

PARK COMMISSION

August 8, 2011

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

Robert Ferrigno (Presiding)
Kevin Bellows
Anthony Chmielewski

Diane Mayo
Kenneth Martin
Vincent Lipinski

Also,
Park Superintendent Dmitri Paris
Recreation Director Mary Markham
Chief Park Ranger Robert Hawley
Town Hall Chief of Staff Dan Nelson

Guests:

Scout Mathew Logan, 26 West Lake Road
Gary Bean, 263 Hilltop Circle, Tr. Babe Ruth League
Joan Dosky, 20 Quaker Lane, Tr. United Soccer Club
Anthony Vinci, 40 Long Meadow Road, American Legion League & Little Legion
Div Pithadia, 7 Misty Wood, Cricket League
Rick Bushnell, 19 Camelot Drive, American Youth Soccer Org.
Jeff Blueweiss, 63 Coventry Lane, Trumbull Little League
Laki Dimoulas, 266 East Ave, Norwalk, Buffalo Wild Wings Grill Picnic Unity Park
Margo Santarsiero, 27 Canterbury Lane, Buffalo Wild Wings Grill Picnic Unity Park
Pam Georgas, 17 Broadway, Nature Center Commission

Public Comments:

Scout Mathew Logan, Eagle Scout Candidate:

Scout Logan stated that he has discussed with Chief Ranger Hawley his proposed Eagle Scout Project to paint the wood fence at the parking area at the Churchill Road entrance to the Rail Trails. He provided photos of the fence. The Parks Department will donate the supplies. He will accomplish the project with the help of scouts in his troop and supervision from leaders. As the fence backs up to neighboring properties, he will provide letters giving approval for work on the back side.

Gary Bean, Tr. Babe Ruth League:

Provided their Fall Ball scheduling request for Unity, Jane Ryan and JV Field at THS. Registration going on now, games on Saturdays and Sundays begin after Labor Day through the third week in October, 22nd or 23rd of October, ages 13/15 year olds from Little League and 16/18 year olds.

He noted that the 15 year olds Team have won the New England Tournament and progressing to the World Series. They are the All Star Travel Team. Finals are with the ten top teams in the country. When they return from traveling late in August or early September, the League would like to celebrate with them at a picnic at Unity Park.

Joan Doskey, Trumbull United Soccer:

Provided packet and spread sheet with their Fall Request. Games at Kaechele Park on Saturdays. Sunday games at Indian Ledge Turf field. They will need one other field, possibly at THS.

Ms. Doskey discussed the problem of other than league players on the turf field when they arrive for play. These older players, most of whom are not Trumbull residents, are intimidating and only move when a Ranger is called in. They move and pull goals across the turf field. They are at the artificial turf field almost every evening from spring through summer.

Chief Ranger Hawley will get notice out to Rangers to curtail this non-resident activity on the field.

Anthony Vinci, American Legion and Little Legion Leagues:

Fall Season they will have one 13 year olds team, one 15 year olds team and one 18 and over senior team (usually scheduled at the High School Varsity and JV fields). They begin right after Labor Day through end of October.

Little Legion has been scheduled at the Softball and THS fields. They coordinate with Little League for the 10/12U team. Cost to play is \$375 (Babe Ruth, \$175).

Div Pithadia, Proposed Cricket League:

Mr. Pithadia indicated that he is a part of a group who would like to form a Cricket League in Trumbull in association with the United Youth Cricket Association. They have no specific field area in mind. They would need space on Sunday mornings.

Chairman questioned what size field space they would need.

Mr. Pithadia explained they utilize an all-flat circular field with pitching from the center. The pitching area is of clay the texture of tennis court clay or a strip of removable artificial turf, generally 22 yards in size with no specifications for boundaries. He had a diagram of such a field area. Teams comprise eleven (11) fielders each side, and two (2) batters. He said Island Brook Park, right in the middle of the fields, would be a good site for cricket. They have no season, play year round weather and conditions permitting.

They are in the process of forming the league; 15 years and older, and under 15 years.

Chairman stated that the Recreation Director will provide him with a packet on the Field Use Rules as a begin to the process of being considered for field scheduling.

