

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. AT
THE YOUTH CENTER, 559 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE
(PER EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT)**

Public access made available through live streaming on YouTube at

http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL_K7b38cCJpv-606Vk7vpA/live

Public comments accepted at recreation@cheshirect.org and by voice mail message at 203 272-2743.

Video will be available on Channel 14 and on demand at www.cheshirect.org as soon as possible.

Present: Chairman Patrick Duffy, Paul Fracasse, Dan Nowak, Michael O'Donnell,
Steve Trifone Council Liaison, Peter Talbot

Absent: Karen Bertoni, Robert Parr

Staff: John Gawlak, Director; Elizabeth Mayne, Program Supervisor;
Mark Cunningham, Highway Superintendent

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

Mr. Gawlak called the roll and determined a quorum was present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr Gawlak received an email from Mrs. Kirsten Augliera on June 1. Mrs. Augliera and her husband have been enjoying Mixville for 30 years. Her email was concerning signage at Mixville being unable to be read, changing the park to residents only, and keeping the park clean. Mr. Gawlak has responded to her.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES, MAY 6, 2020

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell seconded by Mr. Nowak

MOVED to approve and accept the minutes of May 6, 2020.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously.

5. PARKS UPDATE

Mr. Gawlak stated all 3 basketball courts have been completed, but are still wrapped. The Town is waiting for guidelines from the Governor's office before they can be opened.

The tennis courts have been paved. The company should be out by June 12 to do painting and striping. He is hopeful that Cheshire Park courts will be open and operational by the third week in June.

The equipment has been ordered for the playground at Bartlem Park. The Public Works crew needs to finish up what they are working on in order to get there to do the necessary site work. Mr. Cunningham advised that crews were hoping to get there this week.

Mr. Gawlak advised the commission that he's sent emails Mr. Noewatne and Mr. Kimball as he's been getting emails from sports groups regarding starting their practices. New guidelines are expected next week regarding sports, beaches, and pools.

Mrs. Mayne continued that new guidance will be coming out this week, and she feels that guidelines will be strict regarding practices. The municipalities have their own sets of rules and the Town will have to decide what will be allowed and how to handle. An example is the requirement for signage, which may be a problem to do at all the parks. There are also expected to be strict guidelines for the number of people on a field. The final guidelines may be out as early as Friday, June 5. However, they will not go into effect right away – more likely on June 20.

Mr. Gawlak told the commission that the Public Works Department will have no summer help this year due to budget constraints. Because of this, there may be an issue opening restrooms. They are researching companies to clean the restrooms, or not use the restrooms and rent port o lets this year.

Dr. Duffy asked about putting temporary fencing around the Cheshire Park tennis courts as people are rollerblading on them.

Mr. Trifone advised that the Board of Education fields are not open and he does not have a date as to when they might be able to open them.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Talbot said budget was approved by council last Thursday. The general government increase is just under \$72K, education increase of 1.237M, a 1.69% increase. Fifty percent (50%) was cut from what was requested. Increase 1.867M, a 1.63% increase. The mill rate will stay the same for taxpayers, which is \$0 dollar tax increase for Cheshire residents next year which was the goal of the council going in.

Mr. Gawlak advised the commission that the Program Coordinator position has become a full-time position and the secretary position has been eliminated.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Duffy commended Mr. Gawlak and stated that he has done an unbelievable job. He has patience with the different groups, and also keeps everyone informed as to what is going on.

9. OLD BUSINESS

Chapman Master Plan – this project has taken a back seat due to Covid and has been put on hold until we can have public gatherings.

FY19-20 Budget - Mr Talbot advised the public hearing for the capital budget will be the Tuesday prior to the regular meeting.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Mixville Park – Mr. Gawlak said the situation is changing quickly and is very fluid. No passes have been sold due to the office being closed from the end of March through the end of May. No guards have been hired for the gatehouse. There is a need to talk as a group to create a Mixville Park master plan – there are aging structures, we need a pass management plan, and there have been comments on the Cheshire Community Forum on Facebook and emails received concerning resident vs non-resident fees. Also of concern are the guard house, lack of life guards on beach, and more signage is needed if there are no guards.

For the department to continue to run the Mixville Adventure Camp, there must be an area of refuge. It's difficult to order a bus and bring them to Youth Center.

Mr. Gawlak continued that Public Works did a nice job mobilizing to limit parking capacity and it worked over the holiday weekend.

Mrs. Mayne explained Mixville needs work. She has researched a new building for gate attendant as the gatehouse is literally sinking into the ground. With the situation of reduced capacity, the gate attendants will be dealing with a lot. They are high school and college students who are by themselves and take verbal abuse as they are the only staff people in the park. The police have always been responsive if needed. There is

concern over keeping cash in gatehouse. And now with the COVID pandemic, it doesn't make sense to put them out there, especially with no bathrooms and limited capacity.

Future needs – the camp needs a building for an area of refuge. As far as emergency operations go, it is best to stay huddled under pavilion per Jack Casner, Fire Chief. The boathouse is being used to store boats for camp. There is an opportunity to have boat rentals if we start staffing lifeguards. The lifeguard shack is currently being used to store camp supplies that cannot be stored in the storage unit. Another item is that the beach needs sand, and the volleyball court has become a clay court,

Mrs. Mayne asked what the commission would recommend regarding staffing. Mr. Nowak asked if the commission would like to go out there on a field trip. Dr Duffy suggested commissioners go out individually. Mr. Talbot stated the commissioners can go out as a group, unless the number of people constitutes a quorum, so 3 or less would be ok.

Mr. Gawlak suggested having a noticed special meeting. Mr. O'Donnell suggested having the next regular meeting at Mixville.

Mr. Gawlak stated that the Governor's guideline numbers for social gatherings are increasing and suggested having the July meeting at Mixville. Everyone was in favor of doing so.

Begin developing program to utilize the high school students – this item has been tabled until Mrs. Bertoni is in attendance at the meeting. However, Mrs. Mayne offered that we get volunteers from CHS for the CIT program over the summer and also some volunteers for basketball, volleyball and even preschool cooking. Barbara Costello has Therapeutic Recreation program and also has volunteers. We can usually find something for a person that asks to volunteer.

11. DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Gawlak spoke about the following items:

Community Pool – Mrs. Adams and Mr. Gawlak participated on call with Chesprocott to go through a potential reopening plan to get the pool ready. The liner is at 60% finished. They went through protocols as to what needs to get done to get the pool open to the public. Chesprocott recommends opening during Phase II, as long as it meets the guidelines and recommends only 25 people at a time. Mrs. Adams suggested 2-hour sessions and swimmers would have to make reservations. She would leave an hour between sessions to clean and sanitize.

A message was left for Mr. Kimball asking to bring back the furloughed lifeguard and pool coordinator in order for them to finish the tasks they were working on before they were furloughed.

There is a position open for the front desk attendant. Filling of that job will be deferred until Fall. The pool facility technician also needs to be hired. The candidate passed his physical, there are now just a few details until he can be hired and get acclimated.

Dr. Duffy asked about pool membership? Mr. Gawlak stated it will be discussed tomorrow at the weekly staff meeting.

Mr. O'Donnell asked about the pool liner – if its 60% done, will it be ready on June 20 if Governor allows? Mr. Gawlak replied that it's possible.

Weston and Sampson did a pool assessment – once the pool is up and running, they will come back and complete a total assessment, he may have as soon as early summer.

Summer concerts are cancelled.

Winter Blitz at the Youth Center- Mr. Gawlak complimented the great work done by Keith Baron and Steve Lavorgna. They created and built a handicap accessible window for the front office, repainted three offices, moved furniture and fixed carpeting prior to us coming back.

Cheshire Youth Baseball is going to give up the concession stand. Mr. Gawlak still needs a letter from their board.

Field distribution meetings - These would normally happen in June and July, but more info needs to be obtained about fall sports to see what's going to be allowed.

Parks and Recreation Ordinances – the last time they were revised was 1995. It does not have to be done right away but should be done during the next couple of months. Mr. Talbot stated that there is an ordinance committee and this item should be added for ordinance review. Dr. Duffy and Mr Gawlak will discuss.

Basketball survey – this has not yet been analyzed.

Summer camps have been cancelled

The Dog Park and Tennis Courts at the Youth Center are open, playgrounds and basketball courts are not. It is not known if they will part of Phase II, however Mrs. Mayne doesn't believe they will be.

Dr Duffy asked if bases are still on the diamonds? Mr. Fracasse stated there have been kids playing baseball at Bartlem and the bases are out. Dr. Duffy recommended they be taken out. Mr. Cunningham stated Public Works will remove them.

Mr. Gawlak advised that the department has an intern from Southern Connecticut State University. He plans to have the intern help out with a disc golf and low ropes project at Mixville to help him get into facility management; it will help Mr. Gawlak get things done and good experience for the intern.

There is work being done on public gathering permit process with other towns to be sure that public safety is kept in mind. This would be for larger events so we can be sure to have fun and safe events.

Bartlem Parking passes for high school students – staff has worked with the administration at Cheshire High School on refunds. The high school sent a letter to all students on Friday as far as what they can expect for refunds.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Fracasse seconded by Mr. Trifone

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Dunn