

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2018 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE YOUTH CENTER,
559 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

James Nankin, Chairman; Dr. Patrick Duffy, Vice Chairman; Karen Bertoni, Paul Fracasse, Dan Nowak, Michael O'Donnell, Steve Trifone.
Staff: Director Josh Medeiros; Assistant Town Manager and FOI Officer Arnett Talbot.

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

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

The Clerk called the roll and determined a quorum was present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

Ms. Talbot was present to inform the Commission on FOI meeting and agenda requirements, and she cited some of the FOI requirements.

Agenda – must provide all the information to be discussed at the meeting; the agenda is publicly noticed/posted 24 hours before a meeting; and the Parks and Rec Commission has always been in compliance with this notification.

Ms. Talbot noted that at the December 2017 Commission meeting there was discussion of items not stated on the agenda. With the required agenda format, there would be no future FOI issues for the Commission. There must be a 2/3rds majority vote of the Commission to add an item to the agenda.

Director's Report – all questions, comments, issues on this report from the Commissioners must be addressed under this section of the agenda.

Ms. Talbot left the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman Nankin moved agenda item #4 to current status.

4. MINUTES, DECEMBER 6, 2017

MOTION by Mr. Trifone; seconded by Dr. Duffy.

MOVED to approve the minutes of December 6, 2017 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman

MOTION by Dr. Duffy; seconded by Mr. O'Donnell

MOVED that James Nankin be elected Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

(Nominations were called three times; there were no other nominations)

VOTE The motion to elect James Nankin as Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission passed unanimously by those present.

Vice Chairman

MOTION by Mr. Nankin; seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

MOVED that Dr. Patrick Duffy be elected Vice-Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

(Nominations were called three times; there were no other nominations)

VOTE The motion to elect Dr. Patrick Duffy as Vice-Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission passed unanimously by those present.

Secretary

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell; seconded by Mr. Nankin

MOVED that Dan Nowak be elected Secretary of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

(Nominations were called three times; there were no other nominations)

VOTE The motion to elect Dan Nowak as Secretary of the Parks and Recreation Commission passed unanimously by those present.

5. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT – Councilor Peter Talbot

Mr. Talbot reported that 90% of the Council was re-elected; David Veleber replaces Michael Ecke; and Robert Oris was re-elected Chairman of the Town Council.

At this time, the Council and Town administration are wary about the State budget, further revenue reductions, and consequences to the Town. Department Heads are holding the line on spending in anticipation of future State budget cuts. Mr. Talbot does

not see any real impact to the Parks and Recreation Department. He stated that the Council has discussed inclusion of the cost of installation for memorial benches in parks and on the Linear Trail.

Director Mederios informed the Commissioners that the department must save \$12,000 this year with minimal impacts. With regard to the cost of benches, there should be inclusion of materials, town crew labor costs, and administrative expenses, which total about \$400. A bench has a cost of about \$1,600...with \$400 for installation, total cost would be \$2,000. There is a department form which people complete for purchase of a bench, which will be reviewed and updated. Once the bench is installed, it becomes Town property. The benches include a memorial plaque.

The Commission discussed the cost of bench installation, and noted availability of cement pre-formed bases (United Concrete), and Public Works having the equipment to install the benches. Director Mederios will discuss this matter with the PW staff, check with United Concrete on pre-formed bases, and report his findings to the Commission.

With regard to damages to the bench, the Commissioners noted there is no warranty for the benches. The question is the liability of the Town to repair or replace these benches. On the bench purchase form, the Commissioners discussed including a time frame of a 10-year life span for the benches for repair or replacement by the Town. By inclusion of installation costs for the benches, there should be some funds available to repair or replace benches within the 10 year time frame.

Councilor Talbot reported that the Council approved funding in the capital budget for the Community Pool...pads and starting blocks...and Sea Dogs organization will be the first sponsorship for the starting blocks.

Regarding the pool, Mr. Nankin stated everything is being done to watch the dollars. The assumption is to increase department revenue, and this involves increasing the marketing for the department opportunities.

Ice Rink – Mr. Nankin talked about the installation of the rink at Bartlem Park, and his being unaware of the change in location of the rink from Youth Center to the Park. He asked that this type of information be communicated to him by department staff. There are questions about lights for the rink.

Director Medeiros informed the Commission that the rink did not fit at the basketball court location, there was a pitch in the rink, and the brackets received were not enough for the rink. The signage for the rink is in; portable bathrooms will be installed; light towers have been donated by a resident and the Cheshire Police Department for temporary lighting. It is expected the rink will open next week, and there will be an opening event.

There is an unofficial agreement with neighbors of Bartlem Park regarding lights. Lights cannot be installed on the north side of the park (Chipman Drive). Director Medeiros noted that Town Manager Milone did not believe temporary lights would be a problem for the rink site. The rink will be open until 9 p.m. and pool staff will be responsible for turning the lights on and off when it is in use.

Chairman Nankin commented on the need for a facility for junior football and lacrosse.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Food Truck Committee – Mr. O'Donnell reported that this committee will hold a meeting in January and report at the February meeting. At the last summer concert there were 19 food trucks, and parking assistance came from the Lions Club.

Mr. Mederios will get information from the Connecticut Parks and Recreation Commission on food trucks, which he will review with the committee.

Regarding food trucks coming into the parks for the rink and other events, Mr. O'Donnell explained that the trucks want a guarantee of a certain number of people. With the ice rink the Town cannot guarantee a large number of people to support a food truck, and most truck owners shut down in the winter season, reopening in the spring.

Mr. Nankin talked about having a food truck at the park site on a regular basis. It was noted by Mr. O'Donnell that local business, which pay taxes to the Town, would be in opposition to a food truck on a full-time basis. Mr. Nowak asked about use of the concession stand at Bartlem Park for the rink and other events. Mr. Trifone informed the Commissioners that this stand is winterized, water is turned off, and there is no heat in the building.

The Beautification Committee – Mr. O'Donnell reported there was no meeting on January 3rd. He commented on whether there is a need for a Parks and Rec Commission liaison to the TBC as the department and commission no longer have control over the Parks Division...it now comes under the Public Works Department. He noted that other commissions have withdrawn liaisons to the TBC.

Councilor Talbot will review the Town Charter and Town Ordinances regarding liaisons to the TBC.

8. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS – none

9. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Outdoor Ice Rink – Mr. Mederios is working on the opening of the rink.
- b. Food Trucks/Concession Stand – the committee will meet on this matter.

c. Discussion re: sponsorships – The Parks and Rec Department and Commission can now undertake sponsorships...selling something for a fee to sponsors. This includes the summer concerts which are a huge success and supported by the community.

Director Medeiros informed the Commission he will be sending letter to all the local businesses promoting sponsorship for the concert series. He noted businesses need a value back to them, and there will be different value/level packages for the sponsorships...i.e. platinum, gold, silver, bronze. If Commissioners have any connections with local businesses, Mr. Medeiros asked them to spread the work about opportunities for sponsorships.

Dr. Duffy recommended contacting Hartford Health Care which is opening a large, new medical building in the center of Cheshire.

Ms. Adams and Ms. Mayne will be looking at pool events to start a sponsorship campaign. The pool sponsorships will include many items needed such as more starting blocks, score board, and other amenities.

Chairman Nankin moved agenda item #12 to current status.

12. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. Department SWOT Analysis/2018 goals.

Mr. Medeiros reported on the staff meeting to review the "SWOT" – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Action items were reviewed at the staff meeting, and Mr. Medeiros highlighted the top three items.

- 1) Develop community needs and program satisfaction survey.
- 2) Develop strategy and brand (new logo, social media presence).
- 3) More collaboration within the department – aquatic and recreation; customer experience; streamlining the cumbersome process (registration); customer experience should be carried through in everything the department does; suggestions and comments are welcomed.

Mr. Nankin commented on a survey and feedback on everything the department undertakes, and the department operating a business. He cited "yoga" as an example...whether it should continue to be offered. Mr. Nankin stated that the Parks and Rec Department and Commission are never mentioned on the Cheshire Community Forum, and this type of social media should be utilized.

In that regard, Mr. Medeiros said staff is aware of these things and is tied into these initiatives. He and the staff are excited about looking about what is being done and areas of growth.

Monthly Report – Mr. Medeiros noted he is providing the Town Manager and department staff with a monthly report, and distributed copies of the report to the Commissioners. This report highlights all the monthly happenings, budget updates, fiscal history of the past four years (revenue and expenditures). He said lower revenue is tied to marketing; winter offerings are lower; aquatic revenue is down considerably (\$26,000 less in December 2017 than 2016); there was weaker summer pool membership; there are no other amenities at the pool (i.e. rock wall, recreational fields).

With regard to pool fees, the question is whether they are correct; are there too many fee categories and sub-categories; or not enough categories; family day pass costs must be looked at for reasonable cost. Mr. Medeiros will be looking at sponsorships for support of pool amenities, and said we want to make the pool more attractive with a special event summer calendar and movie nights. Currently, basketball season is underway; winter registration is ongoing; park pavilion rentals are underway; 2018 summer part-time employment is started.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Issues or Concerns by Commissioners.

Ms. Bertoni welcomed Director Medeiros and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. Nowak asked about the community pool tension membrane and pool interior being affected by the cold and snowy weather.

In reply, Mr. Nankin stated the Town has an enclosed building, with a stable inside environment.

Councilor Talbot reported that the Energy Commission looks at the operational issues, energy efficiency, and energy usage at the pool.

Mr. Trifone advised the tension membrane has an "R value" and there is insulation in the pool structure.

Mr. Nowak asked about the "orange cones" that are usually on Cornwall Avenue and Higgins Road, and why they are no longer there.

In the winter these cones are removed, and Mr. Nankin noted they would otherwise be plowed away. He said the middle section of the Linear Trail is not open yet.

Dr. Duffy wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. Fracasse stated he likes the monthly Director's report, and thanked Mr. Medeiros for submitting it to the Commissioners.

With the start of the budget process, Mr. O'Donnell asked about funding for the Chapman property.

Councilor Talbot advised that the Town Council has not yet held a "pre-budget" meeting on the FY 2018-19 operating budget.

Director Medeiros reported \$140,000 has been set aside for the Chapman property.

Mr. Trifone congratulated the Commission officers, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Chairman Nankin wished everyone a Happy New Year, and hopes 2018 is a good one for all. He commented on the department, under Director Medeiros, going in a new direction with open communication to the Commission on what is ongoing. Mr. Nankin said the Commissioners and Director will work well together.

11. BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT – discussed earlier in the agenda under Committee Reports.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Dr. Duffy; seconded by Mr. Trifone.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:


Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk