

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 13, 2012

The regular monthly meeting of the Commission was held at Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. with the following in attendance:

Robert Ferrigno (Presiding)	Anthony Chmielewski
Kevin Bellows	Marie Petti
Nancy Walsh	Richard Moore
Kenneth Martin	Nicholas Bragano
Vin Lipinski	Roger McGovern

Also,
First Selectman Timothy M. Herbst
Park Superintendent Dmitri Paris
Recreation Director Mary Markham

Guests:
Stu Needleman, 16 Squire Court (Ball Leagues)
Doug Imri, 32 Ridgeview Avenue (Little League)
Mark Fritz, 13 Fernwood Road (Babe Ruth League)
Anthony Vinci, Longmeadow Road (American Legion Teams)
Jeff Blueweiss, 63 Coventry Lane (Little League)
Kevin Carley, Saranee Circle (Pisces)
James Blose, Old Tree Farm Lane (Titans)
Paula Pessaro, 47 Quail Trail (Donna Festa Tournament)
Paul Crisci, Shelton (Donna Festa Tournament)
Benita and Robby Barhpaga, 460 Edison Road (Cheetah Cricket Club)
Rick Bushnell, 19 Camelot Road (AYSO)
Peter Tinnesz, 39 Cranbury Drive (Lacrosse)
Ted Chase, 28 Frances Street (Lacrosse)
Rick Vieira, 575 White Plains Road (Christian Heritage School)

Chairman welcomed First Selectman Herbst who attended to speak briefly to the Commission to touch upon some issues that have come up over the past several weeks concerning Town personnel and this newly constituted merged commission. He explained that Town personnel are agents of administrative policy. The role of commissions and boards is very much one of policy making. The First Selectman used as an analogy that boards and commissions are the “what” and Town personnel is the “how”. The boards and commissions of the Town adopt policy and the staff serves in an administrative capacity to implement said policy. The First Selectman indicated that he is making it a practice of addressing all boards and commissions to make sure there is a clear understanding of the distinction of policymaking and administrative delegation. The First Selectman said that several instances have been brought to his attention where Town personnel is making ad hoc policy and in turn, members of boards and commissions are attempting to enforce policy as if they are Town employees. With this clarification, some of the issues we experience can and will be avoided going forward. The First Selectman indicated that if any commissioners have concerns with the job performance of Town personnel in administering policy, they should contact him directly.

Dr. Bellows noted the large number of guests this evening and that we may need a different meeting place to accommodate larger numbers of guests. Selectman Herbst said they would make arrangements for the space we need going forward.

Stu Needleman, on behalf of the Ball Leagues:

Mr. Needleman distributed copies as a Trumbull Baseball request for fields for Trumbull Little League (Baseball and Softball), Trumbull Babe Ruth League (ages 13-18), Trumbull Legion (Jr. and Sr), Trumbull Travel (ages 9-12) and Trumbull Travel (ages 13-15). He said they are coming to the Parks and Recreation Commission for fields scheduling as a "Program" to meet the requirements of our new policy of providing a binder complete with all required information as soon as available. He said the programs are working together to meet our requirements. This process would be much more uniform for the kids and the residents. They ask that we then define what meeting date we would want for them to come back for a presentation.

Chairman questioned why not a separation of leagues as in the past? Response: They are working together as one unit.

Mr. Martin questioned who manages field use? Response: each league manages its own field use.

Mr. Lipinski questioned how three leagues can be represented by one entity?

Anthony Vinci, American Legion, responded there would be an accountable individual for each group. Tonight, they are just trying to document field needs and what fields they are requesting.

Chairman noted that this Commission would feel more comfortable with individual representatives who are the spokesmen for each league.

Stu Needleman on behalf of Babe Ruth League read through their written request.

Doug Imri, read through Trumbull Little League written request.

Superintendent indicated that the conditions of the Little League overhaul of fields this past fall is good. They did a good job with installing the sod.

Upon response to a question, the starting up date is between the first and the third week of April. Field Closure signs will be provided. Goal for fall and spring will be no practice on the rehabilitated fields. Only skinned infields will be used for practices. Fall Ball field usage basically same as spring scheduling and ends in October. Jeff Blueweiss continues as president of Little League.

Festa Tournament:

Chairman questioned: Will Paula Passaro continue to be the point person with Little League and this Commission? Mr. Imri felt she will be the liaison person.

Stu Needleman said Babe Ruth is still in the process of fund raising for fall rehab of the Babe Ruth Unity field either this fall or next.

