

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**JULY 13, 2015**

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

Robert Ferrigno (Presiding)  
Kevin Bellows  
Michael Travisano  
Richard Moore

Lee DeFusco  
Vincent Lipinski  
Matthew Caron  
Marie Petitti

Also,  
Stuart McCarthy, Parks and Recreation Director

Guests:

Cindy Penkoff, 101 Columbine Drive, Dist. 2 Council Representative, Beach Pool Issue  
Jamie Garnett, 59 Round Hill Road, Unity Park Picnic DJ Request  
Tracy Vonick, 155 Killian Avenue, resident/past Parks Commissioner

Public Comments:

**MOTION** by Mr. Lipinski, second by Dr. Bellows, unanimously passed to hear an issue at Beach Pool which Dist. 2 Council Representative Cindy Penkoff wished to discuss.

Ms. Penkoff stated that she has been requested as a Town Council representative to come before you on behalf of her constituents. She has a full mailbox via voice mail, text messaging, mail and face book private messaging regarding the feces issue at Beach Pool, an issue that we don't seem to have at Tashua Pool which never closes due to that issue. So she asked the Commission to take a look at requirements for small children being in Beach Pool and/or look at the issue of putting in a Kiddie Pool as now exists at the Tashua Pool. It is felt that the Beach Pool is because of the way the pool is shaped and the way it's covered. She thinks the Town should be able to come up with the money to put in a Kiddie Pool at Beach Pool to help alleviate this problem. The latest closing this week was the third closing.

Director stated that this is managing of a public pool. Health Regulations are very specific, shut the pool down for a full filtration cycle. Our pools are large...going to be closed for the day.

Ms. Penkoff commented:

- Never know who it is, no one points fingers.
- Focus is on tots in the wrong pants; but, problem may come from others.
- Tots are required to wear "swimmies"...which may not be supportive enough. Could require 'classic' plastic pants.
- The long term needs to be for possibly next year putting in or looking at the possibility of a Kiddie Pool so this doesn't continue to happen.
- Parents with little children go to Beach Pool and get in low end with them.
- Kiddie Pool would discourage parents from not using Beach Pool as a beach.
- Should think about changing the configuration of the pool and getting rid of the incline and starting the water at the 3 foot mark and put in stairs from that point on, we no longer have to deal with it as an incline.

It was noted:

- Tashua Pool has been closed for the same reason.
- Beach Pool is closed more than Tashua pool, only difference is the kiddie pool and sloped end.
- Beach Pool is a busier pool.
- The mandatory Adult Swim provides a small window of opportunity for people when their kids come out of the pool to go to the bathroom and maybe the most effective short-term solution is that we should put signs that remind people that adult swim time very hour is a good opportunity to take the kids to the lavatories.
- Kids don't always get out of the water for adult swim (because of sloped end sit next to parent). At Tashua they get out of the water. They don't have an option.

Ms. Penkoff stated that Signs are fine, life guards make the announcements with the megaphones. They attempt to remind parents to take their children to the bathroom, change diapers frequently and all that good stuff; unfortunately you can't make people respond. We've had enough years of this now, enough complaints, it's time for action to do something. It needs to be addressed.

Chairman thanked Ms. Penkoff for her attendance.

Director, Superintendent and Recreation Manager are to come up with some thoughts on controls for alleviating so many Beach Pool closings due to feces in the pool.

Jamie Garnett, Unity Park Picnic DJ Request

Planning a family picnic at Unity Park for August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1:00 p.m. to dusk, trying to get family together, planned up to 150 people. Requested permission to have a DJ present for a portion of the day, not too loud.

Chairman reminded her that the Pequonnock River is not a swimming river at that location and they must remove all garbage and thanked her for her attendance.

Tracy Vonick, past Parks Commissioner observing:

Questioned what suggestion was made by Ms. Penkoff for Beach Pool as he arrived later than all her comments. Chairman stated that she is recommending a Kiddie Pool and/or removal of the sloped end of the pool.

