

Parks and Recreation Commission
September 11, 2023

Present: Kevin Bellows - Chairman, Nancy Walsh, Cat Lamy, Mike Travisano, Ed Ritacco, Jonathan O'Brien, Jaime Smith-Solomon

Absent:

Also present: Abigail Relkin - Clerk, Matt D'Amico – Asst. Superintendent

Call to Order: 7:00 PM

Public Comment Opened:

Louise Perkins – Old Dike Road – the neighborhood is requesting to secure after-hours access to Beach Memorial pool parking lot. The lot is becoming a hangout for young adults with their cars and area residents are concerned about personal safety. There was a very loud party at the end of July, resulting in the cops needing to come and break up the event.

- Question: Ed Ritacco – Are there signs that note there is no parking, or the park is closed?
 - Response: It's my understanding that there is a sign that says park is closed at dusk.
- Question: Jonathan O'Brien– Is this new this month? Or has this been happening for a while?
 - Response: This is something that started during the pandemic in 2020.

Robert Velthuisen – 11 O'Clock Lane – I enjoy walking and hiking through the Trumbull parks but there is a posted trail map that is incorrect. Is the town aware that it is incorrect? If so, why has nothing been done about it? Was assistance provided to the Eagle Scout that made it? There is a map put out by Recreation and Health Department that is "clumsy." I'm offering assist to correct it.

- Comment: Matt D'Amico – it should have been correct at one point. This was before I started, so I was not aware if there were any issues.
- Question: Jaime Smith-Solomon – I'm looking at the website, is that trail map correct?
 - Answer: The map is clumsy, and the trails are incorrect.

Dumping Issues – There are trees that have been cut and have been dumped, not on trails but to the sides of them and it shouldn't be happening. Is this a portion of a state park or are they town trees?

- Comment: Matt D'Amico – in this picture, it looks like the tree was cut and was left lying there but was not brought from another location, so it would not qualify as "dumping". We did work in this area last summer and may have been left there by parks dept.

The bridges in the different parks are in poor state. People could fall and be hurt. Only one bridge is marked as do not cross. There are so many parties involved to get anything done, who is responsible for what when it comes to getting things done?

- Answer: Matt D'Amico - Anything that resides in the town parks will be the responsibility of the parks dept. We are aware the bridges are in poor shape, but they should all be marked as "Do Not Cross" or blocked off.

Steve Banko - Flintlock Road, Southport & Kristie Adarante – We were here for the June meeting to discuss a musical (looking to do "Hair," no nudity). at Indian ledge pavilion in summer 2024. Our group filed a formal application today to use the pavilion on July 5&6 (1 show Friday night and 2 shows on Saturday). We are prepared to pay \$1500 per day to close down the park on the above dates but are

hoping to reserve Sunday for a rain date, without the need to pay. We are asking to use the pavilion in the evenings leading up to the shows for rehearsals. There would be 25 to 30 people to finalize preparations without charge if possible. We will be bringing sound and lighting equipment but want to ensure there would be enough electrical, could we keep things in the area while we're up there?

- Comment: Kevin Bellows – Electricity had been updated in the past for large concerts, but we will have to confirm it can support what you have. We would likely look into the teen center and garage for you.

Kristie – Is there an issue with closing the grass space if there were rain the day prior?

- Comment: Kevin Bellows – Likely, no because people will be sitting, not running around.

Michael Murray – Edison Road – In the community garden there are weeds that are very invasive making it difficult to weed or walk through the aisles of the garden. This year, a landscaping group and nursery in Monroe provided plants and vegetable seeds for the Trumbull food pantry. This year was the most success we've had with growing and volunteering. Rena Bakalar is writing grants for a deer fence and we are hoping each plot owner will pay for a plot or raised bed.

Pam Roman – Marigold Lane – I brought George Estrada to the Westport community garden to see the opportunity. I think we need a better marketing plan to allow this to be more successful. There are more condos and apartments being built - those people may want to garden, we need to provide that place.

