

**Minutes of the Cheshire Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
held on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 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, Robert Santoro, Steve Trifone

Absent: Council Liaison, Peter Talbot

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

Guest: Signian McGeary, Suburban Garden Club

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none

WELCOME ROB SANTORO, NEW COMMISSIONER

Mr. Santoro introduced himself. He works at Knott & Knott, made partner in 2019. He moved to Cheshire in 2018, has a wife and two children, and is a user of the parks. He was previously on the Environment Commission and asked to switch due to his use of the town parks. The commissioners welcomed Mr. Santoro.

SUBURBAN GARDEN CLUB SPEAKER

Ms. McGeary presented examples of signage and advised the Commission that her group is in the process of determining which they like better. The exact signage has not been worked on yet.

Ms. McGeary also advised the Commission that a Cheshire High School student used the Cheshire forum to do an informal questionnaire – many people said they would be interested in

the trail being an educational resource. Some were concerned that it would be too distracting, so a smaller sign would be the way to go. She was happy to have had positive feedback on the concept and is looking to the commission for further guidance.

Mr. Gawlak requested a copy of the survey. Ms. McGeary will send once she has access to it.

Mr. O'Donnell asked how many signs they were looking to place? Ms. McGeary replied there would be one in each of three sections. One at the butterfly garden, one south towards the bridge, and one north on the outcropping towards the canal.

Dr. Duffy asked about puzzle piece type signs that Artsplace was working on. Ms. McGeary has no further information on this project.

Ms. McGeary continued that one of the adults on the project looked into the cost and design of the project. The signs will be designed so as not to be removed.

Mr. Gawlak asked if the commission had any opinions on the signs? Mr. Trifone prefers the third sign on the page (photos attached). Mr. Fracasse and Mrs. Bertoni preferred the second sign due to the subtlety. Dr. Duffy agreed. Mr. Trifone prefers a smaller base. Mrs. Bertoni asked if they all had to be the same or could there be a mix of designs.

Mr. Fracasse asked who would be funding? Ms. McGeary said the Suburban Garden Club will help with funding and believes that UCONN will also have funding for it.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. McGeary for the information and Dr. Duffy asked her to come back when she had further info

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES, DECEMBER 2, 2020

MOTION by Mrs. Bertoni, seconded by Mr. Fracasse. Mr. Santoro abstained

MOVED to approve and accept the minutes of December 2, 2020

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

PARKS UPDATE

Mr. Cunningham advised the Commission that the crews have been working to clean up brush and storm damage in parks and open space.

Dr. Duffy asked how the plows are doing with the fog on the roads. Mr. Cunningham stated they've gone to all carbide blades and it's working out well.

Mr. Gawlak advised that he had a meeting scheduled for January 7 with representatives from the Public Works Department to talk about park needs. One item to be discussed is concepts and costs for replacing the back of the large pavilion at Mixville. He also plans to discuss field work and improvements that still need to be done.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

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

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Duffy reminded the commission that they were talking about the Ruth Burke trail at Cheshire Park during last month's meeting. He spoke to Jim Nankin, who was with the Parks and Recreation Commission since 1970. Dr. Duffy asked Mrs. Mayne if she had found any further information. Mrs. Mayne replied that Dr. Burke was instrumental in getting Cheshire Park started. Dr. Burke passed away in 1970 and she has a photo of the sign in 1980.

There was a discussion regarding what might be the best way to memorialize Dr. Burke. Mrs. Mayne showed the commission the current sign, which was refurbished and placed on a tree at Cheshire Park in 2017.

