

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**JULY 14, 2014**

The regular monthly meeting of the Commission was convened at Town Hall at 7:00 pm. with the following in attendance:

Robert Ferrigno (Presiding)  
Richard Moore  
Michael Travisano

Kevin Bellows  
Marie Petitti

Also,  
Dmitri Paris, Parks Superintendent  
Mary Markham, Recreation Director

Guests:

Karin Hayes, 27 Glen Arden Road, TDOG Corporation  
Michael London, 15 Lake Avenue, Dist. 6 Town Council Member  
Miriam Goldberg, 71 Johnson Street  
Allison Spitzer, 15 Lake Avenue  
Gene Cellini, 55 Gatehouse Road, Pop Warner Football League President  
Lori Lewis, 23 Columbine Drive, Trumbull United Soccer Club  
Suzanne Testani, 50 Cranbury Drive, Vice Chm., LA Committee, Tr. Town Council

Public Comments:

Karin Hayes, TDOG Corporation:

- Here to report back on the progress of the TDOG Corporation. After they met with the Commission, Louise Nestor, past president of the corporation, called a meeting at the Dog Park on June 13<sup>th</sup>, about 19 people attending. At that meeting they discussed a new board and voted Karin Hayes as President, Ray Bailey, Vice President, and Louise Nestor, as Treasurer. Past President Joann Gregor passed all her files to her and she filed 501c3 with the State of Connecticut, sent \$50 fee; their names are on file. Secondly, she successfully submitted the required E Post Card to the IRS. (They are a 501c3 through the State and must submit a E Post Card to the IRS saying they don't make more than a certain amount).
- As for maintenance of the park, Ray Bailey mows every other week. Plus, they have contacted tree companies and had three loads of chips arrive and spread. The dog park looks wonderful.
- They are going to call another meeting at the dog park for July 25<sup>th</sup>. They have about 40 names from people to help start a google group to be able to contact all members at once to tell them there's a meeting, a clean-up day or fund raiser, etc.
- Chairman thanked them for having the new TDOG Corporation in place before the 90 days. He questioned if everyone is aware of the sticker policy? She replied, "Yes".

Mike London, 15 Lake Avenue, Dist. 6 Town Council Member:

Opportunity to speak and pass along two concerns of constituents and council members in recent weeks. The first issue is the numerous complaints he has received about the \$5 sticker fee. He is just passing that along to the Commission.

Chairman questioned what is their main objection?

Mr. London said the objection is the \$5, noting that it is really the principle as opposed to the dollars. Constituents have said that they pay enough in tax money, why should they come up with an extra 5 bucks to park in the parks. So it's not a question of affordability, it's a question more of principle than anything else.

The other concern relates to Tashua Pool...a more complicated situation. The installation of the slide has apparently generated quite a number of complaints from people who swim laps and can no longer do so. They feel that the way the pool is currently divided precludes virtually any kind of swimming other than taking a dip in the area that is not roped off. There is only a small roped-off area where you can walk to gain entrance to the pool for those who are not using the slide or the diving board. There are some who have objected to the fact that they have to go under a clamped rope in the pool to gain entrance. He suggested eliminating the rope and widening the area to give folks a little bit more space to get in and out of the pool and get to the adult swimming area.

He would like to have the Commission get back to the full Council at our convenience as to two particular issues; one, as to what the installation of the slide has done to our insurance cost because he knows at least a couple life guards have reported that even in the first few days of operation, they've had to pull several youngsters out of the pool because of concerns for their safety going down the slide. Would like us to get back to them about the possible increase in insurance as well as the total cost for the slide installation. He said there clearly is a need to address slide concerns to keep the youth who use the slide and the diving board and the folks who want to do lap swimming all happy. He feels that the way it is currently configured it is just simply not working, whether you are an adult or you are a child, you really cannot swim because it's crowded. He asked that the Commissioners spend some time and look into that and see if there's some way to address this situation.