- Comment: Nancy Walsh – I commend you for your work and supporting the food pantry with what you grow.
- Question: Kevin Bellows – I was under the impression the town turns over the soil. If you're worried about the weed growth and it was inherited weed free, where are the extra weeds coming from?
 - Year 1 the soil was almost like cement. Weeds are in the aisle of the community garden. Whatever grows in the plot, you maintain, and the weeds are coming into plots that haven't been used. I emailed to see if I could get an extra plot, (there are 13 plots and 3 raised beds unused), but each owner can only have 1.
 - Comment – Kevin Bellows - I spoke to Dmitri today and he admitted he has fallen short with caring for the community garden and he is going to be giving it more attention.
 - Comment - Matt D'Amico – the preparation should remain consistent through the years, but I cannot speak to putting up fences.
 - Rena is waiting to hear from Dmitri to tell her what she needs to put as dimensions for a fence.

Motion to Return to meeting:

Motion made by Kevin Bellows, 2nd by Johnathan O'Brien

Motion to approve of posted July minutes –

Motion made by Mike Travisano, 2nd by Ed Ritacco

Correspondence –

Beaches Pool, Louise Perkins

Old Business –

None

New business –

Beaches Memorial Park

- Comment: Matt D’Amico – Blocking the area is difficult logistically. New cameras have been installed in the area as of last week. If there is one ranger placed there versus a large group, the ranger would have to call the police.
- Comment: Kevin Bellows - This parking lot is so large, in order to do anything like what other parks have, and closing the whole area would be major cost/project. Signage will be changed and added at Hedgehog Circle and Daniels Farm Road.
 - Comment: Mike Travisano – The other issue is that dump trucks will be going through and dumping leaves when pick up begins.

Trumbull Parks Questions

- Question: Ed Ritacco – Wasn’t all of this taken care of when the scanning was set up?
 - Response: Matt D’Amico - I would have to test out the QR codes and see if they are correct.
- Question: Kevin Bellows - Do you think we took down the trees and never removed them?
 - Response: Based on the picture, the tree wasn’t blocking the path and it wouldn’t have been easy to have them removed with the tools that they required.
- Comment: Matt D’Amico – The bridges should be clearly marked as being closed. The issue is that they aren’t noted earlier in the path and there *should* be a physical barrier there. Parks will check on this.

Fairfield Theater Group 2024

- Comment: Kevin Bellows – I was in the First Selectmen’s office last week and they seemed excited about the entertainment coming in. What’re our thoughts on the rain dates, can we leave the day open without paying? If they were speaking to Noreen about Friday and Saturday, I think they would’ve mentioned the rain date.
 - Question: Ed Ritacco - Is every weekend normally booked?
 - Comment: Kevin Bellows - Between travel soccer and lacrosse, yes.

Motion to allow the Fairfield Theater Group to use the Indian Ledge Park pavilion on July 5 and 6, 2024 and allow them to reserve Sunday July 7, 2024 as a rain date, and allow use of the pavilion the week leading to the event, with use of the teen center for storage as available.

Motion made by Cat Lamy, 2nd by Jonathan O’Brien

Community Garden –

- Comment: Kevin Bellows – Dmitri is planning to be more proactive with caring for the community garden.
- Comment: Cat Lamy - These people are donating their time and what grows, I think it’s wonderful!
- Question: Nancy Walsh – Why aren’t plots being given out if they are requested when not all of them are being used?
- Comment: Matt D’Amico - As far as maintenance is concerned, we’re working on a mowing schedule and other things need to be tightened up and we are definitely aware of it.

Superintendents report – Matt emailed the report out.

Division reports – Both Recreation and Ranger reports have been sent out.

Any other business that might rightly come before the commission

- Comment: Kathy McGannon, Jackson Drive – If you aren't aware, Jaime was responsible for our rock snake going around the gazebo. Kids are painting rocks and adding them to "pebbles" and there will be an event at the library to add more rocks.

Motion to adjourn

Motion made by Mike Travisano, 2nd by Jonathan O'Brien

Meeting adjourned at – 8:33 PM