Mr. O'Donnell asked what Dr. Burke's daughter was looking for? Mr. Gawlak replied that she is looking for something more formal than a sign on a tree. Dr. Duffy suggested the possibility of doing a plaque similar to the signs Ms. McGeary was looking to do on the trail. Mr. Gawlak will look into cost and will reach out to Mrs. Burke's daughter.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Chapman Property Master Plan – Concept 1B Final Master Plan – Town Council January 12, 2021** – Concept 1B will be forwarded to the Town Council possibly on January 12, but might be pushed to the 26th due to the agenda on the 12th being heavy. Mr. Gawlak will advise the Commission what date this item will be on the agenda. This meeting is to get approval from the Town Council to have a shovel ready project. The phase that Mr. Kimball and Weston & Sampson are looking to forward is the turf field, the parking, and the Town Green. The cost for that is expected to be about \$6 million. The consultant suggested to put a quarter-mile walkway in the area where the Great Lawn is scheduled to be for size perception and also to have a nice track to walk on. This could be extended throughout the park to a 1.25 mile loop.

Mr. Fracasse asked about the skatepark. Mr. Gawlak responded that the skatepark would not be moved, only the parking would be expanded near it.

Mrs. Bertoni asked about adding pickleball courts to the Chapman property plan. Mr. Gawlak responded that there were no plans to do that, but a couple of years out in the capital budget, they are looking to do something with the courts on South Rolling Acres. These courts could be combination of tennis and pickleball courts, due to lack of parking in that area.

- b. **FY 20-21 Budget** – Parks & Recreation staff will be doing internal workshops and crafting a budget proposal. Mr. Gawlak invited commissioners to offer suggestions.
- c. **Park Fees Proposed Increase for Non-resident/Commercial, Creation of Priority Group 4** – It was well-received by Town Council, but no action was taken.
- d. **Town Ordinances have been submitted to the Town Manager/Council** – recommendations will be accepted at the Town Council on January 12 and will be forwarded to Ordinance Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

2021 meeting schedule – Commissioners discussed the proposed schedule.

Request for a Memorial Bench from Stephanie Eisenbarth in honor of Oscar Collegio.

The request was for an orange bench. The commission agreed that the bench colors needed to remain standardized.

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

MOVED to table this request until Mr. Gawlak has more information

VOTE The motion passed unanimously

DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Gawlak offered the following:

The Pool is being used as a vaccine distribution site. Vaccines are being given to first responders and the process seems to be going well.

The Pool is still open for lap swim. Dr. Duffy asked if there were life support systems at the pool. Mr. Gawlak said there is an arrangement with Trinity Health and there are EMTs there as well. Once people receive vaccine, they sit for 30 minutes and are monitored.

Dr Duffy asked which vaccine people were getting? Mr Gawlak replied they are given the Moderna vaccine.

A new chlorinator was installed in June.

There is an issue with boilers not working, they will be fixed

There is an additional problem with pumps. The Town Manager is aware and is sharing with Council Chairman and they will need to decide where funding will come from.

Weston & Sampson is doing a mechanical assessment so proper budget planning can be done. Dr. Duffy asked when we bring someone in from out of state, is there social distancing? Mr. Gawlak replied that yes, they will social distance. Mrs. Bertoni asked what state? Mr. Gawlak replied Pennsylvania

Mixville –Park rangers were there last August, but it was costly. A demonstration was done with a company called Yodel on a parking solution. Mr. Gawlak and Mrs. Mayne believe that automation is not the way to go and we should stay with the system we have, but having money on site is still an issue. Staffing might just be weekends, or Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Dog Park shelters – Mr. Gawlak asked Mr. Cunningham for a status update. Mr. Cunningham replied Public Works will start to assemble them in the next week or two.

Summer Concerts – Mr. Gawlak met with Powerstation to discuss future bid for 2021, they indicated they were working with other municipalities to see if they could extend the 2020 bid since no one had concerts last year. This item will be on the Town Council agenda on January 12 to honor the 2020 price.

Special events – This past Fall, the department organized Tom Turkey Hunt. Chic Fil A provided gift bags containing approximately \$40 in coupons to the winners. Also organized a Santa Hotline – 52 families signed up and got a phone call from Santa. Another new item by the department was Nights of Lights and Sights – Signpro donated yard signs, and 50 homes participated. Mr. Gawlak and Tim Weed, Program Coordinator, went around with the Fire Department on “Prize Patrol”. The Tree Lighting had to be done virtually this year due to the pandemic. Public Works put lights on a tree at Bartlem Park in the hope that events will eventually start migrating to Bartlem. The Cheshire Lions Club refurbished an old throne that Mrs. Mayne found in the set shop and made it to a “Santa Chair” that was placed under the tree.