Recreation Director noted that she has had another inquiry on a group interested to create a Cricket League. She will provide contact information to the two groups.

Rick Bushnell, American Youth Soccer Org.:

Came in to make his seasonal field request. They are planning for 1,000 players this fall. Saturday mornings beginning September 17 through November 12. They use four quadrants of Kaechele Park. Older teams need larger fields, THS Turf for U12, 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., three games. Indian Ledge Turf, Saturday mornings when Trumbull United not using.

Practices always a field at Hillcrest. U8 through U14, five days a week, 5:30 to dusk. Once they have the game schedule ready, they will give it to the Rec. Director for scheduling.

Jeff Blueweiss, Trumbull Little League:

Fall Program request. Looking for scheduling beginning September 6 through October 30 for games, practices week nights and clinics. If available, they would also like to use Spring Hill field. Willing to put in some funding to make the field more playable. Several years ago they provided \$30,000 toward Spring Hill maintenance issues. They will discuss this proposal with the Park Superintendent.

Little League would like to 'skin' Unity 5 and 'sod' Unity 2. They have some repairs on their two buildings...ceiling repair and painting. They will provide details to the Park Superintendent.

Festa Tournament:

Mr. Blueweiss is following up on the need for Donna Festa Committee to provide proof of payment of the Ranger services bill from last year; and, if unpaid, the bill must be paid prior to this year's event.

Chairman provided him with a copy of the Town's Noise Ordinance for his review with the Donna Festa Committee.

Laki Dimoulas, Buffalo Wild Wings Grill:

They have scheduled a picnic at Unity Park on Wednesday, August 31st and are requesting permission to have a DJ present. They will have approximately 75/100 employees and would like some background music. It's a family picnic so music will be low key. It is a no alcohol event. They come in around 9:00/10:00 a.m. through 4:00/5:00 p.m. They clean up following the picnic and take all garbage away. Mr. Dimoulas was provided a copy of the Town's Noise Ordinance.

Pam Georgas, Nature Center:

She reported that about a week ago there was a meeting with the First Selectman, Town Hall Chief of Staff, Director of Public Works, Park Superintendent and three members from the Park Commission Sub-Committee and three members of the Nature Center Sub-Committee. Mr. Ferrigno indicated that the consensus of the Park Commission sub-committee was that the Nature Commission should be looking at the Fairchild Wheeler/Swap (Exchange) Property, as they would be making a recommendation that all parks be denied as a location for the proposed Nature Center as it didn't fit into the vision of the Parks System. She stated that she would like an explanation for that.

She said that following that meeting, she and others met with the Selectman and he was not happy with the swap property and felt there were a number of other parcels to locate the proposed Nature Center and would like to do more research.

She wanted to know why the Sub-Committee of the Park Commission thinks a nature center wouldn't fit into the parks system.

Chairman said that the decision made by the Sub-Committee of the Park Commission which will be presented to the full Commission is that this proposal is not the vision they feel for the Parks System.

Mr. Lipinski, Park Commission Sub-Committee Member, said the Nature Commission brought us a document that Mr. Watson prepared. The Committee took a lot of what he said into consideration. He said the "swap property" would be great. (Pam Georgas said his vision is different from hers.)

Mr. Lipinski said he was in attendance at the meeting with the First Selectman and others, and the Director of Public Works and Park Superintendent supported the "swap property" as well.

Ms. Georgas said that on Friday, the Selectman changed his mind.

Dan Nelson said that Pam and their 501c3 Board met and discussed with the First Selectman the options.

1. Everyone recognizes that the current location of the Nature Center is not good.
2. Thought was that there are other locations in town where the Nature Center could be located.
3. Funding to be identified to meet their original goal.
4. Came to this Commission back in December to consider the possibility of joining the Nature Center with the Ranger Station and possibly locate in a park and determine what would be the best location to do so.

In review, the Commission has made a determination that this is a facility you do not want to have in the Parks System. If that's what this Commission votes on tonight, there are other locations in town which can be considered... The Bill Property, Whitney Avenue/Broadway Road, the Halaby Property (although the Land Trust has indicated they would like to retain this property as open space), and the State Exchange Property (with possibly a 50/99 year lease).

