

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 13, 2012

The regular monthly meeting of the Commission was convened at Town Hall at 7:03 p.m. with the following in attendance:

Robert Ferrigno (Presiding)
Kevin Bellows
Marie Petitti
Richard Moore

Vincent Lipinski
Nancy Walsh
Kenneth Martin

Also, Dmitri Paris, Parks Superintendent
Robert Hawley, Chief Park Ranger
Mary Markham, Recreation Director (7:15 p.m.)

Guests:

Donna Smith, 156 Freshmeadow Drive, Pisces Swim Team with others

Public Comments:

Donna Smith, Pisces Swim Team Secretary:

At meeting to discuss use of Hillcrest Pool. She noted she attended a meeting with others on October 5 at Town Hall called by the First Selectman with regard to the Pisces Swim Team practice time at Trumbull High School versus use by Trumbull High School Girls Swim Team. It was agreed by everyone at that time that Pisces would be able to keep their begin time as 5:00 p.m. on swim days. However, when they arrived at the pool to begin at 5:00 p.m. that agreement was reneged and they were allowed to begin between 5:15 and 5:30 p.m. depending upon how much time the THS team needed. They were getting squeezed out of practice time at the end of their session because they are scheduled to 7:30 p.m. (two hours).

Chairman forwarded and distributed a message from the Superintendent of Schools dated 10/24/12 indicating the resolution in place as:

- Effective tomorrow (10/25/12), the THS Girls Swim Team will utilize the pool from 2:45 – 5:15 p.m., at which time Pisces will begin their practices.
- Upon conclusion of the Girls' season (11/17/12), the THS swim schedule will revert to the previously agreed to time of 2:45 – 5:00 p.m.
- All parties should note, however, that the school, its Athletic Director and staff do not believe this time allotment is sufficient and working, and we reserve the right to extend the session next year to better meet the needs of the school. That final determination will be made after a meeting in the spring of 2013 with all groups involved.

Pisces concern this evening is that following 11/17/12, once the Boys Team begins, the agreement will not be met. They did note that the Boys Team has always ended at 5:00 p.m. in the past. Pisces would like to accomplish their spring scheduling now in advance of routine spring scheduling. Upon questions, they responded that Spring Practice begins April 1st and they do use outside facilities at Newtown, Woodridge and at Flood Inn Stratford. Planet 400 was not available to them because of the under 16 age limit.

Chairman asked if at any point in time have they considered limiting their numbers? Ms. Smith said they have not considered limiting swimmers. In the past they had 110 swimmers and used UB for time needed. They now have 92 swimmers. They are not at the point of limits.

Chairman said Pisces must schedule along with Trumbull High School, St. Joseph's and the Recreation Programs once everyone has their schedules in place in the Spring prior to begin of the season.

The Superintendent noted that the school programs have proprietary use of the school.

Ms. Smith thanked the Commission for its time and mentioned they are conducting an Aquathon at the Hillcrest Pool on November 30, 2012 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. and invited Commissioners interested to attend.

Chief Park Ranger, Robert Hawley:

Reported on Dog Park enforcement and distributed copies of incident reports that occurred within the Dog Park that illustrate this enforcement policy. He stated Park Rangers enforce all Parks and Recreation Commission policies/rules and ordinances within the borders of all Trumbull Parks. When the Dog Park was opened, the Rangers were informed that the TDOG group would be enforcing the rules they had institutes within the dog park. The Rangers assist with all complaints within their limited powers. Any significant problems are turned over to the police or the Trumbull Animal Control Officer. Park Rangers participate in human aspect controls.

Discussion:

- In other communities you can't use facilities without a resident permit. After November or December other communities close their parks.
- Indian Ledge's circumstance involves non-resident use which has evolved because of the BMX Track, soccer field competition, concert area, compost area including the cell tower activities and filtering-in from the close proximity to the Rail Trail all bringing non-residents into the park. They do control non-resident use of the lower Tot Lot area.
- Every park has its own value. Should this Commission consider no dogs allowed at specific parks?
- We have ordinances requiring dogs on leash and pick-up after dogs which users disregard.
- The network of secondary trails and paths throughout our system are contributing to increased walkers with dogs.
- State beaches and Kent Falls State Park were mentioned as prohibiting dogs. We should research at the State level if we can prohibit dogs in the valley because of the environmental impact to the parks system.