Mr. Moore questioned if it's during adult swim, kids are using the slide so much, adults can't swim.

Mr. London said no, when the slide is effectively not used at all, half the pool is still roped-off for the slide and is vacant and the other portion of the pool which is approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the pool maybe a little more, adults are in there going back and forth.

He feels there is clearly a significant need for some additional life guard training on what the rules really are, where people can be and where they shouldn't be, time etc. He said this has been a problem for a number of years, doesn't relate to the slide at all, just been exacerbated by the slide because of the people being cramped into a smaller area. He said there is a need for the life guards to teach and enforce pool etiquette. He thinks that's something the life guards have not been asked to do and should be asked to do. He said the life guards are very diligent in watching out for folks who are having difficulty in the water and adept at yelling at kids not to run. Aside from those two things he feels they are not trained to what it means to be in a community pool and how to respect the wishes, the space, the needs of everybody there. He urged we consider that. Aside from the pool etiquette, he feels the issue of the position of the slide is really quite problematic for a lot of people. He said there's no question the slide is being used, there's no question the diving board is being used. His understanding is that the slide was installed to draw more folks from Beach Pool because of over-crowding. Now, Tashua pool is over-crowded in the portion of the pool that is roped-off for swimming. He again urged we take another look at the configuration to consider expanding the area that is allowed for adult swimming.

One suggestion from a constituent is changing the way Adult Swim is operated by eliminating the adult swim for the diving board and slide areas so that youngsters can use those two areas at any time. Make the Adult Swim time for half an hour every hour rather than 15 minutes every hour. In that way, kids still have a place to go for the entire 60 minutes every hour, but there's an area for adults to actually get in their lap swimming if so desired. Several people have said that 15 minutes to do your laps is just simply not enough time. He feels the way the slide is currently operated, we have effectively changed a lot of attitudes about that pool, and would like to see it go back to being comfortable for all parties.

Mr. Moore: Noted he was a competitive swimmer for many years. His uncle is one of Trumbull's Olympic Gold Medalists, he spent a lot of time in town pools and other community pools and feels that the symptoms being described are problems that are problems everywhere. Anytime you have water and recreation and people looking to have fun, you run into people who are going to be unhappy because someone else is having fun at their expense and unfortunately when it comes to water, etiquette goes out the window. He noted that part of the reason why children should not be allowed in the pool continuously and should be mandated to leave the water 15 minutes out of the hour is because they don't know when to use the bathrooms. Getting them out of the water 15 minutes is time they can go use the restrooms. It gives the life guards an opportunity time to breath a little and really get a good sense of the status of the pool and the occupants of the pool and a good change-over transition to maintain the way it is now ... 15 minutes out of the hour, it's just adults only.

Mike London.... that's a point he hadn't considered. But, we still need to address the fact that there are a lot of folks who are really unhappy about the way that pool is configured and there must be a way to help solve that problem; so, he would hope we would address that.

Park Superintendent explained that the actual configuration was calculated and is within State compliance standards, the entry level of the slide, all of that had to meet requirements, it could only be within a specific area so that it would have enough deck space around it and as far as the operation of the splash zone is concerned, we only learned of the State's 20 foot requirement the day of inspection. The solution at that point was to move 'the lane' over. We're not opposed to reviewing any and all of those things.

Mr. London said he was surprised we didn't learn of the 20 foot requirement until after the slide was already installed. Again, he stated he looks to the Commission to do what we can to better manage how this is operated and also to see if there's some way that we can get the life guards to try and teach a little better of the etiquette of waterways.

