

MEETING MINUTES
Trumbull Parks and Recreation Commission
Monday, January 13, 2020

In attendance:

Kevin Bellows, Chairman
Mike Travisano, Vice Chairman
Bill Brown
Brian LeClerc
Ken Martin
Richard Moore
Jon O'Brien
Ed Ritacco
Nancy Walsh

Also in attendance:

Dmitri Paris, Superintendent of Parks

Guests:

Janet Epstein, 76 Old Dike Road
Richard Ruby, 76 Old Dike Road
Louise Perkins, 58 Old Dike Road
Susann Gill, 30 Old Dike Road
Arthur Riley, 30 Old Dike Road
Mike Buswell, 94 Gray Rock Road
Kevin Murray, 120 Park Lane

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION to suspend regular meeting to allow for public comment made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. LeClerc. Motions carried by unanimous consent.

A group of Beach Memorial Park area residents appeared before the commission to express their concerns regarding a potential aquatics facility in Beach Memorial Park. Mr. Richard Ruby read a prepared statement into the record on behalf of the group (attached herewith). Since the commission has not been approached by the Aquatics Facilities Building Committee, there was little information it could provide to the residents, however, Mr. Paris responded to their concerns to the best of his knowledge.

Mr. Mike Buswell and Mr. Kevin Murray appeared on behalf of Trumbull American Legion baseball to discuss roster expansion to include some players from Monroe. The Field Use Committee will be holding a meeting soon, after which there will be more information regarding the effect on Trumbull Legion's group status.

MOTION to close public comment and resume regular meeting made by Mr. Travisano, seconded by Mr. O'Brien. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

MOTION to approve November meeting minutes made by Mr. LeClerc, seconded by Mr. Travisano.
VOTE: 8-0-1 (Moore)

After a brief discussion, the commission agreed to allow Trumbull Babe Ruth to host the 2020 14U regional tournament.

MOTION to approve Babe Ruth tournament request made by Mrs. Walsh, seconded by Mr. Travisano. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Mr. Paris's department is still working on new language for the photography permit discussed at the December meeting and should have it ready for the commission soon.

Mr. Martin mentioned that there is a tree down on the trail between Tait Rd. and Whitney Ave. Mr. Paris will send a crew out to remedy the situation.

Regarding the residents' concerns about an aquatics facility in Beach Memorial Park, the commissioners agreed that there is nothing for the commission to do until the building committee comes to a decision and/or comes before the commission to ask for its thoughts on the site.

Mr. Moore announced that this meeting would be his last and thanked the commissioners for the opportunity to serve alongside them. The commissioners in turn thanked Mr. Moore for his dedication to the commission.

Prior to adjournment, the clerk was sufficiently embarrassed by a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday," and she thanks the commissioners and Mr. Paris for their kind wishes.

MOTION to adjourn made by Mr. Travisano, seconded by Mr. LeClerc.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Submitted by Laura Shiel

TO: Kevin Bellows, Chair; and Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Kay Curtis, Old Dike Road; Janet Epstein, Old Dike Road; Leslie Jennings, Old Dike Road; Louise Perkins, Old Dike Road; Arthur H. Riley, Old Dike Road; Susann Gill Riley, Old Dike Road; Richard Ruby, Old Dike Road; Lora Sapir, Old Dike Road; Stephanie Sudikoff, Old Dike Road

DATE: January 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Recommended Site for New Aquatics Facility in Beach Memorial Park

Overview

The purpose of this document is to:

- Express our concerns to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) regarding the proposal to build a new aquatic facility at Trumbull's Beach Memorial Park (BMP) in light of the Commission's dutiesⁱ for "...care, management, and control of all parks and grounds used for park and recreational purposes and all structures thereon...".
- Request clarification from PRC on its roles and responsibilities moving forward given the vote on Dec 12, 2019ⁱⁱ by the Aquatics Facility Building Committee (AC) to "select Beach Memorial to recommend to Town Council as the preferred site on which to build an aquatics facility."
- Request advice from PRC on resident participation in the decision-making on this issue.

Background

As long-standing residents of Trumbull, we believe that our town would benefit from a new aquatics facility. At the Jan 2, 2020 AC meeting, the architect's design sited a two-story facility near the current pool with parking for 160+ vehicles. Many neighborhood residents have expressed concerns about the BMP site (e.g. see AC minutes of Nov 7, 2019ⁱⁱⁱ and Jan 2, 2020^{iv}). Some of these concerns are listed below.

Concerns

Preserving the Character of BMP, the Surrounding Neighborhood, and our Town: Our open spaces are finite resources that make Trumbull attractive to residents and newcomers. Many residents consider Beach Memorial Park and the surrounding neighborhood to be a treasured island of peace and quiet. Placing the proposed facility in the park will fundamentally change its character and diminish its enjoyment by Trumbull residents. Beach's pool will be transformed from a town pool surrounded by shady groves, picnic areas, and a well-loved toddler splash park to a pool in the midst of a parking lot, overshadowed by a large building regardless of whether in its current modern form or in character with the neighborhood.

In addition, the park is home to foxes, bobcat, coyote, deer and other wildlife. The 2014 Trumbull Plan of Conservation and Development^v reflects our values concerning irreplaceable natural resources and preserving the town's character. We are worried about losing this precious natural habitat and about the precedent this development might set for further parkland exploitation. We believe the proposed aquatics facility which would be open 12 months a year with associated noise and light pollution is not appropriate for a parkland setting and does not belong in a quiet residential neighborhood.

Accessibility, Transportation, and Safety: The park is enjoyed by walkers, dog walkers, THS runners, cyclists and pool users. What will be the impact of increased traffic on these park users? We are worried about the potential for widening Beach Memorial Park Road and tree clearing to accommodate more vehicle traffic and for pedestrian safety. Parking is another concern. Current pool users park on Old Dike Road even when the designated parking lot is not full, creating a safety concern for residents given that it is a narrow roadway; residents have made calls to the Police Department about this. Exiting Hedgehog Road onto Daniels Farm Road is already problematic; the proposed facility will undoubtedly exacerbate this problem.

Protecting the Environment: Beach Memorial Park and adjacent Twin Brooks Park are flood prone. As recently as September 2018, flood water filled Beach Pool with mud and flooded the parking area. The proposed site is surrounded by wetlands and the proposed facility and parking lot is located within the regulated wetlands setback area. We understand that the town is responsible for the preservation and protection of such resources.^{vi}

Requests

We respectfully ask the Commission to respond to the questions and concerns raised in the above comments, clarify the Commission's role going forward, and advise us on how we, and other like-minded residents, can contribute to the decision-making process on this issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

ⁱ <https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/423/Parks-Recreation-Commission>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/12122019-3841>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/11072019-3325>

^{iv} <https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/01022020-3847>

^v <https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/913/Plan-of-Conservation-and-Development-2014-PDF>

^{vi} <https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?Q=325682>

<https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1197/02-02-2010-Inland-Wetlands-and-Watercourtheses-Commission-Regulations-PDF>

<https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1156/Conservation-Commission-Supports-an-Undisturbed-100-Foot-Setback-Zone-from-Wetlands-and-Watercourses-PDF>