**MOTION** by Atty. DeFusco, second by Mr. Moore, unanimously passed to close Public Comments.

**MOTION** by Mr. Caron, second by Dr. Bellows, unanimously passed to accept the minutes of the June 8, 2015 meeting as distributed.

Correspondence:

Email acknowledged and accepted from Pamela Georgas with reference to the Nature Commission and her request to add her comments to the minutes of the June 8, 2015. Town Attorney's opinion stated that this email indicates it was sent on June 8, 2015 at 4:28 p.m. and confirmed that it was not opened until after the meeting was held and the format was sent to multiple individuals and not specifically directed to the Commission, the correspondence cannot appropriately be added to the minutes of the June 8, 2015 meeting. Further, if Mrs. Georgas desires to address this issue she will have to do so at a future, duly noticed Commission meeting.

Old Business:

Proposal by Spath Bjorklund Assoc on behalf of the Dwight Hansen family, to donate a 1.697 acres parcel with frontage on Huntington Tpke. and contiguous to Mischee Brook Park subject to a physical audit of the property by relevant town departments as well as the Town absorbing any costs related to the transfer of the property. Chairman reported that he, the Town Engineer, the Parks Superintendent and Dave Bjorklund toured the property, did a physical audit and found the parcel to be a worthwhile addition to the town's parkland contiguous to Mischee Brook Park with no issues for concern. The acceptance of this parcel as parkland will be placed on the August Agenda for action.

Status of Historic Barn Rehabilitation Project at Abraham Nichols Park:

Director of Parks and Recreation will get a status report on the funds approved from the Park Trust and expected completion of the project.

Historical Society Project:

Director reported Parks Superintendent assisting with Historical Society on Igor Sikorsky Monument and Display Boards dedication set for September 24, 2015.

Chairman and Director attended June 30<sup>th</sup> Soccer Meeting held at the In-Sports Facility. General conversation of soccer concerning Premier or Travel Programs. Everyone meeting together.

Departmental Audit was begun. Interviewed senior staff, customer service staff in office, TYA, Finance Dept., Parks and Recreation Chairman, Superintendent, Sr. Park Ranger, Mrs. Petitti and Mrs. Walsh (past Board of Recreation members). An interim assessment is due soon. Director will keep Commissioners informed.

Pickle Ball lines installed on Unity Courts the end of June.

Pools: Mr. Moore reported his sister and three children visited from Massachusetts and utilized the Tashua and Beach Pool and found Tashua to be a wonderful facility, didn't mention excessive noise coming from the slide. Tashua much more quiet than Beach Pool.

New Business:

Lake Avenue greenbelt looking unkempt. Director will take a look. Greenbelt is not as maintained as parkland is. In this case the streetscape and sightlines may need some upkeep.

Dr. Bellows noted that the THS Track, not two years old yet, originally an abundance of excess synthetic turf was being placed across the entrance area (ie. band crosses area, football cleats) main gate area is gouged and being torn. Should go back to putting that synthetic turf over that area to protect the track material. Could be removed when there are track meets.

He also reported that the baseball score board at the high school is being left on after games.

Director will bring these concerns to the Athletic Director's attention.

Director's Report:

- Suggested that questions of him should be received in advance of meetings so he can have the information available at meeting.
- Programs in full operation. Basketball camp, swimming lessons.
- Power outage shut down Tashua Pool for three/four days (good work by Superintendent and his crew, they already had a replacement panel, only delay was when storm came through and UI was slower in getting back as they were in emergency mode.
- Swim lessons made it a little crowded at Beach during that time period.
- Jr. Camps at Booth Hill and Jane Ryan had issues with asbestos removal in the buildings. We put up a tent at one of the schools, BOE paid for porta-johns for a few days. Camps have been able to operate without disruption.
- Tuesday night Concert Series very popular with high turnout.
- Tuesday afternoon Children's programs well attended.