Mark Fritz, Babe Ruth: This past fall they re-cut the edges, tapered to take out lips to get them through the season. They documented all the sprinkler heads. They are developing the drawings to refurbish the field at Unity. If they close this fall, they will need another field scheduled for fall ball.

Anthony Vinci on behalf of American Legion read written request.

Chairman asked when do they select their All Stars... do try-outs take place before season starts. Response was yes. Upon question, Mr. Vinci responded that a player needs to play with the core league to be on All Stars. There are no scholarships. Fee is from \$1,200 to \$1,300. Families with multiple players get a \$100 discount per player.

Kevin Carley, Saranee Circle on behalf of Pisces:

He reported that Pisces has elected a Board of Directors. They are moving forward to comply with information requested...financials, tax returns, minutes, bylaws. They will have all their information in to us by March 1st.

Recreation Director indicated that she does have some of the information in already from the previous Board...Tax Form for 2010, Rosters, Insurance Certificate. They are a newly organized group and creating their By Laws now. Still need one background check to come in. They will provide copies of all the agendas and minutes that are available.

Question on non-resident swimmers: they will be through by mid-April. There were 8 non-resident swimmers. There are now 6 non-resident swimmers who will finish with this current season.

Upon question:

- Tryout Acceptance: 40 try-outs, 15-30 taken.
- Must be able to swim two laps in the pool for consideration.
- Current swimmers automatically get a slot the next season.
- Fees: Group 1, \$1,269
Group 2, \$1,639
Group 3, \$2,000
- Differences are pool use time allotted.
- Younger age groups fit more into the swim lane.

Jim Blose, Trumbull Titans:

Submitted a binder with their required information.

Looking for Practice field time Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 from April to early July. Currently use Long Hill School field and Upper Madison Avenue.

Jeff Blueweiss, Trumbull Little League President, arrived. Responded to questions concerning the Festa Tournament.

He explained that Little League has sponsored this group since 2008 to hold its Tournament at the Little League Fields at Unity Park. In giving permission for the tournament, the Park Commission indicated it would have to be a fundraiser for Trumbull Little League and the net profit would have to be donated to Trumbull Little League. In October, Trumbull Little League and the Park Commission requested a financial accounting of the tournaments as well as a meeting concerning prescribed field use requirements. At this point in time, Little League still has not received the requested financial report nor attendance at a Park Commission meeting by their designated Trumbull liaison and tournament requestor Paula Passaro to respond to questions concerning field use responsibilities has not taken place.

Mr. Paul Crisi, one of the Tournament board members, was in attendance was critical of the information being requested. He took exception with Little Leagues requiring Paula Passaro as liaison.

Chairman asked why we haven't received the financials.

Mr. Crisi said the money is supposed to be earmarked for installing a bullpen at the park which has not been done. They haven't seen a plan yet. Not heard a single word about it.

Chairman said we are not asking for their proposal with Little League. We ask for financials. In order for them to use the facilities, they need to be sponsored by Little League. There are two issues, financials have not been presented and the Commission had issues with the Tournament Committee not complying with the Town's Noise Ordinance and park use regulations this past fall. They need to address these issues.

Mr. Crisi said the Tournament is very nice and a very successful program.

Chairman said that transparency of every group that comes before us is required and they won't be exempt from that.

Mr. Crisi repeated that this is a very nice event, the Trumbull Sea Hawks girls are Trumbull residents. If their relationship with Little League is broken they will take the Tournament to Monroe. They haven't gotten the answers they need from Little League. The money is earmarked for girls softball.

Mr. Blueweiss said Mr. Crisi had graphically illustrated here why he cannot be the liaison with Trumbull Little League. Little League would have gone forward as long as they were informed. Mr. Crisi said he had no notice of requests to attend the November meeting of the Park Commission; however, the very evening of the meeting, Mr. Blueweiss sent an email, of which the Park Commission was on copy, stating exactly what was required by the Commission and what was needed. Despite that, no one appeared at the November meeting. Nothing came to the Commission or to Little League to comply with the mandates of the Commission. Multiple follow-up notices were sent to Mr. Crisi asking for the financials and for them to attend an upcoming Park Commission meeting.

Chairman commented that this is the same transparency as is requested of all field user groups.

Mr. Blueweiss stated that the Tournament Committee has not complied with mandates of the Park Commission and Little League concerning the Town's Noise Ordinance and request for financials allowing Little League sponsorship of the tournament. Upon question, Mr. Blueweiss said that Trumbull Little League will not be supporting the tournament going forward under present circumstances, but would do so if Paula Passaro were the liaison.

