

MEETING MINUTES
Trumbull Parks and Recreation Commission
Monday, June 14, 2021
via Zoom

In attendance:

Kevin Bellows, Chairman
Brian LeClerc
Jon O'Brien
Ed Ritacco
Nancy Walsh

Also in attendance:

Dmitri Paris, Superintendent of Parks
Kathleen McGannon, Chief Administrative Officer
Bill Chin, Meeting Facilitator

Not in attendance:

Bill Brown
Ken Martin

Guests:

Joe Roth, 11 Driftwood Lane
John Coleman, 10 Home Street

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Roth, Vice President of Trumbull Babe Ruth, appeared in place of Mr. Buswell, who was unable to attend. Trumbull Babe Ruth is requesting permission to host a 13-year-old tournament at Unity Park on July 10th and 11th of this year.

Mr. Coleman appeared on behalf of the Trumbull Rotary Club, requesting permission to hold the annual Sunset Run at Twin Brooks Park on Friday, July 23rd. Mr. Coleman noted that the race would be conducted in the same manner as in previous years.

MOTION to accept May meeting minutes made by Mrs. Walsh and seconded by Mr. LeClerc. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Mr. Bellows acknowledged receipt of the letter from Mr. Mark Halsted, Executive Director of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra, sent to the Commission on Monday, June 14.

Mrs. Walsh inquired about returning to in-person meetings. Mr. Chin shared that the town is waiting for guidance from state legislature. Currently, the Town is planning to continue online meetings through the end of June. Among the challenges to returning to in-person meetings are available spaces that are large

enough to allow the public to participate safely, and considerations of board and commission members who do not yet feel comfortable meeting in person.

Mr. Bellows asked for suggestions on meeting spaces that are large enough to host the Commission. Mr. Paris replied that there is the potential for the renovated barn in Nichols to become a permanent home for the Commission.

MOTION to approve the Babe Ruth 13-year-old tournament on July 10-11, 2021, made by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Ritacco. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

MOTION to approve the Trumbull Rotary Club Sunset Run at Twin Brooks on July 23, 2021, made by Mr. Ritacco, seconded by Mr. O'Brien. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

The Commission discussed the letter from Mr. Halstead of the GBSO. In his original letter, Mr. Halstead expressed the GBSO's desire to return to Trumbull after their successful event at Indian Ledge Park, and put forth potential dates for 2021. In the letter received by the Commission on Monday, June 14, Mr. Halstead expressed regret that the GBSO would likely not be able to perform in Trumbull this year, in part due to financial considerations. He again expressed the organization's desire to hold future events in Trumbull, and suggested opening a discussion around a concert to augment the events of next year's Trumbull Day.

Mr. Paris reported that renovation of tennis and pickleball courts is approximately one month ahead of schedule and as such, at least some courts should be ready for use this summer. There will be six dedicated pickleball courts at Unity Park, as well as two tennis-only courts; at Tashua, courts 1-4 will remain dedicated tennis courts.

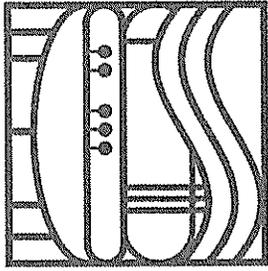
On the subject of park restrooms, Mr. Paris noted that the sprinkler parks have become a higher priority with recent warm weather, but that the restrooms will likely be fully opened in the coming weeks.

Mr. Ritacco inquired about limited opening hours at Tashua pool on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Mr. Paris explained that one day is being reserved as a "water day" for town summer camps, and the other is being reserved for swim lessons. The pool is open to the public from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on those days.

Mr. Paris introduced a discussion about a possible solution to the burden on the Tait Road trailhead parking area. He posited that an area of parking at Old Mine Park could be designated for nonresidents, noting that he is thinking long-term, rather than reducing resident parking at present to accommodate out-of-town trail users. He added that a discussion could be had with engineering to mark out a few spaces for use in the short-term as well.

MOTION to adjourn made by Mrs. Walsh, seconded by Mr. LeClerc. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.