Facilities:

- Viet Nam Memorial area damage when a truck plowed through. All damage repaired and at the same time did some work on the bridge deck.
- Completed a raised planters project at Abraham Nichols Park. Grant from Aquarion.
- Sikorsky Memorial poured the slab, relocated a tree that was in the way and this week installed a granite base.
- At Tashua tennis courts there were some issues with the repair work done to the under-surface. Contractor come back and made the repairs.
- Pickle Ball Lines Installed on Unity Courts.
- Island Brook basketball courts vandalism
- Playground Inspections: Upon inspection, the playground at Indian Ledge had wooden support posts rotted and they have taken that section of the playground out of service (cautioned tapes up). Other areas of that playground that are showing a great deal of stress and will be repaired and made safe. Don't need to close the entire playground, just one section. Well over twenty years old, wood construction, needs to be replaced. This project is in the capitol forecast for next year. Met with Director of Public Works and will try to accelerate the capitol request. If that project is approved, we could have a new playground there by next spring or summer. That would be our goal.  
(Chairman commented that part of the Town Budget is the yearly inspection by an outside company of the playgrounds facilities to avoid liability issues...they evaluate and critique for any upgrades to be addressed.)
- Crew applying herbicide applications getting invasive species out of areas. Huge parks system and open trails, tremendous challenge.
- Daily seasonal work taking place.

Mr. Moore noted that he has received several complaints about the swing set at Twin Brooks Park being too high for certain children. Director said work to lower chains has already been taken care of.

Director also Reported:

- Good deal of his time spent with Matrix on Audit.
- Concentrating on some of the accounting, financial areas in the office. Putting some systems in place for cash-handling.
- Reviewing applications and permits with the idea to get them on-line and will be coming back to this Commission with some recommendations. items that can be set by policy and administered by the department or whether they individually come back to the Commission.

Chairman stated that a concern about picnics is that we don't have a good handle on what the fees are and also what security may be necessary so no damage done to the park. Do we need park rangers in place to monitor a certain number of people, police officers on town roads for traffic, security, issues with neighbors, noise level. Sometimes as many as 200/300 cars in the parks because of baseball activity. After August 1<sup>st</sup> few ball games going on. Should involve the Chief; and also the Fire Departments. Really have to scrutinize this program from Parks, Police and Fire level. The other part in administering public facilities is the need to have a level of efficiency; difficult to decide between a party for a 75 year old's party versus an 18 year old's birthday party. That's why the Park Rangers have to be involved in monitoring these large parties.

Mr. Lipinski noted that one of our guidelines is no propane you need to bring charcoal. Today propane is safer than charcoal, charcoal remains in park and could start a fire.

Mr Moore stated that when he goes to Nantucket, to cook at the beach or property you have to get a permit from the fire department...\$5/\$10. Rangers on ATV's patrol and sometimes you have to display your permit.

Mr. Lipinski said we have a requirement here in town as well if you have a fire pit you must call when starting and call when ending use.

Director indicated that he is in process of reviewing all procedures...some very clear and some not quite so clear. He will come back with a goal of having the Commission look at presented policies, vote to establish; and then, turn over to the professional staff to set procedures and administrate the policies.

Director is reviewing history and relationship with the BMX Track group. A concern came up with an EMS call there. They had volunteer EMS personnel on site; however, the Trumbull EMS asked for a review of that policy to make sure anyone who's there is qualified.

Department has begun fall program planning with the idea of having the brochure out the third week of August for program registration which begins after Labor Day.

Met with the web master to make changes including all facets of the department including Town Youth and Arts Commission. All will be found on one navigation page. Working on incorporating the Town Youth Group and the Arts Group into the department. TYA is a theater group...perhaps could be the Parks and Recreation Theater Group. They do a big summer production, a junior production and a summer camp program. Their funds are re-allocated into the appropriate accounts.

Director's observation: Our parks system is great and huge with some amenities a little dated or not in the best repair. He has asked the Superintendent to deal with safety issues; if can't fix, remove. He will look at a program for replacing benches through gifting, etc.

**MOTION** by Dr. Bellows, second M. Lipinski, unanimously passed to approve Unity Picnic DJ request.

Beach Pool Closures because of feces issue will be reviewed by our Director of Parks and Recreation.

**MOTION** to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. by Mrs. Petitti, second by Atty DeFusco, unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Joan E. Plouffe, Clerical Adm. Asst.

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**MOTIONS**

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