

**Minutes of the Cheshire Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting held on Wednesday,
December 2, 2020 at 7:00 p.m**
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 Video will be
available on Channel 14 and on demand at www.cheshirect.org as soon as possible.

Present: Chairman Patrick Duffy, Karen Bertoni, Paul Fracasse, Michael
O'Donnell, Steve Trifone
Mark Cunningham, Highway Superintendent

Absent: Council Liaison, Peter Talbot

Staff: John Gawlak, Director
Elizabeth Mayne, Program Supervisor

Guest: Signian McGeary, Suburban Garden Club

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Duffy called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SUBURBAN GARDEN CLUB SPEAKER

Signan McGeary introduced herself as a team member of a conservation training sponsorship program funded by the National Science Foundation and carried through UCONN. Ms. McGeary would like to have a segment of the linear trail have educational opportunities. Three areas have been chosen on the trail in the section from Cornwall to Jarvis. The tentative plan is to do a 4-part (seasonal) project and expects that it will last at least 3 years.

She suggested modest signage on the above-mentioned trail section and would like permission from the Town. The current plan is to have three signs with QR codes that will lead them to information accessed on trail users' smartphones.

Mr Gawlak asked how far off the trail the signs would be? Ms. McGeary stated they would not be too far off. Mr. Gawlak is concerned about the amount of activity with walkers and bikers on the trail and groups of people congregating around the signage. Ms. McGeary stated they need to investigate what other towns are doing. In terms of size, she doesn't expect the signs would be more than 6" in length and 12" wide.

Dr. Duffy asked Ms. McGeary who would install these signs and who would maintain them. Ms. McGeary answered that she is not sure – that is something that would have to be figured out.

Mr. Fracasse asked about seeing mockups. Ms. McGeary replied that the Commission would be able to see mockups once she had some.

MOTION Mrs. Bertoni to approve conditionally and accept project signage after seeing samples. Mr. O'Donnell seconded for discussion

MOVED to discuss

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

Mr. Trifone asked if the signs would just be QR codes or would there be other info? Ms. McGeary stated it's possible one sign might have more than just a QR code.

Mr. Trifone stated he would like to see the signs match the ones currently on the trail and not be any larger than those.

Ms. McGeary advised the Commission that she has reached out to Artsplace. Ms. Pilarczyk gave her some information about a program that a group is working on involving puzzle piece signs that would have information and there might be a possibility to work together.

Mr. Gawlak asked Mr. Cunningham if there were any Public Works issues. Mr. Cunningham didn't think so – however, he advised that the signs should stay off any wetlands.

Dr. Duffy stated there is interest, but he would like to see more information and invited Ms. McGeary to next month's meeting to present further info.

Dr. Duffy thanked Ms. McGeary for coming to the meeting.

MOTION by Mrs. Bertoni, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell

MOVED to table this item and discuss at next month's meeting

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES, OCTOBER 7, 2020

MOTION by Mr. Trifone, seconded by Mr. Fracasse

Mrs. Mayne noticed that the mention of Cheshire Football under Parks Update should be Cheshire Youth Baseball.

MOVED to approve and accept the minutes of October 7, 2020 with corrections

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

PARKS UPDATE

Mr. Gawlak stated there is a meeting with representatives from the Public Works Department tomorrow to go through what's going on and what is needed to start getting ready for spring.

Dr. Duffy asked Mr. Cunningham about making a permanent barricade at the trail crossing at West Main. Mr. Cunningham advised it would be very expensive to do so.

Dr Duffy asked about small jersey barriers? Mr. Cunningham stated that those would not be expensive, but he would have to touch base with both the Engineering and Police Departments as the barriers would have to be removable for emergency vehicles to get through.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Talbot was not in attendance. There was no report.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gawlak received a new bench request from Cheshire Lacrosse for two coaches that have passed away.