Follow-up comments:

Miriam Goldberg, 71 Johnson Street:

She used to go up there for solace and relaxation; and, it's impossible now. She said she was here with some constructive ideas. One of the things that can be done at this point is limit its usage. It does not have to be going every 45 minutes of every hour. Kids could get a half hour earlier in the day, a half hour in the afternoon and a half hour later in the day. Then it would allow for everyone with every different need be addressed at the pool. The other thing is the 'ropes'. The rope is now 'hooked' ...smack across from one end to the other. Then, where the slide is, there's another rope coming out to hook on. Many come in through the shower area, where the staircase is (the other side is a slippery, horrible); that partitioning rope allows a very small space, She can't get the rope 'up' to go under and a guard had to come and hold it up so she could get underneath it. She felt there should be a hook system so that the kids have the slide for a half hour, then the guards come along and unhook the ropes and let us use our normal pool. And, then before they allow them back on the slide, they can just hook it up again. She came to the meeting because this has got to be addressed immediately. Now, some of the other stuff is long-range but you can certainly get hooks for the ropes and can certainly tell the

lifeguards that the children can't have the slide all the time. It's just not democratic, it's not fair. She said the kids are jumping in from the shallowest end of the pool. Somebody's going to become a paraplegic because of the shallowness, they should be going a little further down the sides where it's a little deeper. That's going to end up in a law suit.

Chairman thanked her for her comments.

Allison Spitzer, 15 Lake Avenue:

I don't know this lady at all, and I support everything she said. She presented sample signage she wanted to be put up on Pool Etiquette. She is not a 'lap' swimmer. She has heard this situation is a work in progress; it shouldn't be a work in progress, it's a massive error. She said it is a disproportionate tool (slide) for the size of the pool. Maybe the intention was to draw away from Beach's but what they've done is essentially is create one large baby-pool. Was at pool and there was virtually not one adult or child in the general swimming area which is about a third of the pool. You cannot do a stroke because once the children come down the slide the parents of those children, who have to be 20 feet away, are standing and waiting for the tots to come down the slide. Other issues she wanted to quickly address:

The guards don't know the children. There's no interaction with the adults. The behavior in the pool is monstrous, It's the Recreation Department's responsibility to train their guards and to help them understand that their job is more than life or death running. I know there's a 15 minutes break, simply mingle in the crowd and let their presence be known. There's a lack of communication between the Recreation Department and their guards. One guard said there would be a lap lane in the pool, when I got to the pool, it's a general swimming area. You ask one guard something, you ask another who says something else. So she thinks it's important to have a different kind of training. Secondly, the handicap issue is legitimate. She can't get into that pool unless she submerges. It's a problem. There's no signage that lets people know rules. The rules need to be clarified. Not a do not, do not, do not; but signage and she presented a sample Pool Etiquette listing. Guards should be trained and supervised by a Senior Staff Member on a regular basis, physically on site. If you're physically on site you can see what's going on.

Her questions are why this process went through, to whom the Recreation Department is accountable, was there an expenditure of this size, did it go to Town Council, if not, why not; and was there any discussion with the public. Random strangers swim up to her and question how did this happen; they didn't know about it, they would have said something, they would have gone to a meeting about it, and said they don't want it. It's an incredibly dangerous situation...it's a mistake, many people would acknowledge it's a mistake. Rather than saying it's a work in progress I think it needs to be closed... Last comment, again, there are people who go there not to swim, they go because it's pleasant to be outside and with nature and maybe they want to have a little rest or whatever. It should be a place for children who want to play while their parents are supervising them. I think the key is that parents have to supervise their kids. Every family should get something like this (her Pool Etiquette List) and I think that guards need more administrative support, and competent training as to what you do other than save someone who is drowning. Thanks.

Chairman: Thank you very much.

Any other comments:

Follow up, Miriam Goldberg: A lot of kids are being left there. I don't think their parents are there to supervise them.