Mr. Crisi interrupted Mr. Blueweiss at this point, and Chairman asked that he let Mr. Blueweiss complete his comments.

Mr. Blueweiss said that there was never any agreement or requirement as to what Trumbull Little League would specifically do with the money donated from the tournament.

Chairman said that the day of their Tournament was right following a strong tropical storm with downed trees in all of our parks system. Our departmental workers had to stop everything to open for that tournament because there were no contingency arrangements. They need to have a contingency plan for cancelling if we can't open at all, if fields are closed.

Paula Passaro was also in attendance and interjected that she would be willing to be the liaison for the Festa Tournament. She said they would come up with a contingency plan for cancelling in the future.

Mr. Blueweiss said that if she, in fact, will take the liaison position and provide the required financials, Little League would reconsider sponsorship.

Mr. Crisi said they have given Little League \$8,000 to do improvements at the park. They haven't seen a blueprint for anything. He said he took some time before getting back to Mr. Blueweiss. He is a volunteer. Works at Sports Zone. He is busy.

Mr. Blueweiss there was no contingency at all for what the funds were to be used for. Little League didn't ask for the funds, it was a condition for approval by the Commission in order to approve the Tournament. He said over the years there have been conversations about installing a bullpen at Unity; however, Little League never said the money was for a bullpen. Projects such as this require layout plans, specifications, Town Departments and Park Commission approvals prior to going forward. That proposed project has never been formalized

Chairman questioned if Mrs. Passaro takes over as liaison, what next? Mr. Blueweiss said they need to have the financials.

Mr. Crisi then presented Mr. Blueweiss with a sheet reflecting financial information from this past season's tournament which indicated total income as \$475. The information submitted did not sufficiently respond to the request for actual financial statements from the tournaments held.

Chairman said this Commission is only required to act on Little League's request to allow the Festa Tournament to go forward with their support. Commission will wait for Little Leagues request.

Benita and Robby Barhpaga, Cheetah Cricket Club:

Benita said she spoke to the Recreation Director last year about securing grounds to host cricket games. They are recruiting team members. Trumbull residents. Looking for space somewhere for games. They looked at the Madison Avenue property which they think could be prepared for cricket. She said the Club is 100% privately funded and not-for profit. They are a member of the Southern Connecticut Cricket League which is a member of the United States Cricket Association. They provided a binder with their Field Use Application, a Certificate of Liability Insurance, and photos of a cricket field layout. They need a rectangular patch of clay dirt 22' long by 6' wide, with a 350 foot circle of grass area play.

Superintendent questioned how many residents play and why should it work. She said they are an adult league with 11 players, as many as 15 players. Right now they have 8 Trumbull residents. She said interest in Cricket is growing. It is currently being played in Greenwich, Stamford, Fairfield, Norwalk, Milford and Stratford. They play May to August. They would be looking to host six to eight games a season. Upon question she said they do not host tournaments. If we were to schedule a parcel, they can make the pitch area. They use no markers only flags. They reviewed size and layout requirements with the commissioners.

Superintendent noted that there could be three or four potential sites within the parks system if scheduling time were available and they meet the requirements of the Field Use Policy.

Rick Bushnell, AYSO:

Requesting spring field scheduling. They have 1100 players. They use THS and Indian Ledge Turf fields. For spring they need to find additional fields and are requesting Quad 4 at Kaechele and Indian Ledge 4 if I is back on line this spring. They play from April to mid-June. Their financials are run through their corporate office in California. They can provide their local financial information. They are a \$95 a player. Utilized for Program, Training at AYSO Camps and Clinics for instructors. If there is a surplus, it comes back to Trumbull's operating expense account.

Peter Tinnesz, Lacrosse:

Presented a complete Binder of Field Use Request documents. They have grown by 100 players from 2010. Players are from third to eighth grades. Fee from \$125 to \$150. Travel team members pay an extra \$75. They use Artificial turf fields at THS Mondays through Fridays and Indian Ledge Mondays 5:30 to dusk.. Grass area at THS on Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sundays 12:30 on.. They need an extra evening to accommodate growth. They play April to June. No tournaments. Spring is their season. Fall they play at the THS Pit one day a week.

Ted Chase, 28 Frances Street, Lacrosse:

They are continuing to grow. Girls now have the size of the boys. How they manage growth as they go forward is a concern...field space or cuts.

