

Minutes Of The Cheshire Parks And Recreation Commission
Special Meeting Held On Wednesday, August 30, 2017
7:00 P.M. In The Youth Center, South Main Street, Cheshire CT 06410

Present: James Nankin, Chairman; Members: Patrick Duffy, Paul Fracasse, Dan Nowak (arrived at 7:05pm), Michael O'Donnell.

Staff: Michael Milone, Town Manager; George Noewatne, Director of Public Works & Engineering; Sandy Petela, Acting Director Parks & Recreation; Elizabeth Mayne, Program Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nankin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

Mr. Milone opened the meeting, and went over the following talking points:

Department Reorganization: Due to State budget cuts, it was decided to take advantage of the savings when Mr. Simmons and Mr. Ceccolini retired and to reorganize the department. The Parks Maintainers, as of July 1, 2017, have been transferred to the Public Works Department. The Director of Parks & Recreation and the Deputy Director's position have been combined into one position. There will be a new position, Program Supervisor, and that person will become second in command. A new Part-Time Program Coordinator will also be hired. Mr. Milone stated that these positions will be funded as of October and permanent staff is expected to be hired by mid-October.

It was stated by Mr. Noewatne and Mr. Milone that the Public Works Maintainers and the Parks Maintainers have been working together during winter snowstorms and during "winter blitz" activities and the integration of the two groups has worked well.

Mr. Nankin asked about summer help for the Parks crew. Mr. Milone stated that they will be retained and hired through Public Works and will be used as needed and stressed that the recreational facilities will not be neglected; there are now more resources as the Public Works Department has 25 people.

Mr. Nankin stated that what always made the Parks Department a success was their quick response to emergencies and their willingness to do whatever had to be done. Mr. Noewatne responded that nothing would change – there is a work order system in place for regular maintenance and they can always be called upon for emergency situations.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that there have been informal relationships formed between the Parks Maintainers and the sports teams and stressed the need to be responsive to the immediate needs of the public.

Mr. Milone advised that the summer went well – any crises that arose were dealt with and that next spring, weather permitting, it is hoped that with the extra resources from the Public Works Department, fields can be attended to earlier, rather than waiting until summer help comes on board in late May.

Commission Impact and Priorities: Mr. Milone stated that the job of the Parks & Recreation Commission will not change. The ordinance is clear, however the staffing will be different and

ways of communicating will change. The Director of Recreation will attend Commission meetings, however the Public Works Director will only attend periodically. The Parks & Recreation staff will communicate any work-related issues that come up at the meeting to the Public Works Director.

Mr. Milone asked that the Commission's priorities be addressed at the end of the meeting.

Operational Issues: Mr. Noewatne advised the Commission that the two departments have been getting together for weekly meetings and that scheduling has been going well.

Winter Blitz- Mr. Noewatne explained "Winter Blitz". During the winter, the Maintainers from both departments work together to complete building-related work that needs to be done at various town buildings (examples: painting or building shelves)

Winter Weather – The departments have combined in the past to complete plowing routes. Mr. Milone stated that deployments will be modified based on the nature of the storm, and that is a benefit of having one organization and that scheduling will be more efficient. Dr. Duffy asked how many people were out during storms? Mr. Noewatne stated that there are 14 plow routes with the big dump trucks, and approximately 6 routes done by pick up trucks.

Bathroom Renovations – Priority has been given to the restrooms at Cheshire Park, Mixville Park, and MacNamara. It's hoped that the renovations can be started this fall and finished by Spring 2018. Quinipiac Park and Lock 12 are hoped to be completed by Summer 2018.

Mr. Noewatne stated that there is \$120,000 allocated to spend on the new restrooms. Some restrooms have had new fixtures installed already. A discussion followed regarding hiring an architect in order to ensure restrooms will be up to code. Mr. Nankin asked if the restrooms will be handicapped accessible and Mr. Noewatne replied that they will.

Basketball Court Resurfacing – An RFP will go out in the fall for concrete courts for Cheshire Park, the Youth Center, and MacNamara. Regarding the court at the Youth Center – the original proposal was for a 4" concrete surface, but due to clearance and drainage concerns, and the potential for the portable ice skating rink to be located there in the winter, it was determined that the court would be patched this fall. It needs to be determined if or how the ice skating rink will impact the court surface this winter, and then it can be decided how to proceed next spring.

Linear Trail – The group discussed the Linear Trail. The issue of speed on the trail was brought up. Mr. Nankin asked about speed limit signs? Dr. Duffy and Mr. O'Donnell agreed they were necessary, perhaps near the entrances. Mr. O'Donnell suggested that perhaps it could be painted on the asphalt.

It is expected that once the portion of the trail from Cornwall to West Main opens, there will be an increase in activity on the trail. A discussion followed about how to handle increased usage of the trail, and to be sure users continue to be courteous to others.

Markers are being ordered by the Police Department that will be not only used as a measuring device (placed approximately every 1/10th of a mile), but will also have a 4 digit number on them. This number will be tied into the Police Department, and if there is an emergency, the

number can be given to dispatch and the Police will know where the emergency is. These markers will be installed by Public Works and it is likely they will be installed this fall.

Quinnipiac Roller Rink – Members discussed the usage of the rink at Quinnipiac Park. It was stated that Cheshire Youth Soccer is interested in partnering with the Town to rehabilitate the surface. Mr. Nankin stated that he does see people using it.

Quinnipiac Park – Mr. Milone stated he has allowed Cheshire Youth Soccer to have temporary lighting at the two fields closest to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Dr. Duffy asked about funding? Mr. Milone answered that Cheshire Youth Soccer would pay for the lighting.

Various Inspections – Mr. Noewatne reported that inspections were done at the various park pavilions for structural integrity and discovered that they are in good shape, with the exception of a few minor maintenance items that need to be taken care of. He also reported that the Lock 12 Museum had some insect damage and needed to be fixed and that the Lock 12 pavilion had some damage due to carpenter bees.

Open Space – Mr. Milone and Mr. Noewatne discussed the Town's Open Space and stated that it was maintained by the Parks Crew, and monitored by the Police and Fire Departments as well.

Chapman Property – Mr. Milone advised that the Town Council has put funds aside to hire a consultant in the next fiscal year. He stated that the Parks & Recreation Commission will be working with the Town Council in the planning of the development of the property.

Summer Concerts – There was a short discussion about the success of the summer concerts and how much they were enjoyed by everyone. It is hoped that sponsorships will be obtained next year.

Mr. O'Donnell talked about the difference between the two different companies hired to do set up. A discussion followed about starting to look for bands earlier in the year.

Fall Festival – Mr. Milone advised everyone that both the Public Works Department and the Parks & Recreation Department will be involved in the Fall Festival. There will be fireworks this year and they will be shot off from the Chapman property, far south from the pool.

Mr. Nankin asked where does the Pool fit into the reorganization? Mr. Milone replied that the Aquatics Director will report to the Director of Recreation and that the Pool Maintainer will continue to report to the Aquatics Director. The Pool Maintainer works for the Pool and is not part of the merge between Parks and Public Works.

Turf Consultant – Mr. Noewatne stated that he is looking at different turf consultants to determine the best way to fertilize and seed the fields. Mr. Nankin asked if he was considering going back to using pesticides. Mr. Noewatne replied that the Town is committed to organic, and that some fields may need targeted work for the problem areas.

Mr. Milone asked the Commission about their priorities. Dr. Duffy mentioned how important it will be to work together and suggested meeting with Public Works quarterly. Mr. O'Donnell asked about the liaison with the Town Beautification Committee and will that work the same? Mr. Milone replied that yes, nothing is going to change.

Mr. Nowak asked about the separation of Parks and Recreation and spoke about the issue of tobacco-free parks as one of the items the Commission has worked on. He asked about other issues that might come up at the parks – is the Commission now totally removed? Mr. Milone referred to the Town Ordinance and said the Parks and Recreation Commission still has the same duties and that nothing has been relinquished.

Mr. O'Donnell asked about the capital budget. Mr. Milone replied the Director of Recreation and the Director of Public Works would both have to be involved in the capital budget process for parks related requests.

Mr. Nowak stated he was thankful for the walkthrough of the Chapman property, and although there have been no final decisions made, he's heard talk of moving the tennis courts from the Youth Center. Mr. Milone replied that if that happens, it will not be right away. The decision had to be made to fix the Youth Center courts this year because they were in very poor condition.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell to adjourn. Seconded by by Dr. Duffy
MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.
VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

ATTEST

Stephanie Dunn, Clerk