Lori Lewis, Trumbull United:

Here to make our field request for the fall, much the same as the past years. We have 13 teams that will be playing U8 and U11. In order to accommodate those teams they are requesting

- Old Mine, Monday through Friday, for practices 4:00 to 7:00 pm.;
- Indian Ledge #3 and #4 for the over-flow, IL #1 during the week whenever not scheduled for Christian Heritage and THS;
- Kaechele Field Saturday once AYSO is over, usually 2:00 p.m. to dark if we need it; and, Sundays between noon and 6:00 p.m.;
- Indian Ledge Turf both Saturdays and Sundays, again when AYSO ends and usually to about 5:00 p.m.
- In the fall, we usually have the turf on Friday's for makeup games if we get rained out.
- Would like practice time at Indian Ledge 2, Mondays – Fridays from mid-afternoon until 10:00 p.m., with lights when needed.

Upon question, financials, 501c3 and insurance certificate in binder. Background checks being done now and will be added to the book by August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Suzanne Testani, Vice Chairman of the Trumbull Town Council, Dist 1 Rep., Chm of the Legislative and Administration Committee:

Thanked the Parks Commission, Dmitri Paris, Mary Markham and Chairman Ferrigno for granting the Dog Park Organization extra time, trusting in her championing these people. She presented photos of the way the Dog Park looks from inside the park and the way it looks from the outside as far as weeds. She believed somewhere along the line during one conversation or another, it came up that the park was not being properly cared for by the original group of involved individuals. She believes the current volunteers are keeping the weeds down inside the park, but she took these shots to show that the outside of the fence looks a bit unsightly. The organization is doing it's job inside the fence. Photos just in an effort to show visually that the group has been taking care of the inside. There's new chips in there.

Chairman thanked her.

Gene Cellini, Pop Warner:

Season starts August 1<sup>st</sup>,

Background checks not fully in yet because they don't have everyone in place.

The roster is preliminary.

A new "Head Up Program"...lot of commentary about concussions, etc. New training clinics for coaches. (He completed twelve hours at Trinity College on the new concept to make the game safe.)

Schedule at Madison Middle is: Weekends, 6:00 a.m. to dark. Weekdays, 3:00 p.m. to dark. Practices in the morning, cut out at noon. When they have games, it's all day.

Six football teams, 5 cheerleader teams.

Signup at the library tonight. so depends on how many more kids they get. Maximum 35 on a team.

In Binder:

- Tax Exempt Status
- IRS Rules, etc.
- Financial Statements, budget,
- Tax Return, on-extension approval letter.
- All insurance certificates for all locations they play.
- Insurance certificate for two trailers and concession stand at Madison Middle School
- Rosters, Directors and Officers are listed.

Pop Warner has specific grades to play. Education as well as athleticism, quite a rigor of paper work collecting grades and coding. Twenty kids in national recognition. Very well organized making sure playing the right kid in the right division. Coaches must attend two and a half live six hour clinics and take two courses 'on line'. And, they do in-house training...ie. how to tackle. 2014 schedule should be coming out middle of August. Schedule of activities laid out for coaches, classroom and field training, At least two CPR and First Aide

Certified per team. Demonstrate everything to the parents...tackling, lay out practices what Trumbull Pop Warner is all about, what we expect in kids behavior, coaches behavior, what the town expects from us, what they can and can't do...parents session, first week in August. Will leave the book, will get rosters stamped and then submit to us. Each team has to put a binder together of kids pictures, consent forms, etc. This gets approved by Southern Pop Warner Board of Governance in mid-summer. Book goes to the coach, every time they play, coaches exchange binders at game to check kids face with the kids, get on a scale and weigh in and must conform to each sheet in each binder. Highly regulated, really very little room for maneuvering, date of birth matches up, the weight match up to level of the child's play. This is done before every game they play.

No questions.

Chairman asked how many girls on a cheerleading team. Ten to twenty, by ages 7/8, 10/11 There are competitions, mandate is cheer at football games but they have their own competitions that they go to and Babe Ruth League hires buses to have them all arrive at the same time...they go to state, regionals and then Florida competitions. Maximum pinnacle to this, your football team and your cheer team could end up in Florida. Sent a couple cheerleading teams to Florida.

**MOTION** by Dr. Travisano, second Mr. Bellows, unanimously passed to close Public Comments and return to the order of the Agenda.

