

**Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission**  
June 16, 2009

In Attendance:

Barbara Dobbin, Chairwoman

Phil Kearns, Vice Chairman

Wayne Tinker, Secretary

Gina Carey

Jon Chase

David Thaxter

Evie Bottali

Paul J. Roche, Director

Eileen Cipolla, Accountant

Jane Byrnes, Recording Secty.

Meeting called to order by the Chairwoman at 8:03 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:**

The agenda as submitted was approved.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The Chairwoman made a correction to the minutes of the May meeting. On page two, second sentence should read: "Mr. Kearns suggested that the Chairwoman ask the First Selectman for a copy of the most current proposed agreement." Also, Mr. Tinker made a correction. On page two, under Assistant Director-Parks, first sentence should read: "Mr. Schneider attended the Tiger Hollow annual meeting."

The minutes as amended were approved.

**Chairwoman's Report:**

Ms. Dobbin stated that she had met with the First Selectman regarding the Sturges Park issues, and that she had in fact had the opportunity to look over the agreement. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the Commission's position on this issue and the terms of the agreement. After the discussion, Jon Chase made the following motion:

**MOVE** The Parks and Recreation Commission does not support any further concessions regarding the Sturges Park Entrance. Instead, an easement should be given to the owner of the adjacent property so access to his property is assured.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Kearns and unanimously passed.

Ms. Dobbin also reported that she had met with the First Selectman to introduce herself as the new Chairwoman of the Commission. The meeting was very positive. She had also met with the new Town Controller who stated that the Parks and Recreation Department has been very helpful with the budget process and he is very confident in Ms. Cipolla, the Department's Accountant. They also discussed the way the Department's

finances are reported and possible future changes. Ms. Dobbin also mentioned that she had met with the two Assistant Directors as an introduction.

**Director's Report:**

The Director reported on the following:

The MacDonald-Pin dance recital was a great success and the program continues to be successful.

The Department has been working with three interns from Ridgefield High School, educating them on all facets of the Department.

Training is being held for the staff on an up-dated Red Cross swim lesson program for infants.

Mr. Roche reported that there have been some press releases and notices posted regarding turf field safety issues. There was much discussion regarding the issue and the lack of notification to the Commission prior to the posting of these signs. Due to jurisdiction issues, the Commission felt that the issue should have been brought to its attention prior to the posting. The Commission requested the Director to follow-up with the Director of Health. Mr. Chase mentioned that the Commission may have challenges in the future regarding the replacement of the turf fields. The Chairwoman will touch base with the First Selectman to follow-up on the issue.

One of the two Parks large dump trucks has been taken out of service. Mr. Schneider is working with the Town Mechanic for further directions.

Mr. Kearns mentioned that the continued cuts on our capital expenditure budget are now beginning to snowball as replacements have been requested for several years and deferred.

Spring outdoor clean-up is behind due to the rainy weather. Mr. Thaxter mentioned that the lacrosse fields are in great shape and that the crews are doing a good job.

The Skate Park will be relocated to the Veterans Park School playground near the basketball courts. There was much discussion regarding the effect the relocation would have on the Park's revenue, regarding the disruption of classes, camps and daily membership. Mr. Roche stated that the "grand reopening" would take place after the new site is constructed. Mr. Kearns requested that the Director contact the Controller requesting him for a "revenue release" for this season stating possible revenue shortfalls for this period.

The Director is working with the volunteers from Ridgefield Aquatic Club regarding the improvements to the Barlow Mountain pool. Mr. Roche presented a sample of material which could be used to cover the cracks in the pool. Mr. Roche mentioned that RAC is working on fundraising for this project as suggested by the Aquatic Sub-Committee.

The construction of the ADA accessible walkway in Ballard Park has been slow due to weather conditions, along with the completion of the trail around the Rec Center.

**Assistant Director-Recreation:**

Covered under the Director report.

**Assistant Director-Parks:**

Covered under the Director's report.

**Sub-Committee Reports:**

**Buildings and Grounds- Mr. Tinker**

Mr. Tinker reported that Mr. Schneider has had some correspondence with the Rebels regarding the Criteria for Field Use. Mr. Kearns mentioned that he and Ms. Dobbin had met with First Selectman regarding this issue. Mr. Kearns mentioned that Mr. Marconi would like to have this issued reviewed by the Town attorney regarding any legal liabilities.

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

Ms. Bottali presented to the Commission the Department's FY 2010 Action Plan. After review of the plan, the Commission thanked Ms. Bottali, Mr. Roche and his staff for the great job. Ms. Bottali stated that this is also a working document to be used by the Department's Supervisors to establish their 2010 goals and will be tied into their annual review. Mr. Roche stated that the staff worked hard on the development of this plan and they had some concerns regarding the current economic situation and the effect it may have on meeting their objectives. Mr. Roche stated that the Department will be working with the Commission on their concerns.

The following motion was made by Evie Bottali:

**RESOLVE** to accept the Parks and Recreation FY 2010 Action Plan as amended.

The motion was seconded by Phil Kearns and passed unanimously.

**Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns**

Mr. Kearns submitted the "Maintenance Staff Reduction Impact" report. Mr. Roche summarized the reduction of service plan to the Commission for their approval. After discussion and amendments, the Commission will forward the revised document to the First Selectman and BOS. It was suggested that the Commission request to be on the BOS agenda to present the report.

After much discussion, questions and comments, the Commission amended the document, and made the following motion:

**RESOLVE** to approve the "Maintenance Staff Reduction Impact" report as amended.

The motion was seconded by Jon Chase and passed unanimously.

**Financial Status**

**Report/Budget Summary**

Ms. Cipolla summarized for the Commission the year-to-date revenue comparison report. A discussion took place regarding the revenue numbers. Ms. Cipolla mentioned that the Department is still waiting for a few outstanding payments from the Town's sport groups. Ms. Cipolla also reported that the expenses continue to cover revenue deficits.

**Membership**

Mr. Roche reported that all memberships are showing a decrease this month. Mr. Kearns questioned the revenue numbers for the summer camp program and the amount of publicity covering the camps. Mr. Roche stated that there will be two ads in the Ridgefield Press over the next few weeks: one for Martin Park Beach and one for summer camp. Mr. Roche also stated that several school flyers had been delivered to each elementary school.

**ADA-Gina Carey**

No report at this time.

**Aquatics-David Thaxter**

No report at this time.

**Old Business**

No report at this time.

With no further business, the Commission adjourned at 9:45 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.**