GREATER BRIDGEPORT SYMPHONY

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Jonel Perlea 1954-1967
Jose Iturbi 1967-1972
Gustav Meier 1972-2013

Music Director
Eric Jacobsen 2014-

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Sonya Schopick (deceased)

Executive Director/ Recording Secretary

Mark R. Halstead AIA

June 14, 2021

Parks and Recreation Commission
Trumbull, Connecticut

VIA EMAIL

RE: Greater Bridgeport Symphony in Trumbull

Honorable Commissioners

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you at tonight's meeting via Zoom. Unfortunately the timing of your meeting directly coincides with a retirement get-together for my wife in Westport.

Though I cannot attend "in person," I would like to bring your Commission up to date on the proposed concert at Indian Ledge Park, which only about two weeks ago found a possible date of Saturday August 7.

GBS is excited about the opportunity to perform at Indian Ledge again. Our experience last summer was 100% positive; the Town could not have been more accommodating, and our audience is *still* talking about how wonderful the event was, and on the beauty of the venue as well.

Our problems this year are money and time. All of our players are professional, and are paid at or above union scale. The cost of some 45-50 musicians, the conductor, the vocalists and several staff members comes to well over \$35,000. Last year, we were able to make a go of the project with no outside funding, because the concert had been previously scheduled and ticketed, so we already had money in the budget to spend.

Last Thursday, Mr. Durand and I had a long conversation about options for presenting concert this summer. He said that Trumbull would be willing to offset our costs by \$1,000; he also said that we could benefit from the same favorable rental terms we enjoyed last season, and we would be allowed to charge admission. However, no further municipal funding (or ideas for private/corporate sponsorships) would be forthcoming. This meant that GBS would need to raise not only the \$38,000 needed for payroll, but for the costs of lighting, amplification, publicity, ticketing, venue rental and Park Rangers as well.

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It has always been a sad reality that orchestral music doesn't make money, and this concert scenario is a typical case. Even if we charged the public \$30 per ticket, we would need to sell around 1500 tickets to break even. Given the short time (seven weeks) between now and the concert date, this is too tall an order for us to take on.

In a wonderful demonstration of support for the Trumbull concert, GBS spontaneously raised over \$7,000 at an event this past Saturday, but unless an angel appears with another \$35-\$40,000 in the next few days (we normally need twelve weeks before each concert to hire musicians, rent music, etc.), a concert in Trumbull just isn't feasible this summer.

However, our Symphony is a never-say-die organization. This past season, in addition to presenting the Covid-safe concert in Trumbull that all too many people said would be impossible, we also brought our musicians together, Covid-responsibly, four times to record full-orchestra concerts for subscribers – something that I believe no other orchestra in the United States was able to do, at least not on that scale. We want to be back in Trumbull! What's needed is lots more time to plan and raise funds.

I would like to use the example of our experiences these past months as a springboard to a future event or events in Trumbull.

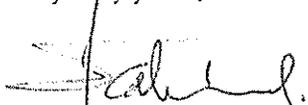
May I use this opportunity to present that idea that GBS become a part of the 2022 Trumbull Day celebrations? Working together, we would have the time (and, between us, the contacts) to solicit big sponsors, and plan a spectacular concert to augment the fun of next year's Trumbull Day. A free concert at Indian Ledge, with big-scale popular music, is certainly a winner for the public, and so it would be in the eyes of the sponsors associated with it.

Beginning discussions on this now could yield a real prize for all of us next year.

We take pride in our name – The *Greater Bridgeport* Symphony. We're not just Bridgeport's cultural gem; we are Trumbull's hometown orchestra as well, and we want to play our part in bringing great music to Trumbull. On behalf of our Board of Trustees, I wish to express the boundless enthusiasm of GBS for this project. We'll work hard to make it happen, and we'll do Trumbull proud – as long as there is sufficient time to plan and raise funds.

My apologies again for not attending tonight's meeting. I hope this letter may open discussions so that GBS can do something special in and for Trumbull.

Very truly yours,



Mark R. Halstead
Executive Director

cc: Hon. Vicki Tesoro, Jean Moffitt