Pam Georgas said she didn't know why the Park Commission didn't see a nature center fitting into the parks system. She didn't understand the logic. Wanted an explanation.

Mr. Lipinski said the Park Commission Sub-Committee reviewed the report presented by the Nature Commission Sub-Committee and talked about a variety of reasons... parking, size of building, residency, traffic, busses in quantity, charging for commercial events (weddings, etc.) The beginning size of the building was 5,000 sq. ft. with the ultimate twice that size.

Pam Georgas said some of that criteria in that report is wrong.

Chairman said those who met thought that the swap (exchange) parcel was a good idea. It's 18/30 acres, close to Beardsley Zoo, the proposed Magnet School, the Pequonnock River and Rail/Trail System, space for a community garden and a major highway.

Sub-Committee member Chmielewski said he thinks they ought to consider the exchange property.

Chairman said the Sub-Committee's recommendation stands.

Pam Georgas asked for another meeting. The Nature Commission is a town commission and this is taking away 80 percent of their options for a location.

Sub-Committee member Lipinski said they met last week and decided on recommending the swap property. The Committee will make a recommendation tonight to the Commission. Vote to uphold or go in another direction.

Dan Nelson noted there were two competing documents presented. One from the Nature Commission, one from their sub-committee member, Don Watson. Question is do you want either of these in the parks system.

Pam Georgas said that if you start with the wrong criteria, you don't come up with the right proposal. They are not thinking of the 10,000 sq. ft. building with playgrounds. They are better to be about outdoor experiences.

Chairman said that Mr. Watson, who is greatly respected as a professional in his field, said that you can expect expansion of a nature center; might be 20 years but it happens. It's a definite. As a consultant he forecasted 15,000 visitors a year, 68 parking spaces, additional area for drop-off and pick-up for autos and busses, potential for additional 5,000 square feet, 430 bus visits a year, lighting for night events, additional area for overflow parking, banquet and wedding facilities, 2,000 sq. foot enclosed playground area. This sub-committee is going to make a strong recommendation to the Commission.

Pam Georgas expressed her frustration in not being able to continue meeting.

Chairman reminded her that the Nature Commission presented a rendering of a proposed nature center at a park location before the Park Commission ever knew it was being considered.

Upon question, Pam said maintenance, utilities, snow plowing would be with the Park Commission. They are a 501c3 with fund raising potential.

Mr. Chmielewski said they should be an enterprise fund like the golf course.

Mr. Martin asked if their current building at the Wagner Parcel could be expanded.

Mr. Lipinski suggested they take down the current building and re-build on their current site.

Ms. Georgas said the plan was to sell the property once the market changes.

Chairman thanked Ms. Georgas for her attendance.

MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Dr. Bellows, unanimously passed to close Public Comments portion of the agenda.

MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Mrs. Mayo, and passed approving the Minutes of the July 11, 2011 meeting. Mr. Lipinski abstained as he was not in attendance.

MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Mr. Lipinski, unanimously passed approving the minutes of the July 25, 2011 Special Park Commission Meeting.

Mr. Martin questioned if we have had an indication when the filming will happen at Unity Park.

Dan Nelson indicated they will be filming the evening of August 29th.

Sports Groups Fall Scheduling Requests:

Recreation Director said:

- They are in process of purchasing a computer program to facilitate scheduling.
- Sports Groups tend to request the same fields each successive season.
- Pop Warner delivered their papers to her office.
- She is working with Steve Kennedy from Board of Education on billings.
- Sr. City will be billed for lights and games.
- American Legion will be billed for lights.
- Little League pay for lights.
- Rangers checking of field areas is working well. They get schedules from Recreation.

Non-residents playing on fields.

- Superintendent said a key piece of the new policy is a comprehensive schedule. No one should be on the field without having been scheduled. Ranger should make a pass and ask them to leave.
- From March to November, every piece of grass is used. There is no place to just go and 'play'. We need to determine places for the average folks for non-official use of facilities.