Rick Vieira, Director of Athletics, Christian Heritage School:

Presented their letter of request to use athletic facilities on the dates and times listed at Unity Field (Baseball), Madison Middle School (Baseball), Unity Field (Softball), Nothnagle Field (Softball), Unity Park (Tennis), Indian Ledge Soccer Field. Upon question he responded Christian Heritage has near 25% Trumbull residents. Entire school numbers 460. Chairman commented that 25% takes off the tax burden of our residents which would have to be covered if the students were in our school system. They provide use of their gym to our summer program and THS band color guard uses their gym as needed. It was noted by Commissioner Lipinski that they also offer basketball in the fall and it's a no-cut program. They use Indian Ledge artificial turf field for their Triple Header Homecoming game.

MOTION by Mr. Martin, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed to close the Guest portion of the Agenda.

MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Mrs. Walsh, unanimously passed to approve the minutes of January 9, 2012 and January 26, 2012.

Old Business:

Mr. Martin mentioned that the Historical Society Civil War Reenactment event on March 4th at Abraham Nichols Park Orchard may require additional parking because parking is limited at the park. He requested permission to utilize Nothnagle Field parking area. They will have police assistance for directional assistance.

MOTION by Mr. McGovern, second by Mr. Chmielewski, and passed (One abstain, Mr. Martin) to allow parking at the Nothnagle Field parking area on March 4th to accommodate parking needs of the Civil War Reenactment event at Abraham Nichols Park Orchard at 2:00 p.m.

Commissioners discussed field requests:

AYSO was well presented. They need an additional field. Keep their facility in top shape. They are packed with players on Saturdays.

Lacrosse was well presented.

Soft Ball Recreation Program - Upon question, Recreation Director responded yes to do we suspend for alcohol use.

Little League – Springhill field not on-line yet.

Babe Ruth – We will wait for their request for fall shut down for rehabilitation.

Trumbull Legion – We would rather not have them select All Stars before season starts. Competing Programs prompt November selections. There should be slots open at the end of the season for kids who want to play.

Babe Ruth and Legion working well together.

Trumbull Titans – Practice twice a week. This year only one team. Financial information indicates \$1,300 League Fees; last year, \$700 for each of two teams.

Lacrosse – Reasonable request. Only charge for what it costs to run program.

Cricket Request discussion:

- They are a team, not an organization.
- Do we want to offer this recreational activity in town?
- Would it be possible to create a cricket court?
- Do we have the resources to offer another program.
- If they fit the criteria of the Sports Field Policy, the program could be worked into our system.
- There is no field tear-up. Rectangular area restored following play.
- Would be nice to offer cricket in town.
- Consensus was it is a nice proposal and should not decline any organization if they fit into the policy. They are adults. Baseball over. No impact on parks at that time.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mr. Moore and passed five (5) yes (Mrs. Walsh, Mr. Lipinski, Mr. Bellows, Mr. McGovern, Mr. Moore); one (1) no (Mr. Martin); one (1) abstained (Mr. Bragano) that if the Cheetah Cricket Club can provide all the pertinent information as outlined in the Parks Facilities Field Use Policy, they may be considered for use of facilities as any other group that applies.

Superintendent's Report:

- Completing brush removal at Great Oak Park. Crossed over four waterways. Trail system nearly completed.
- Senior Center:
 - Generator installation completed.
 - We will be planting in the spring to create a sound barrier.
 - Removing the old playground equipment.
- Removed old Davidow Park (Joan Estates) playground equipment. New equipment to be installed.
- Planting beds maintenance and preparation in process.
- New Organizational Chart has been finalized as: Director of Public Works

Park Superintendent
Recreation Director
Tree Warden

Chairman Ferrigno, Commissioner Martin and Superintendent met with Director of Public Works on the proposed Rail Trail expansion from Old Town Road to Daniels Farm Road. Once the final plan is set, the Director of Public Works will invite a representative from the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency to attend an upcoming Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to review the proposed path as it skirts the borders of Unity and Twin Brooks parks. Superintendent noted that once the trail is completed, the Town will be responsible for maintenance as with the current trail. Chairman noted that this is a tremendous enhancement trail model in Fairfield County.

Chairman noted that the Park Commission had assigned sub-committees to oversee happenings in park facilities in close proximity to each Commissioner's residence. He will re-distribute park assignments between the newly joined commissioners to facilitate monthly updating.

MOTION to adjourn at 10:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Joan E. Plouffe
Administrative Assistant

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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MOTIONS

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MOTION to adjourn at 10:57 p.m.