

MEETING MINUTES
Trumbull Parks and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting
Monday, September 13, 2021

In attendance:

Kevin Bellows, Chairman
Mike Travisano, Vice Chairman
Brian LeClerc
Ken Martin
Jon O'Brien (via phone)
Nancy Walsh

Also in attendance:

Dmitri Paris, Superintendent of Parks
Steve Chapman, Chief Park Ranger

Not in attendance:

Bill Brown
Ed Ritacco

Guests:

Jason Schenker, 3 Courts Lane

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Jason Schenker appeared before the Commission on behalf of his son's Scout troop to request permission to conduct the troop's fundraising popcorn sale. Sales would take place during fall ball games at Islandbrook Park, and Trumbull Little League was on board with the plan pending approval from the Commission.

MOTION to close public comment and return to the regular meeting made by Mr. Travisano, seconded by Mr. LeClerc. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

MOTION to accept August meeting minutes made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Travisano.

VOTE: 5-0-1 (Walsh). Motion carried.

Mr. Martin discussed his findings regarding revenue from park sticker violations. He noted the following revenues collected:

7/2018 through 6/2019: \$11, 735
7/2019 through 6/2020: \$14, 595
7/2020 through 7/2021: \$38, 665

Chief Ranger Chapman explained that the large increase from FY20 to FY21 can be explained largely by the pandemic shutdown, citing the rangers' ability to patrol lots more frequently due to the lack of special events requiring their attention, as well as events during which tickets are not issued to nonresidents (e.g., baseball games). Mr. Chapman also discussed the difference between parking violations and infractions tickets, stating that the latter must go through the Infractions Bureau in Superior Court. Per state law, rangers must issue written warnings before imposing fines.

Regarding vandalism in the parks, Mr. Chapman stressed that it is a crime of opportunity. While closing the gates to the parks does keep cars from congregating, it doesn't stop people from waking into the parks. Quarry Road is part of the rangers' regular patrol as much as possible, and while people are generally compliant when rangers explain the ordinances, it doesn't always stop them from coming back at another time.

Mr. Chapman also discussed his department's staffing issues. With most of his staff being part time, there are several challenges, including limits on working hours, training time, special events outside of typical ranger duties, and staff retention. Mr. Martin added that a conversation should be had with the Town about what can be done to increase resources for the Park Ranger department.

The Commission then discussed the request from Mr. Schenker to hold the Scouting fundraiser during TLL fall ball at Islandbrook Park. Mrs. Walsh expressed concern that it would set a precedent that goes against the ordinance governing sales in the park, in addition to and influx of requests from all types of groups looking to raise funds. Mr. Paris noted that it would be difficult to differentiate between groups when granting permission. Mr. Martin pointed out that other groups have sold items during their event, however, these groups had taken out a permit to use the park. Mr. LeClerc suggested that without a documented process, it would be difficult to approve or deny fundraisers. Mr. Martin suggested that the Scouts reach out to the NIA farmers market. Mr. Travisano added the suggestion of other municipal properties such as the library. It was agreed that the Commission would adhere to the existing ordinance.

The Eagle Scout who submitted a proposal to build a COVID-19 memorial has received permission from Fairfield to construct one there, and so has withdrawn his request from the Trumbull Commission.

Mr. Bellows forwarded the correspondence from Mr. Faruggia regarding the tress overhanging his property to Mr. Paris, who then directed it to the appropriate town personnel.

Mr. Martin drew the Commission's attention to the Fall/Winter Recreation program brochure, noting that it looks exceptional. He suggested adding the names of the Commissioners, though Mr. Paris pointed out that the Commission typically acts as a unit and perhaps may not want individual members singled out.

During discussion of his report, Mr. Paris informed the Commission that the administration is going before the Board of Finance to request a special appropriation to convert the basketball court at Islandbrook into pickleball courts. The request will be for \$23,000.

The engineers inspecting Hillcrest pool have submitted their report and now the town will ask for contractor quotes and scopes of work. THS swim team is practicing in Westport and Orange for the time being.

Mr. Paris asked to correct the misinformation that the HMS pool would be back up and running in 5-6 weeks. He said that is not the case.

Mr. Paris and Ms. Wilpiseski had a successful meeting with Dr. Semmel and the Board of Education and rec programs will be going back into the schools with modifications in light of COVID protocols.

Cleanup from storms Henri and Ida is ongoing.

Mr. Martin inquired about the Unity Park parking lot, to which Mr. Paris responded that money had to be diverted to more urgent needs, but if the Commission feels strongly about a particular project, they should do so, especially coming into December and January budget hearings.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Submitted by Laura Shiel