We are still trying to liquidate the former Bartlem concession stand.

There is nothing currently in process with Jim Jinks and the DeDominicis property

Midstate Rugby would like to do some minor things in order to be able to use upper field at Mixville.

Park rentals have been pushed to March 1 to see what the Governor’s rules will be and where the pandemic numbers are at that time.

Field distributions have been pushed out to February.

Mrs. Mayne is the chairperson of the Connecticut Recreation Parks Association Legislative Committee as of February 1 and is sitting on meetings with State of Connecticut and people that put together the public sector guidelines. January 19 is the date the restrictions were supposed to be lifted, but with the new strain of COVID this may be pushed out.

Mr. Trifone advised of a CIAC meeting to be held on January 7 and will update the Commission at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Dunn



Cheshire Parks & Recreation Commission

Director's Report- January 6, 2021- (Bold print underlined in red are new submissions)

Welcome Rob Santaro to the Parks & Recreation Commission glad to be working with you!

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. Installation completed 3rd week of December 2020.
- New Chlorinator installed in November 2021.
- New issue with the boiler system requiring a new controller panel \$1,000 plus service calls. Issues exist with newer boiler still older boiler serving well as back up.
- Impeller to the pump has failed problem is pump is 20yrs+ old vendor can not locate an impeller to repair. CT Custom Aquatics regular pool vendor is recommending a new pump approx. cost \$20,000 not including electrical services.

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. Public meeting occurred with over 57 people on average through most of the meeting. There was some great engagement and feedback. Weston and Sampson are putting together feedback requested by those who attended as well as completing a final master plan of Concept 1B. The next step is presenting to the council January 12 for adopting and accepting the full plan to have a shovel ready project ready when the Council feels any portion can be supported monetarily. I know that I would like to phase in the turf field w/lights (provides playing fields not subject to drainage issues and provides back up for when the others are addressed), increased parking for 80 vehicles and create the town green while leaving most of the Chapman property as is. The oval shaped great lawn targeted for concerts/events is equivalent to ¼ mi. The entire park perimeter walkway is equivalent to 1.26mi.

3. Non-resident Park/field Fees: The Council meeting went well. The fees will be discussed and possible action at the next council meeting on January 12th. A priority group 4 which is nonresidents and commercial organizations will be subject to the fee increase. 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 or simply utilize staff and software we already own just not accept cash on site) 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. **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.**
7. **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. **The draft recommendations have been sent to the Council for their committee review and discussion.**
8. **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. This will begin first week of January with a site visit.**
9. **Public gathering permit working with other town departments to create**
10. **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.**
11. **Cheshire Park Pavilion: Mark Jardim sign and specifications size/material?**
12. **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 Show mobile type stage. **I am asking the Council January 12 for an exception for one year essentially a bid waiver for Power Station for the summer concerts.**
13. **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 ,Sign Pro is donating the award winner signs (3), Santa Hotline 52 reg 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 switch.

14. **Dr. Helen Burke** Trail at Cheshire Park email from Daughter regarding a more permanent memorial of Helen Burke.
15. **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.
16. **Signian McCreary** President of Suburban Garden Club of Cheshire project proposal Environmental Awareness Signage
17. **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.
18. **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 nowhere 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.
19. **Park Rentals ability to reserve has been pushed ahead to March 1st for now to see where we will be with the current state of affairs**
20. **Rec Trac Splash page for program registrations and facility reservations will be worked on in January hopefully completed in a short amount of time as Vermont Systems rolls out a new look to its software more customer friendly. The town is still a few months away from rolling out its new web page and look.**
21. **Community Pool is being used as a location for vaccine administration for the next 3-4 months the initial start is Saturday January 2, 2021 for first responders only.**
22. **Field distribution meetings in January may be pushed to early February.**

Respectfully submitted:

John Gawlak

John Gawlak CPRP
Director Parks & Recreation
Town of Cheshire