asked about the status on providing corporate memberships. Ms. Matthews stated that she did not know where they stood; however, Mr. Roche reported that the VNA has signed on and that Ms. Towers was meeting with them this week. Currently, the Chef's Warehouse is signed on. The Commission also questioned how the corporate memberships are represented in the membership report. Mr. Roche will check and get back to the Commission.

Buildings and Grounds- Mr. Tinker/Mr. Kearns

Covered above under Assistant Director's report.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns stated that the next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 25 at 3:30pm to discuss the budget. Mr. Kearns stated that he will be presenting both the operating and capital budgets at this meeting. Mr. Kearns summarized his presentation for the Commission.

ADA-Gina Carey

Covered above under Director's report.

Aquatics-David Thaxter

Mr. Thaxter reported that Ridgefield Parks and Recreation had been chosen to host the Annual Lifeguard Competition at Martin Park Beach this year. Mr. Thaxter felt that this event had a two-fold opportunity; one, it would be a great opportunity to market the Beach and two, the event would also give some positive publicity to Parks and Recreation.

Old Business

Richardson Park Project

This item has been moved to the March, 2010 meeting.

New Business

No current issues.

The Commission adjourned at 9:26pm.

Minutes Approved: _____
Wayne H. Tinker, Secretary

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