**MOTION** by Dr. Bellows, second Mr. Moore, unanimously passed approving the Minutes of the June 9, 2014 minutes as distributed.

Old Business:

Follow up on Trumbull Lacrosse:

Dr. Bellows noted that Trumbull United request tonight takes up all of Indian Ledge. Recreation Director said Lacrosse gets all of Trumbull High School in the spring, with the scholastic program. They request Tashua Turf for weather back-up. They use Indian Ledge Mondays and Tuesdays. If Recreation Director knows it's going to rain, she'll get in touch with them if there is open field time at IL. They feel because they are a spring sport they should get first right of refusal on the IL artificial turf field.

**MOTION** by Dr. Bellows, second by Mr. Moore, unanimously passed to reopen Public Comment portion of the meeting to welcome Michael King, new Trumbull Public Schools Athletic Director.

Chairman introduced the Commissioners to Mr. King. Chairman noted that he had a preliminary meeting last week with Mr. King, the Superintendent, the Recreation Director and Mike Curley (Tarrantino Representative). Discussed what responsibilities for facilities are on the town side, BOE side, and contractor side. The general principle here is to try a share the facilities as best we can. Chairman said we will work together as with the past Athletic Director. He said Mr. King understands our situation of addressing and providing recreation facilities

for an entire community...his, objective is to address the athletics at the scholastic level. We have a great team to work with, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Supt and Dir. of Recreation to work with on a daily basis and field committee that we assembled as well for any serious problems, we have a Field Use Policy that this Commission initiated with the Board of Education and is part of what we follow now with any issues on facilities and schedules.

Chairman thanked Director King for attending to personally meet our Commissioners. We appreciate it.

**MOTION** by Dr. Mr. Travisano, second by Dr. Bellows, unanimous passed to close guest comments and return to order of the Agenda.

New Business:

Unity Park (Dr. Bellows) noted that the Block Letters indicating MENs Room at Unity Babe Ruth lavatory are gone and need to be replaced or repainted. Superintendent to take care of.

Tashua Pool Slide:

Chairman said the Commission will address issues brought forward this evening.

**MOTION** by Mr. Moore, second by Dr. Bellows, unanimously passed to respond to expressed concerns about Tashua Pool Slide installation this season; the Commissioners, Superintendent and Recreation Director will observe and study activity at the pool throughout the 2014 swim season and review the addition of the pool slide in the fall at the completion of the season.

The Superintendent and Recreation Director will immediately check to determine any beneficial changes to the configuration of Tashua Pool so that there is access to the lap lane through the stairs and splash zone is open during Adult Swim; and, they will continue their inspections through the season.

Superintendent will provide Mr. London with information pertinent to the funding of the pool slide.

Chairman requested Commissioners all take looks at the pool area at different times, see what we need for signage to respond to expressed concerns.

Superintendent's Report:

- Standard operational season. We're full into it. Cutting grass, taking care of pools, restrooms, etc,
- Plugging away on specialty projects, we're going to be building bocce courts at the high school .
- Also going to be managing a project putting in new basketball courts at Tashua School. BOE bonded funds, looked at the work we did at Tashua and Island Brook and wanted the same there. Good project for the community, two full courts, two half courts on either side so you'll have 10', 10', and 8' on each end. Going to be post-tension concrete, isolated from the driveway so easy to see, plenty of parking, people will find their way there to play it regularly. That's a positive thing.

Dr. Bellows noted that the Rangers are doing their job at Island Brook because cars are parked out on Garden Street (shows how many out-of-towners playing basketball there).

Recreation Director's Report:

Very busy with park stickers distribution (over 9,000) and signing up for programs.  
In process of putting fall brochures together.

**MOTION** to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. by Dr. Bellows, second by Dr. Travisano, unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Joan E. Plouffe  
Clerical Administrative Assistant

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**JULY 14, 2014**  
**MOTIONS**

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