2011 Field Use Policy:

Mr. Lipinski expressed great concern that we are not able to administer the new Field Use Policy to its fullest because in reviewing the Policy he finds some descriptions of current education activities which may not be accurately identified and appear to require approval of the Park Commission.

The Chairman will review those areas of the Policy with Mr. Lipinski and present possible revisions to the Commission for approval in time for the 2012 season.

Sports Groups Fall Scheduling Requests:

MOTION by Mr. Martin, second by Mrs. Mayo, unanimously passed approving the American Legion/Little Legion request for fall scheduling.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed approving American Youth Soccer Organization request for fall scheduling.

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second Mrs. Mayo, unanimously passed approving Trumbull United Soccer request for fall scheduling.

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed approving Trumbull Babe Ruth request for fall scheduling.

A letter of congratulations will be issued to Trumbull Babe Ruth 15 Year Olds on their recent success in winning the Connecticut State Championship and New England Regional Championship.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed approving Trumbull Little League request for fall scheduling.

Recreation Director secured from her Office, Pop Warner League's request for fall scheduling including use of Madison Field, THS Turf, THS Football, Indian Ledge for scrimmage as well as BOE indoor facilities for Cheerleaders. Insurance Certificates for all were submitted.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed approving Pop Warner request for fall scheduling.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed approving Scout Mathew Logan's proposed Eagle Scout Project to paint the wood fence at the parking area at the Churchill Road entrance to the Rail Trails providing he come back to the Park Commission with a concise, comprehensive, written plan on estimated time of start and completion, safety precautions, how he will handle barriers to keep vehicles from area of work in the parking area, secure back-side neighbor permissions, clean-up plans, and planned supervision from scout leaders or parents for approval by the Park Commission.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed approved request by Buffalo Wild Wings Grill to have a DJ present at their scheduled picnic at Unity Park on Wednesday, August 31st abiding by the Town's Noise Ordinance of which he was given a copy and clean-up of area of use at end of event.

Nature Center Proposal Sub-Committee Recommendation:

Chairman Ferrigno stated that as the proposed Nature Center to be built within the parks system does not meet the Commission's vision of what the Trumbull parks system should be, the Sub-Committee recommends to the full Park Commission that the proposal be withdrawn from further consideration.

MOTION by Mr. Lipinski, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously approved to remove from further consideration the building of a combined Nature Center and Park Ranger Facility at a central location located within the Trumbull parks system as previously agreed to in concept and principle on April 12, 2010.

MOTION by Mrs. Mayo, second by Mr. Lipinski, unanimously passed that should the Town pursue the proposed land exchange on Quarry Road in conjunction with the release of the Fairchild Wheeler Park parcel within the Town of Trumbull to the City of Bridgeport, the Park Commission will be willing to support the pursuit of the exchange parcel and submit a letter of support the State DEEP recommending the site for a proposed Nature Center in the town of Trumbull which would be appropriate to this location housing a Regional Magnet School, Beardsley Park Zoo, Route 8 corridor, and Pequonnock River Rail/Trail System.

Superintendent's Report:

- Department has managed to get through a busy season.
- Core aeration of field areas and fertilizing.
- Exterior work on barn at Abraham Nichols completed. Currently working on interior.
- Annual Concert at Indian Ledge planned for Sunday, September 10th. The controls are pretty smooth now. Indian Ledge roadway is one way in and out. Last year, most attendees out within 45 minutes.
- Pools close Labor Day.
- The diving board at Tashua was broken. The individual diving was not injured; however, the next diver had a knee injury when the board broke free. A new board has been ordered and will be installed next season as a low board, more a platform with less bounce to take into consideration weight limitation.
- Pool closed more often this season because of feces problems. Closures are for 12 hours. The problem has yet to be identified.

Chief Ranger responded to Mr. Martin's question:

Rangers gave out 445 warnings this season. All first-time offenders. Non-Residents at Water Park are warned, if they come back they get a ticket. If it's a resident without a sticker, they are given an opportunity to obtain a sticker. They had four (4) tickets this season.

MOTION to adjourn at 10:50 p.m. by Mr. Chmielewski, second Mr. Bellows, unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Joan E. Plouffe
Clerical Adm. Assistant

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