Mr. Gawlak discussed Ruth Burke. Back in the summer, the Town Council wanted to name the trail at Cheshire Park after Mark Jardim. The department did some investigation and found the trail had previously been named for Ruth Burke. Mrs. Burke's daughter contacted Parks & Recreation last month and is looking for something more permanent than the sign (which is currently nailed to a tree near the trail). Mr. Gawlak asked the Commission if they would like to discuss a better way to memorialize Mrs. Burke.

Mrs. Bertoni asked how the trail was named. Mr. Gawlak said he believed the previous Director, Mr. Ceccolini, took care of it with the family.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested a new sign might be a good Eagle Scout project.

Discussion followed regarding how the trail was named and when. Mrs. Mayne said that she has notes and believes it may predate Mr.Ceccolini.

Mrs. Bertoni asked where to find the minutes when that took place. Mrs. Mayne replied that the Town Clerks office would have the minutes on file. Mr. O'Donnell suggested that a previous Commission Chairman, Mr. Nankin, might remember.

Discussion followed regarding putting memorials on the ground vs. on a tree and what might be most appropriate and easy to maintain.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Duffy brought up the idea of naming Mr. Nankin, previous Commission Chairman, the "unofficial official" historian.

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

MOVED to have Dr. Duffy approach Mr. Nankin to ask if he would consider being the Commission's "unofficial official" historian.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Bertoni asked what such a position would entail? Dr. Duffy advised the Commission that members could ask about things that Mr. Nankin might remember than happened before the current commission's time. He would be a non-voting member. Mr. O'Donnell stated he thinks this is a good idea.

Dr. Duffy advised Commission members that Robert Parr and Dan Nowak have both resigned from the Commission.

Mrs. Bertoni asked who looks for replacements? Dr. Duffy replied that it's the nominating committee from two different political parties.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Chapman Property Master Plan** – Nothing new to report
- b. **FY 19-20 Budget** – Nothing new to report

NEW BUSINESS

Request for Memorial Bench from Isolde Zinnert

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

MOVED to approve this request

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

Mrs. Zinnert sent an email asking to change the location from what was on her original form to one-quarter mile south of Lock 12, near the parking area. There was some confusion regarding where she meant. Mr. Gawlak will confirm the location with Mrs. Zinnert.

Request for Memorial Bench from the Cheshire Lacrosse Club

MOTION by Mr. Trifone, seconded by Dr. Duffy

MOVED to approve this request

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

Mr. Gawlak asked Mr. Trifone if he knew where the group wanted to put the bench. Mr. Trifone replied they would like it at the east side field where freshman lacrosse plays. The Commission decided the bench will be placed at Bartlem Park per the Commission's discretion.

Mr. Gawlak advised he is still in communication with Mr. James Brochinsky regarding the wheelchair accessible picnic table. Mr. Gawlak asked Mr. Cunningham if we can have him purchase a new table for the area his is requesting. Mr. Cunningham replied that he could. Mr. Gawlak asked Mr. Cunningham to advise the cost of putting in a new pad. Mr. Cunningham will get back to Mr. Gawlak with cost.

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell, seconded by Mrs. Bertoni

MOVED to approve Mr. Brochinsky's request

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Ordinances – Mr. Gawlak sent out an annotated version of the ordinances and asked if there were any comments.

Mr. O'Donnell replied that "open space" was missing as it's technically under Parks & Recreation.

Mr. O'Donnell also added that vaping should be added to the tobacco section.

MOTION by Dr Duffy, seconded by Mrs. Bertoni

MOVED to approve ordinance review that was done with new suggestions and forward to Ordinance Committee.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

Mr O'Donnell asked how things are going at the pool? Mr. Gawlak stated the Governor's latest Executive Order stopped all athletics. He stated Ms. Adams has a good system in place and can handle about 15 swimmers an hour.

The new UV system was set to be installed this week, however the pool's facility technician is out of the office, so installation likely won't occur until next week.

Mr. Gawlak advised the Commission the department had a successful Tom Turkey Hunt on November 19, with approximately fifty families participated. Chic-Fil-A sponsored the hunt and gave winners Chic-Fil-A gift baskets.

Mr. Gawlak talked about the tree lighting. There will be two trees lit – one at the Church green, which is always the one that's been lit and a tree at Bartlem Park, near Route 10. Due to the pandemic and to keep the public safe, this will be a virtual event so that people do not gather. The announcement will be posted later this week.

Mr. Gawlak continued that the Santa hotline is popular this year – the Department had nine families sign up last year. As of today, there are 40 families signed up. Parks & Recreation also came up with another program “Nights, Lights and Sights of Cheshire”, a holiday light contest. There are three categories and the winners of each will receive yard signs, donated by Sign Pro. Department members will go with a fire truck as “prize patrol” after next week’s judging.

Mrs. Mayne advised the Commission that the Town cannot have a gathering, so the tree lighting must be virtual. It will be live on both YouTube and Facebook next week (on a date yet to be determined). A notice will go out on Friday afternoon. Santa will attend and the winner of the Junior Women’s Club essay contest will flip the switch to light the tree. In addition, the Lion’s Club offered their services to refurbish an old throne from a previous play the theater group had done. The throne will be placed under the tree and will be available to the public for photos.

Mr. Gawlak advised the Bartlem South meeting will take place virtually tomorrow at 6pm. The consultants will go over the three different concepts and get feedback.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Fracasse, seconded by Mrs Bertoni

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Dunn

Cheshire Parks & Recreation Commission

Director's Report- November 4, 2020- **(Bold print underlined in red are new submissions)**

1. Community Pool: UPDATE:

- Town Beautification Comm is meeting Nov. 4 to discuss landscaping the front of the pool. **Settled on a landscape plan to be implemented in the Spring of 2021.**
- UV System bid has been awarded. Bid came in at \$43,000. Town received \$42,000 in an insurance claim for the UV system that was damaged during the tropical storm back in August. **Waiting on installation 2nd week of December 2020.**

2. Chapman RFP: UPDATE: Last Tuesdays Town Council meeting Weston Sampson presented the Executive Summary. Council provided some good feedback and approval of what has been completed thus far. They were quite complimentary. Public meeting TBA as Weston and Sampson needs to revise and simplify concept look. **Public meeting is scheduled for Dec. 3 with Weston & Sampson Presentation**

3. **Non-resident Park/field Fees: I am on the council agenda to discuss the fee schedule and increase from \$25 to \$75 for non-residents and commercial.** Thoughts? I think there is a missed opportunity to charge market rates to non-resident groups and commercial entities. These funds can go back to the general fund or create a special fund facilities revenue and expense line item. Then these user fees (non-general fund funds can be used throughout the fiscal year). Any balance as of June 30 then get deposited into the general fund and start over the next year. Cheshire fees are \$25 per hour for a field. In Wallingford the fees are \$200 for up to three hours. I recently did a rental for Quinnipiac Univ. for 28 hours of field time at \$25/hr. totaled \$700. In Wallingford 28 hours of field time the total would have been \$2000 field charge. Groups will pay as fields are at a premium. The department has consolidated our facility requests forms from 5 down to 2 forms. Met with Jim Jaskot and Sean Kimball on budget related items one being the creation of a Special Fund Facilities. It would provide greater transparency and flexibility to assist in facility improvements left over fund balance then goes to the general fund at the end of the fiscal year. This summer there is an opportunity to make more than what we will actually see for instance 6 different events will net just under \$10,000 when actually we could have realized \$27,000.

4. **Mixville 2020: Gate guard house:** We need to discuss 2021 especially for budget planning. We put 2 staff out there for 7 days a week starting August 1 through Labor Day at a cost of about \$12,500. Revenues were obviously down no charge to residents and rentals down due to restrictions. I spoke with Erik Reis, Recreation Administrator in Newport Rhode Island, in consideration of potential future solutions for Mixville parking. From Tim Weed research:

Erik oversees Easton Beach where they recently switched from cash sales to an automated kiosk. Easton Beach purchased 8 kiosks for the beach from Hectronic, a company in Fort Lauderdale. The backend software used is called Cityline. Beach guests park, go to the kiosk and pay for the day by credit card, and display a printed-out receipt of their transaction on their dashboard.

Revenues increased over 20% from 2019 using the new system (\$740 k to \$900 k), though he admits it is not exactly an apple to apples comparison when the impact of COVID is considered. The cost of the kiosk is about \$7800.00 per unit. The monthly software cost is \$85.00 / month during usage months, and 50% of the regular rate in off season months when not in use. The kiosk is solar powered and runs off a cellphone signal.

The local police oversee enforcing compliance. Cars who do not have a receipt displayed are charged a \$40.00 fine and risk being towed if no receipt is displayed on their dashboard, though Erik says they do not actively look to tow.

Guests can use the pass for the full day and are able to come and go as they would like during the day. Weekday and weekend / holiday rates are programmed and can be adjusted to meet whatever fees a municipality approves. Season rates are also available wherein purchasers receive a sticker for the season, much like years past at Mixville.

Erik is very happy with the switch. It reduces the need for employees to handle cash and mitigates associated risks. Guests can purchase passes easily and the manpower used to track pass sales and educate on the process is greatly reduced. Refunds are very easy to process as well. Erik also stated that in switching from a cash system to a credit card system, they have received next to no complaints with the only issue being that some people were not aware of the switch to a credit system. **Need to make a decision on process (purchase of equipment) so we can be prepared for 2021 season**

5. **I am interested in pursuing creating a Parks & Recreation Friends Foundation for the purposes of generating alternative funding sources for capital or operational expenses.**
6. **Bartlem Skate Park Improvements:** I have a skate park plan to refurbish the park: Overall the park looks to be in good condition nothing a little TLC can't fix. Looking through the pictures, the following is what I see is needed for the park. Tan riding surface paint (7 gallons) Black enclosure paint (4 gallon) Galvanized guard rails (15). The pictures are showing some rust on the enclosures, if you can send pictures of the sides/back of each ramp. This will let me see how many new enclosures will be needed. We will also replace the bases directly behind the enclosures. The work listed above would come in at just below \$18k. Materials and labor. **The work was completed third week of October. The project included a 20-year warranty inspection as the park has 4 years remaining.**
7. **Field Distribution meetings** to be held annually in January and July with a master schedule produced for all user groups.
8. **Dog Park shelters** one lost in windstorm and another has rotted out legs was removed by DPW Feb. 4. Replacement types? Wind rated? Need to be surface mounted due to the restrictions of the capped landfill. Dog park dog injury see email for discussion. Council approved donation for one shelter just waiting on Dog Park Committee to circle back with purchase(s). **The Dog Park Group is now ordering and purchasing one of the shelters. Some of the gates need hinge repairs.**
9. **Park & Recreation Ordinances:** **last adopted in 1995 Pat Duffy and I have taken a couple meetings to review and discuss recommendations for updates. I will have a copy sent to you prior to November meeting to review and we can discuss at next commission meeting for your**

input. We then can send to Town Council Ordinance Committee for review and discussion with the result of updating.