Rangers Budget Discussion:

Ranger reviewed the security growth development since the 1980's. He noted, we are losing ground with controls for lack of staff. We currently monitor parks on a schedule covering major facilities and then passive parks (i.e. Great Oak, Aldo, Tashua, Davidow, Mischee Brook). Residents to the passive park areas, call to the Rangers when they see something wrong happening. This past season they increased checks at Twin Brooks, Indian Ledge and Beach Memorial. They gave out 1600 warnings, Recreation gave out 2,500 vehicle permits with registrations presented. The comparison showed 1,300 non residents were given warnings. (These are those who didn't come to Recreation for a permit.) In devoting additional time at these areas, they had to take time from the remainder of the parks system. He noted his huge concern and that his recommendation to help solve this problem would be to better staff the Rangers by adding a third full-time Park Ranger, as we had back in 1980. They currently have two full-time Rangers, and 6 seasonal part-time rangers. They need to reinstate that lost full-time Ranger to improve security in the parks system. It was noted that it would take time to advertise, train and implement; and, we would request a half year position in the 2013 budget to have someone in place in time for the 2014 season. To help off-set this increase, the plan would be to reduce the number of part-time rangers for the 2014 season. The Chief Park Ranger noted for the public record that in the early 1980's, the Town of Trumbull had employed three full-time rangers; and today, after a huge expansion of facilities and responsibilities, we have just two full-time rangers.

Budget Discussion continued:

The Superintendent said that in addition, he supports a robust sticker program be included in this budget. We are now able to obtain a software component to our current scheduling system in the range of \$3,500 to manage the sticker distribution system from the Recreation Department.

Under equipment, there is a need for a Back Hoe in the Department for removal of trees and logs. This should be added into our Budget request.

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second by Mrs. Petitti, unanimously passed to return to the order of the Agenda.

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second by Mrs. Petitti, unanimously passed approving the minutes of the October 15, 2012 meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mrs. Walsh, unanimously passed to include with the Parks and Recreation Departments Budget request for 2013/2014 one additional Full-Time Park Ranger to enhance security within our parks system, an amount to cover the cost of a software computer program to cover distribution of resident Park Stickers, and a Back Hoe for tree removal.

Superintendent and Ranger will provide a 'bullets' list of Rangers staffing (past and current), citations, security problems, etc. to support reinstatement of the third full-time ranger in the 2013-2014 budget request.

Old Business:

Recreation Code of Conduct:

- Recreation Director distributed the Recreation Code of Conduct to all sports leagues.
- Teams have been notified that games must begin on schedule and end on time or lose the play time. Policy in spring will comprise this ruling.

Footbridge – Mischee Brook Park:

Mr. Martin expressed concern that with sewer line construction the path through the park is now a 100' wide road. Superintendent said the area is planned for replanting; hopefully, by spring.

Little League Field #3 rehab work not completed as yet.

Babe Ruth Field rehab work is finalizing; but with a great amount of oversight by the Superintendent.

Nothnagle Park Gate:

The Town Attorney has cleared our ability to install a gate. We must make a request to the Police Commission to proceed with installation.

MOTION by Mr. Martin, second by Mrs. Walsh, unanimously passed to request permission from the Police Commission to proceed with the installation of a gate at the entrance to Nothnagle Park as with other parks for the purpose of security as approved by the Town Attorney.

Mr. Martin suggested the dilapidated sign at the Shelton Road entrance to Abraham Nichols Park be removed. Superintendent will have the sign removed.

Correspondence:

The Chairman reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission received a \$5,000 grant from the Ethel and Jennie Mallett Charitable Trust to support our Town Hall Green Summer Concert Program.

Superintendent's Report:

- System winterizations completed.
- Babe Ruth on way to having grade-work done correctly. They encountered weather conditions which was his concern with starting a project late in the fall season. Superintendent was disappointed in the contractor-leadership team. Hopefully, they will keep up with a maintenance schedule and, in the future, close down the field when it needs repair rather than over-play the rehabilitated field.
- Hurricane Sandy and Fall Storm Athena have taken down trees throughout our parks system and the Valley. One site in the valley where many years ago a boy scout Eagle Project provided a telephone-pole-base bridging across the river to Indian Ledge Park area is down and in complete disrepair creating a hazardous condition. Superintendent will remove. Possible replacement will be determined at a later date.
- Hedgehog Circle Pond area: There is a huge wood chips dumping area planned for spreading along the contiguous High School cross country trail. Superintendent has brought to the attention of the High School Maintenance Department that it is too large and will create a problem and must be spread. Chairman will follow up with a call.

Beach Pool parking lot is a collection site for storm debris and leaf collection materials which will be removed prior to spring. We have grant funds in place for re-paving the parking area and Superintendent is hopeful this work will take place prior to next season.

MOTION to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. by Mr. Moore, second by Dr. Bellows, and unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Joan E. Plouffe
Clerical Administrative Asst.

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