

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2013, AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE
YOUTH CENTER, SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Chairman James Nankin; Commissioners Patrick Duffy, Paul Fracasse, Ira Kushner, Michael O'Donnell, David Veleber.

Absent: Karen Bertoni

Council Liaison: Councilor Peter Talbot

Staff: Parks and Recreation Director Robert Ceccolini

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nankin called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 6, 2013

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

MOVED to approve the minutes of November 6, 2013 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. COUNCIL LIAISON – Peter Talbot

Mr. Talbot informed the Commission that Town Manager Milone and Town staff attended the December 3rd Council Organizational Meeting. At the meeting, Mr. Milone gave a presentation to the Council on the projects and issues upcoming in the next few years.

With regard to the Parks and Recreation Department, the Town Manager commented on the Mixville Dredging project, Linear Trail extension, Community Pool Dome (Tension Membrane structure), and the Dog Park.

Director Ceccolini reported that the Dog Park will have a ribbon/leash cutting ceremony on December 8th, and that the park has been very busy.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Jim Nankin

a. Communications (None)

b. Pool Discussion

The Commission was given an update by Mr. Ceccolini on the status of the community pool project.

At the Public Building Commission (PBC) meeting on December 3rd, a Pool Sub-Committee will be confirmed; user members of this sub-committee will be named; the project received a bid waiver from the Town Council and permission to proceed with the RFP.

There are 3 top firms interested in the pool dome project, and a total of 7 firms have expressed interest in submitting a response to the RFP which goes out on December 9th. A walk-thru of the pool facility is planned for December 17th; RFP responses must be received by January 9, 2014; there will be a short list by January 17th; interviews around January 27th; and recommendation of a contractor/firm for the pool project to the Council on January 28th. Construction would start in Spring 2014; the dome would be up by the end of June; and this is an aggressive and optimistic schedule. The Town would like to have the pool opened and operating by the end of June, get in the summer season, and have summer activities going forward.

Chairman Nankin discussed having a Parks and Rec Commissioner as a member of the user group of the PBC pool sub-committee. When the original pool facility was being built, Mr. Nankin and Mr. Duffy were user members of the PBC Pool Sub-Committee, and had a vote and voice on the pool project. It was noted by Mr. Nankin that the community pool is the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Commission should have a member on the sub-committee.

Councilor Talbot assured the Commission that he would check on this issue, and report back to Chairman Nankin and Commission members.

The Commission was told by Mr. Ceccolini that there are 3 firms interested in doing the pool project, and they are the top 3 firms that do this type of work. Some of the work could be sub-contracted out to other companies. At this time, the "Friends of the Pool" support group is still active, but it is uncertain if the group will be working on the marketing of the pool. The Town Council will be involved with the process, and PBC handles the building project.

c. Rec Person of the Year

The Commissioners discussed the selection of the Parks and Recreation Person(s) of the Year, and a decision was made to honor the Friends of the Dog Park Group. This group of people have worked diligently for 5 years on the dog park project, had many successful fund raisers, encountered and overcame many challenges, and achieved a great accomplishment with the new Cheshire Dog Park.

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

MOVED that the Parks and Recreation Commission honor the Friends of the Cheshire Dog Park Group as the Person(s) of the Year.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

d. Meeting dates for calendar year 2014

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

MOVED that the following meeting dates for Calendar Year 2014 be approved.

JANUARY 8, FEBRUARY 5, MARCH 5, APRIL 2, MAY 7, JUNE 4, JULY 2, AUGUST 6, SEPTEMBER 3, OCTOBER 1, NOVEMBER 5, DECEMBER 3.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. DOG PARK – Karen Bertoni and Bob Ceccolini

Mr. Ceccolini reported that the fencing around the park is completed, and the work was done by the Public Works Dept. crews. There are many dogs and people using the park. The 3 acre site will have an official opening on December 8th; there are 2 handicapped/paved parking spaces which comply with ADA requirements; the painting will be completed on Thursday; 2 waste containers are on the site, along with doggie bags and people are using them. Dog owners have brought dog toys and water dishes for the dog park. The Boy Scouts are working on a kiosk which will have rules of the park, and they are also working on a sign for the Cheshire Dog Park.

7. BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE - Michael O'Donnell

Mr. O'Donnell informed the Commission that there are problems with lights at the central parklet. This will be checked out by department staff, and lights replaced.

Community Sign – there has been discussion about replacing this sign, and the high school principal wants an automated sign which can be changed remotely.

Mr. Ceccolini advised that Yankee Gas is making a donation to the Park and Rec Gift Fund of \$10,000. This donation comes after the Town had many issues with the company as a result of the unsatisfactory work done at the parklet in the center of Town. One of the projects to be partially funded from the gift account would be the automated sign, with donations also coming from the Board of Education and local organizations and groups. The cost of the sign is about \$30,000. Mr. Ceccolini stated that according to the rules of usage of the community sign, it can be used by any non-profit organization for a charity event.

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Bob Ceccolini

a. Park Status

Mr. Ceccolini reported that he, Town Manager Milone, and Dan Marsaglia (BOE) met with the DEEP about pesticide and organic use by municipalities. A state-wide

program will be undertaken, and at this time, Cheshire is the only town that is almost totally organic in use. For K-8 schools, no pesticides can be used – only synthetic products are allowed. Cheshire's Parks and Rec Department has been doing heavy organic use since 2006, and the State looks to Cheshire for assistance and information on the town's organic program.

The retirement of Paul Fitzsimmons was announced by Mr. Ceccolini. He informed the Commission that Paul has 30+ years of service with the department as a Parks Maintainer, and has worked on the major areas – Town Hall, Police Department, and Town parklets – always doing an excellent job, detailed work, and he will be missed.

The department will be looking at a listing of the work projects, and rearrangement of work loads and areas with existing staff will be undertaken. The hiring of a new maintainer will be conducted by Mr. Ceccolini, who stated that with the current Parks and Rec staff there is +150 years of experience working for the Town.

b. Recreation Programs

The winter programs are out; people are signing up; basketball starts this weekend with 18 high school league teams, which could go up to 20 teams.

The "Tree Lighting" ceremony will be held on December 8th, 5:45 p.m. on the Town Green.

9. COMMISSIONER'S FORUM

Ira Kushner stated that he would be resigning from the Commission as of this meeting, and expressed his pleasure in working with the members and serving on the Commission. Mr. Kushner said that people who work at the board and commission level do great work for the Town.

Chairman Nankin thanked Mr. Kushner for his service to the community, and said he would be missed. He wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

Mr. Duffy wished Mr. Kushner good luck, and Happy Hanukah and Merry Christmas to all.

Mr. Fracasse wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

Mr. Veleber wished everyone a Happy Hanukah, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. O'Donnell thanked Mr. Kushner for his service on the Commission, and wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Kushner; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk