

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2019 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE
YOUTH CENTER, 559 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410**

Present: Chairman Patrick Duffy, Karen Bertoni, Dan Nowak, Robert Parr, and Steve Trifone
Council Liaison, Peter Talbot

Staff: Josh Medeiros, Director, Chris Rusack, Program Coordinator and Elizabeth Mayne, Program Supervisor

Absent: Paul Fracasse, Michael O'Donnell

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Duffy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES, JANUARY 2, 2019

MOTION by Mr. Nowak, seconded by Mrs. Bertoni

MOVED to approve and accept the minutes of January 2, 2019

VOTE The motion passed unanimously.

5. PARKS UPDATE

There were no personnel from Public Works in attendance and no Parks Update. There was discussion about the absence of Public Works staff at this meeting, which has been going on for several months. Mr. Talbot will contact the Public Works staff regarding this issue.

Dr. Duffy asked for an update on the Dog Park. Dr. Medeiros said there was no update.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Talbot stated that the budget review will start the middle of March and will be finalized by May 9 per the Town Charter. He also informed the members that the Youth Committee is looking at a change of ordinance, to increase the age limit for nicotine delivery systems use, from age 18 to 21 within the Town. Nearby towns are also looking into this. Cheshire would be the sixth town to consider the ordinance change.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

None

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Duffy informed the members that Dr. Medeiros will be leaving his position with the Town of Cheshire. Dr. Medeiros received an offer from the City of Bristol to be Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, and has decided to take it. He is prepared to stay on in a part time capacity to be able to assist with the budget and the Chapman property until a new hire is in place. He expressed confidence in the staff at Parks and Recreation and he feels that their great work will continue.

Dr. Duffy stated that Dr. Medeiros has done a great job during his tenure.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Ice Rink

Dr. Medeiros stated that the ice rink has definite challenges, such as weather/temperature changes, maintenance of the ice rink, monitoring and keeping it on track. It represents a lot of work for the staff. He suggested that next year the ice rink could possibly be located within the pool structure area to prevent people from playing hockey on it. This has happened before and the ice rink has been damaged and then requires maintenance by the Parks staff. The ice rink was used for a family skate night event and Mr. Rusack explained that because of the warm weather, it was held as a pop up event. The event was attended by about 30 people and all had a good time.

b. Fee Change for School Gym Rentals

Mr. Medeiros explained that Parks & Recreation handles the scheduling of the of school gyms in town for outside programs such as basketball, soccer and baseball. This scheduling is done for the Board of Education by the Park & Rec office staff. It consists of a lot of work and requires substantial staff time. This set up has been handled by the Park & Rec staff for the past 20 years or more. This service requires our staff to make reservations, handle phone calls, follow up on billing, make changes and schedule personnel to be onsite during these events. There is a rate for this service. This rate has increased over the years but has stayed the same for the past three years. The fee being charged by Parks & Rec is \$28.00. Recently one traveling team has expressed to the Town Council that this fee is too expensive.

Mr. Duffy asked about janitorial staff. Mr. Medeiros replied that the Town of Cheshire does not have a night custodian at the schools onsite for these events. This would add a substantial cost for weekday's events and weekend events since the custodian would have to be paid at time and half. Because of the absence of a custodian at night, there is a need for a person to open the buildings for these user groups.

The Board of Ed has allowed Park & Rec staff to open the building for these events as a discount to our department for the use of these facilities.

The Town Council has decided to reduce the fee to \$15.00. This represents a \$40,000.00 loss of revenue for Park & Rec. Because of the reduction of this rate, other groups are now booking thru Park & Rec instead of the Board of Ed. This has substantially increased the work load for the Park & Rec staff.

Mr. Talbot explained that the Town Council believes that town residents pay their taxes and should be able to use the town's facilities. They determined that groups would be charged \$15.00 an hour to have a supervisor from Park & Rec to open and close the building. This fee would be at cost.

There was discussion by the members regarding this new policy, the loss of revenue, cost of insurance and cost of electricity.

Mr. Talbot explained that there is a stipulation that these teams would be made up of Cheshire residents. Mr. Medeiros stated that other towns do not charge a fee because they have custodial staff available.

Mr. Talbot indicated that the Town Council voted at the last meeting to approve this \$15.00 fee. He voted yes, but in the comments he asked the Town Manager to keep track of the impact that this will have on Parks & Rec, the toll it is taking on the staff and what effect it would have long term.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of Chapman Property Master Planning Firm

Mr. Medeiros distributed a memo regarding the bids received for the Chapman Property. The three top ranked firms were interviewed on January 23, 2019. The top firm that was selected is To Design of New Britain. This firm has engaged in similar projects for the city of Hartford, the Town of Southington, and the City of Waterbury. The original fee was \$38,800.00. Mr. Medeiros negotiated the price down to \$31,000.00 which now represents the new price unit. The review Committee is asking this Commission to formally endorse their selection of To Design. After this endorsement, this item will be placed on the February 13, 2019 Town Council agenda.

Discussion and questions were raised about the time frame and the strength of this company. Mr. Parr asked about an overview. Dr. Medeiros explained the procedure. Dr. Medeiros distributed the To Design proposal to the members. An email was shared with the members from Mr. O'Donnell regarding his positive comments of the To Design firm. The members were impressed with the proposal presented by To Design.

MOTION by Dr. Duffy, seconded by Mr. Nowak

MOVED to send the recommendation to award To Design the bid - to the Town Council

VOTE The motion passed unanimously.

11. DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Dr. Medeiros discussed the department financials as of the end of January. The revenues are up; \$13,000.000 more than last year. The Community Pool revenues also increased. Dr. Medeiros attributed the increased revenue at the pool with the following: a new adult swim team has been implemented; there are more swimming meets as a result of the bleachers that were purchased, and more events and concessions sales. The Department has also purchased an inflatable obstacle course which is being used as an add-on for birthday party rentals and is drawing more families to the pool. There is also a climbing wall that will be here in March.

Expenses are down and summer concerts sponsorships are doing well.

Chairman Duffy discussed ideas to raise revenue. One idea was purchasing snowshoes that would be rented by town residents. Members also discussed purchasing scooters to rent to residents as well as bikes for rentals. There was discussion regarding building a linear trail for these activities in order to raise funds and also for the health benefits.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Duffy and the members thanked Dr. Medeiros and wished him good luck in the future.

MOTION by Mrs. Bertoni; seconded by Mr. Trifone

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present

Respectfully submitted,



Angela Izzo