10. **Community Pool Assessment:** I have hired Weston & Sampson Aquatics Division to perform a full-scale inventory and assessment of the pool so that we can understand what condition the pool is currently in and plan for capital needs better in the future. They were on site last week when the liner was removed so they can test and inspect the pool basin which will be a part of their assessment. Once the pool is filled and back in operation they will return and complete the assessment. W&S has made two site visits to inspect the pool basin when the liner was out and a second time with staff mechanical engineers to inspect and inventory all the pumps and HVAC systems. The report is due soon as they are reviewing my comments from the first draft and incorporate into the final report. The Town Manager recently signed an agreement for \$5,700 for Weston and Sampson to perform an HVAC assessment on the pool so The Town can have a complete picture of all mechanicals in the pool.
11. Working on a public gathering permit with other town departments
12. **Park Projects:** MacNamara Legion Fields could use field reconditions similar to Cheshire Park, MacNamara outfield fence connector F4, Parking lot restriped, Community Garden needs work to reclaim the perimeter and repair water leak, Mixville Park basketball court needs crack repairs and sealing, Beach sand needs to be added to, Cheshire Park Pickle ball Fence storm damage needs repair, Need to talk with contractor to establish a revised quote for Mixville Park Pavilion building, Bartlem Playground border, Youth Center exit driveway needs curbing and signed no parking.
13. **Eagle Scout Project:** updates Eli Moskowitz completed the receptacles for fish line and hooks and Ryan Camp is looking to move the Mixville Park sign and landscaping closer to the road and turned perpendicular, text added to the other side to mirror original Eagle Scout sign.
14. **Lifeguards:** The pool lifeguards are dissatisfied with salary structure with the new minimum wage going to \$12/hr and then \$13/hr August 2021. Town Manager and Asst Town Manager are aware, and I will be sitting down with Sheila and Elizabeth to investigate and perhaps develop a reasonable pay wage scale. Three lifeguards who have tenure will receive .50 raise while the others will be reassessed after Jan. 1
15. **James Brochinsky memorial ADA table in memory of his parents Cornwall section of trail** FROM OCTOBER meeting: \$1395 table, \$405 plaque (2"x10" 4 lines of text 42 characters ea) total with shipping \$2100
16. **Special Fund:** Made some recent headway with Finance Director and Sean Kimball to agree in theory to pursue the development of a programs and facilities special fund. The basic premise is to rely less on
17. **Cheshire Park Pavilion:** Mark Jardim sign and specifications size/material?
18. **Summer Concerts:** preparing for RFP meeting with Power Station to review this past year bid and discuss 2021 concerts. Tim and I met with PS staff to review current bid and discuss multiyear bid with the Showmobile type stage.
19. Ice rink closed due to Covid restrictions and no ability to monitor

20. Special events: Tom Turkey Hunt in Nov. Santa Hotline was a success with 55 families participating CFA of Wallingford distributed prize bags for the people finding the 5 turkeys and 1 chicken, Nights of Lights and Sights Cheshire home decorating contest 50 houses so far Sign Pro is donating the award winner signs (3), Santa Hotline 9 reg so far and the Tree lighting event at Bartlem (THANKS to DPW for the time and efforts to reclaim the old lights and light the tree adjacent to D1) vs. Church Green will most likely be on Monday night virtual Santa arriving by CFD with the essay contest winner to flip the swich.
21. Dr. Helen Burke Trail at Cheshire Park email from Daughter regarding a more permanent memorial of Helen Burke.
22. Bartlem Concession stand; liquidation has begun a large freezer and refrigerator is going to the pool, the Coke cooler will be going to Park Rec, some racks, pretzel machine and sandwich table with refrigeration will go to the CHS Booster Club. Mike Federico Cheshire Resident who also manages/directs the CHS Concession stand has contacted his chief vendor to take the fire hood, grill and griddle and sell it on consignment.
23. Signian McCreary President of Suburban Garden Club of Cheshire project proposal Environmental Awareness Signage
24. Mtn Bike Trails: Jim Jinks Councilman reached out recently regarding mountain biking at DeDominicis Open Space and the ability to secure grant funding for parking areas, trail creation/maintenance, signage and a small bridge to go over the Mill River. This property is close to center of town and could provide economic benefits for those bikers that choose to ride these trails. There appears to be a great demand for mountain bike trails. Next steps maybe meetings with Bill Voelker, Suzanne Simone, Town Manager to discuss merits and direction.
25. Midstate Rugby dba. Cheshire Rugby: Met with Sean Mckeown President out at upper Mixville Park last week anticipating spring use and the approvals from Town Planner to be able to use the parcel as they have literally no where to practice. Their games will be held at other locations outside of Cheshire. I was hoping to address the parking and the entrance with DPW as it's a low spot that maybe can be treated with some crushed stone. He would like the ability to put a port o let on site with a set of portable goals.

Respectfully submitted:

John Gawlak

John Gawlak CPRP

Director Parks & Recreation

Town of Cheshire