

PARK COMMISSION  
JANUARY 11, 2010

The regular monthly meeting of the Park Commission was held at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall with the following in attendance:

Robert Ferrigno (Presiding)  
LouAnn Riccio

Kevin Bellows

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

Guests:

Jeff Topolski, 79 Stonehouse Road, BMX TRACK  
Wally Thomas, 3 Wheeler Road, Monroe, BMX TRACK  
Anthony Vinci, 41 Meadow Road, American Legion League  
Bruce Pine, 5188 Main Street, American Legion League  
Gary Bean, 163 Hilltop Circle, Babe Ruth League

As there was not a quorum present, Chairman stated that all actions will be by consensus vote.

Public Comments:

Jeff Topolski and Wally Thomas, on behalf of BMX TRACK:

Requested dates of July 23, 24, 25 be considered and held for their Nationals Tournament this year. Schedule for season will only be slightly changed from the past. State Championship races were planned for Meriden; however, Meriden may not be included in the State Championships this year and then Trumbull would be next in line for that Tournament. If this happens, they will request scheduling of the State Championship at a later date. They should know by March.

Upon request, they indicated they will submit their Tax Return as well as Profit and Loss Statement by May, as not-for-profit returns have one additional month to submit tax returns. They will also submit background checks prior to season begin. BMX is still promoting their program through the Trumbull school system and conduct a trail race day for Trumbull residents in the spring.

Chairman reiterated that we need financial transparency for all facility users as well as background checks. It is a requirement on an annual basis if they want to use park facilities.

Anthony Vinci and Bruce Pine, on behalf of American Legion League:

Mr. Vinci presented their financials for Sr/Jr's (13-19) and Little Legion (10-12). He noted that at our last meeting, it came up again as to whether they were working with Babe Ruth to resolve problems. He said they did have those meetings with First Selectman Ray Baldwin, Little League President Jeff Blueweiss, American Little Legion representative Joe Forren, Babe Ruth President Steve Chille and himself. They did get to a possible solution that every one liked, including the Babe Ruth representative Steve Chille, but he went back to his Board and they said, "No", absolutely not". He said they did as much as they could do as a program to work together and to help the Babe Ruth Program out. He presented an email review of their meetings with Babe Ruth and Little League this past summer when they met to explore putting together a Trumbull Baseball Advisory Committee to resolve competition problems between the leagues. He stated that they ran both groups together in the fall. Team just Trumbull, coaches with Babe Ruth as well as American Legion. American Little Legion is geared for both Trumbull Little League and Babe Ruth age kids. They are still working with Little League.

On question by the Chairman, both Park Superintendent and Recreation Director commented that the merits of the programs are not the problem, but there were a few conflicts on scheduling . Superintendent emphasized it is not on how program is run. Little League requested Spring Hill, but if they get all their field needs, they will give it up.

Anthony Vinci noted that last year was their first year and first year problems would always have to be worked out. If they satisfy most of the people, they will be doing well. They are trying to strengthen ball here in Trumbull. Beyond Little League age, Trumbull High School gets the bulk of scheduling requests. They need practices during the week. They use what ever fields they can...Babe Ruth, Unity, St. Joseph's, and even go elsewhere...Fairfield. They have had good success with scheduling at St. Joseph H.S.

Gary Bean, 162 Hilltop Circle, on behalf of Babe Ruth League:

He is on Board of Babe Ruth League. He stated that Little League can't run a travel program. Babe Ruth does have a travel program. From his opinion, it is redundant to Babe Ruth. They do have a travel team in town since 1968. American Legion started the travel program with 13/18 year olds in 2001-2002. Babe Ruth's travel program is 13/14 year olds. This past fall 14/15 players with American Legion, 52 kids in Babe Ruth. Babe Ruth is growing...coming into the spring season. Both have programs that are identical in offerings. We are competing with each other. American Legion's 13 year old program is deluding the Babe Ruth Program. Players feel it is a requisite to playing high school ball. Twelve and under there's not a travel program, so no problem; but, the 13/14/15 year olds, it's redundant.

On question: \$265 for Babe Ruth Spring player; \$910 for inclusion in travel program.

Anthony Vinci said that American Legion gets kids who want to leave Babe Ruth's travel program and come to them. Want to play competitive program and best coaches. They don't twist arms, only try to run one team in a competitive age group.

Bruce Pine, on behalf of American Legion:

There are a minimum of ten teams of Travel Teams in the region...Norwalk, Ffld, Stfd among these. Many choices for kids with other programs. American Legion is teaching them baseball and training. Graduates of the program are the coaches. They relate well with younger kids. Totally on merit. Been involved for 8 years. Coaches are college age. They pay a minimal stipend for them to coach....breaks out to \$2 per hour because they give a lot of time with these younger kids. The other solid thing is, Legion is all Trumbull kids. If players go to Explosion on Lindeman Drive or other travel teams, they are not all Trumbull kids. We have winter, spring and fall programs. We keep a close eye on the coaches. If kids are over-pitched, we speak with the coaches. They are supervised, they love baseball, they teach hitting, defense...and 'being on time'. In the past we ran the program at no profit. We are all volunteers. Now, because of rising costs, we have fund raisers. Now charge \$300 to cover cost of T-Shirts, coaches, batting cases. American Legion's ball program has been for fifty years. Not here to run a program like Babe Ruth.

Superintendent commented that it sounds like they are looking for sanction to exist....not asking for field time.

Anthony Vinci stated that their league is being attacked from all sides and ruining baseball in Trumbull. They feel like they are being attacked.

Superintendent asked how do we help in totality. Which programs are best suited for field use. They need to come together and then look for field time.

Gary Bein: Fields are not really as easy to schedule as they are asking for.

Dmitri: This was simply a request, not approval or scheduling. Little Legion's request for space....they are going to have to find their way and to grow.

Gary Bein: Not the Little League level finding a void here because they can't have a travel team...that age is wholly a Trumbull-based travel team. It's the 14/15 year old levels that's redundant. What you did for Soccer Program....Travel Organization and Recreation Organization, you should do this for baseball. There should only be one Travel Program.

Anthony Vince: "Yes", Babe Ruth, the Recreation Program and American Legion the Travel Program."

Chairman said we only have one field that involves both your teams, that's Unity Babe Ruth. Otherwise, 80% falls under the Board of Education umbrella.

Anthony Vinci: Little Legion can play all their games at one field.

Gary Bean: At some point, one Travel Team and one Recreation Team.

Anthony Vinci stated as an example that Little League schedules 16 games and then actually plays 12. If Legion schedules 27 games, it plays 27 games. If kids play for us, they can still pay both, can still play Babe Ruth. In Fairfield you play Babe Ruth or American Legion.

Gary Bean questioned how many other towns have American Little Legion programs. Response, 10 other towns.

Anthony Vince said they want a Baseball Committee to get together to resolve this. They will present their financials and background checks.

Gary Bean said Babe Ruth's financials and background checks are in order.

**Superintendent stated that when they put in their field requests they should show what exactly are games and what exactly are practices. These must be defined. It is getting harder and harder to address everyone's request for field use.**

**Chairman said we need hard figures rather than 'wish' numbers.**

Gary Bean gave the example of Babe Ruth putting together a B Level, 12 year old allStars Team of 15 kids. Combined their American League and Nationals. Played 22 games. Asked for field in Trumbull. Told can't get one. Played on the road. Kids liked it. Then, went to Unity on a week night and the field not being used...but had been told not available.

Chairman said we spoke with Steve Chille on the serious work which needs to be done on the Babe Ruth field from over use. Superintendent said we would like to have more all-purpose fields to fill the gap but do not, and we need to keep our fields safe. Recreation Director said, sometimes these fields are not available because they are being 'rested'.

Anthony Vinci asked how many fields will be available this spring. Superintendent said between Board of Ed and Parks, they will all available for use at various levels of condition...safe but not necessarily at the same standard...but all at some level of play this spring. We will schedule what we can. Chairman stated that the Parks Department doesn't have any free time to do the necessary maintenance in the fall season because of the extended league play.

Gary Bean noted that American Legion was always 16/18 year olds, now 13/18 year olds.

Superintendent again noted that we can only schedule.

Recreation Director noted that Babe Ruth Travel Program is with out-of-towners as well.

Superintendent requested the Commission provide a study of what other towns do and how they do scheduling. List of sports groups who are sanctioned to utilize their Town facilities, how do they allocate field space and when.

Commissioner Kevin Bellows noted that he likes the idea of a Baseball Committee to recommend an impartial resolution for travel programs.

Recreation Director felt a Committee should be formed of non affiliated members and make their recommendation for Park Commission approval.

**CONSENSUS** to return to order of the Agenda:

Election of Officers and Setting of 2010 meeting dates:

As there was not a quorum present the Election of Officers and setting of meeting dates was deferred to the February, 2010, meeting.

**CONSENSUS** is that meeting dates should remain as the second Monday of the month unless falls on a holiday when meeting would be on the third Monday or otherwise determined date.

**CONSENSUS** to approve the minutes of the December meeting as distributed.

Superintendent's Report:

Budget

The administration has requested a negative 2% budget be presented.

He is reviewing all line items to determine where reductions can be made with explanation on impact.

His concerns are:

- How to manage salaries which are currently in contract negotiations.
- How to reduce maintenance and services on community space areas such as Rail Trail and Town Greens which include Town Hall, Library, Nature Center, Counseling Center, Abraham Nichols Park/Historical Society, etc.

Vehicle Stickers are due for renewal this spring. Recreation Director said she did mention this to First Selectman Herbst, noting we do not currently charge for park stickers, but could. Regional towns range in fees from \$18 upwards. A fee would cover the cost for provision and distribution of stickers.

Nature Center Letter Box Program, which is a previously approved facilities history field-trip program within Town parks and other Town facilities. Superintendent noted that the Central Library is planning to be included in the Nature Center Program by including its One Town, One Book Program. He questioned if residency requirement for park facilities would continue. Based on past policy, Town Residency is required for all programs conducted in Town Park Facilities.

**CONSENSUS** to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Joan E. Plouffe  
Clerical Administrative Assistant

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ACTIONS  
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