

MEETING MINUTES  
Trumbull Parks and Recreation Commission  
Monday, July 12, 2021  
Via Zoom

In attendance:

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

Also in attendance:

Dmitri Paris, Superintendent of Parks  
Noreen Wilpiseski, Recreation Program Director  
Bill Chin, Meeting Facilitator

Guests:

Mary Isaac, 50 Skating Pond Road

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Public Comment

Mary Isaac appeared before the Commission to follow up on email regarding basketball players in Islandbrook Park. The complaint alleges that a large group of approximately 20 people uses the court while playing loud music, and uses foul language that is inappropriate in a setting where families may be using the tennis court and playground. Mrs. Isaac noted that of the approximately 10 cars associated with the group, none displayed the required park sticker. She also noted that a Park Ranger was in the park, but did not approach group or issue fines to cars without stickers. Mrs. Walsh inquired as to the time of day, to which Mrs. Isaac replied that the group plays during the daytime hours, adding that residents have complained about the situation before, however she could not be sure that it is the same group every time.

MOTION to close Public Comment made by Mr. Ritacco, seconded by Mr. O'Brien. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

MOTION to accept June meeting minutes made by Mr. LeClerc, seconded by Mr. O'Brien.

VOTE: 6-0-2 (Martin, Travisano)

Motion carried.

Chairman Bellows acknowledged the receipt of email correspondence from Mary Isaac and Hillary Yellen, to be discussed under New Business.

The Commission discussed various options for returning to in-person meetings, including the Teen Center, the Helen Plumb Building, and Council Chambers. Commissioners agreed that having the remaining meetings in a consistent location is ideal in order to avoid confusion. The clerk will contact the First Selectman's office to explore what spaces are available and can accommodate the Commission through December 2021.

The next item of business was the question of parking for nonresident pickleball players. Mr. Paris suggested that a permitting structure should be set up in order to address the issue. Under the permit structure, a Trumbull resident would sponsor the permit, and their guests will be allowed to park without a sticker. Permitting can be done both in person and online, and is a good way to equitably allocate playing time.

MOTION for pickleball courts to follow the same permitting process as tennis courts made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Travisano. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Regarding the complaint about basketball players at Islandbrook, Mr. Paris noted that when permitted events are in park (e.g., Little League), it is difficult to enforce the sticker requirement, however during the incident in question, video surveillance confirmed that no other event was taking place in the park. Park Rangers are instructed to ticket cars without stickers but in this case, the Park Ranger who was present did not take action. Dmitri reported the situation to Chief Ranger Chapman, who will address it with his staff. Mr. Martin asked if additional signage stating that a permit is required for use would discourage such incidents, however Mr. Paris noted that saying a permit to use the court isn't accurate because people can drop in to play basketball as long as no one else has a permit for the court.

Mr. Paris gave his monthly report, beginning with introducing the new Recreation Program Manager, Noreen Wilpieszski.

He also discussed the ongoing Little League tournament at Unity Park, which has attracted huge numbers. The restrooms are now open at Unity as well.

The pavilion at Old Mine Park has been vandalized (graffiti), and will be repaired shortly. There was also additional vandalism at Tashua Madison field.

The main concrete work for tennis/pickleball court is complete, and will be followed by tensioning and curing, fencing and net posts. After about a month of curing, courts will be painted and ready for play. Work will begin at Tashua courts this week (milling is already done).

The Hillcrest pool has experienced what is considered a catastrophic failure: water on the floor in the mechanical room turned out to be water that was pushing through the walls at the ceiling. Water has been working its way through the structure, so a structural engineer will need to evaluate. Mr. Paris has also contacted a pool engineer, who will put together a field report. Hillcrest pool is closed indefinitely.

Mr. Martin expressed concern about the vandalism in the parks, and asked how the Commission can help prevent it and protect the facilities. He also asked about the condition of Unity Park after the tournament, and if there are any things to take into consideration before allowing another event of that size.

Mr. Paris offered his compliments to Trumbull Little League and its volunteers for the remarkable job they did maintaining the facility during this large event. The restrooms have been taken care of, and the organization has abided by opening and closing schedule. The smaller restroom has been open constantly with no issues.

Mr. Paris noted that activity in park facilities prevents vandalism, while areas that are more remote encourage it. The extreme vandalism tends to occur under cover of night, when vandals know there is no one else in the area. Mr. Martin suggested addressing funding for more staffing before next year's budget hearings as one way to help prevent/discourage vandalism.

Mrs. Wash asked about surveillance cameras, to which Mr. Paris replied that cameras are present at some facilities, including Islandbrook, Twin Brooks, Tashua, Beach Memorial, and Quarry Road. There are no cameras at Unity or Indian Ledge at this time, one of the considerations being the cost of the system based on the area of coverage.

Mr. Martin suggested that Chief Ranger Chapman be included at future meetings in order to address any questions the Commission might have about his department.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.