

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015, AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 115, TOWN  
HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

PZC Commissioners: Sean Stollo, Vice Chairman; Gil Linder, David Veleber, John Kardaras. Committee Member Martin Cobern. Alternates: Diane Visconti.

Absent: Earl J. Kurtz, S. Woody Dawson, Vincent Lentini, Edward Gaudio, Louis Todisco. Alternates Jon Fischer and Leslie Marinaro.

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

Guests: Robert Ceccolini, Parks and Recreation Director.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Stollo called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

**III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Following roll call a quorum was determined to be present.

**IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 11, 2015**

MOTION by Mr. Veleber; seconded by Mr. Linder.

MOVED to approve and accept the minutes of February 11, 2015 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**VI. DISCUSSION AND SPEAKER**

**A. Parks & Recreation Department Facility Needs  
Bob Ceccolini, Director**

Parks and Rec Director Ceccolini was present at the meeting to inform the Commission on the Parks and Recreation Facilities, Inventory and Needs.

Chapter 8 - Mr. Voelker has started this chapter of the POCD, and information from Mr. Ceccolini will be part of the contents of this chapter.

Mr. Ceccolini has spoken with Mr. Voelker about the Parks and Recreation chapter of the POCD. The Commission will be informed about what is in the Town parks, who is using the facilities, and future needs/expansion of the parks. He took the various sites

with recreational facilities, where they are, what is included in the individual parks, and what will happen in the future.

**Youth Center** - has 6 lighted tennis courts used as Town courts and for the high school teams. These courts are very old, in bad shape, and new courts are included in the Five Year Capital Plan. There is a need for 6 to 8 new tennis courts, but the Youth Center site does not have room for these courts. With 8 courts, the school teams can play all their matches, leave, and the courts are open to the public. Currently, the teams play a few matches, wait, and then play the rest of the matches. The optimum is to have 8 courts. The 2 courts at Dodd Middle School are not "school courts" but are maintained by the Parks & Rec staff. At the Youth Center there are 6 lit tennis courts, and a lit basketball court and sand volleyball court, but there is not enough room for 8 tennis courts.

According to Mr. Ceccolini, the best idea would be to expand the size of Bartlem Park, move the tennis courts to this park site, and give CHS the existing 6 courts for school team use.

At the present time there is also the issue of a large number of CHS students crossing Route 10 in the morning and afternoon; this ties up traffic; and it is a safety issue.

The Youth Center tennis courts have been patched 8 times since Mr. Ceccolini has been in Cheshire, and improvements and changes to these courts is in the CEP one year out, and may be pushed another year out. If there was more land at Bartlem Park it would be beneficial to move the courts.

**Bartlem Park** - this large park has 2 full size baseball diamonds and 2 smaller softball fields, 4 multi-use rectangular fields used for lacrosse/football/soccer/cricket. This park does not have lights. There is a skate park, large children's playground, picnic pavilion, 30 plot community garden and CYB concession stand at Bartlem Park.

The Commission was told by Mr. Ceccolini that at one time CYB wanted to develop the 10 acres (given by the State to the Town) across from Cheshire Park for recreational purposes. But, due to financial constraints, etc. this did not come to fruition. Instead, there was expansion of the ball fields at Bartlem Park, and the concession stand was constructed. Mr. Ceccolini noted that baseball and softball participation has decreased due to interest in other sports, i.e. lacrosse and soccer. There has been discussion with football and lacrosse teams about their potential use of the 10 acres of Town owned land. These two sports are using the lighted areas of Cheshire Park for practices and games. He noted that lacrosse is growing rapidly, is a spring sport, and football is a fall sport...both sports use Cheshire Park fields.

With regard to this State property, Mr. Ceccolini said this is not a flat piece of land, it slopes quite a lot, and Milone & MacBroom has developed plans for use of the property. He has discussed with Mr. Voelker the development of a master plan for all Town parks. There is a need for more parking at Bartlem Park for fields, games, jamborees, and

other events. This park is usually full with people enjoying events, tournaments, jamborees, but parking is a premium.

**Needs** - in the list of "needs" Mr. Ceccolini cited possible lights for Bartlem Park and the Youth Center. Along with relocation of tennis courts, other needs include: multi-use fields, additional parking, outdoor basketball court, nature-outdoor learning center area.

The Commission was told by Mr. Voelker that lights at parks would be a capital expenditure. In the POCD the Commission could include "lighting at parks" as a recommendation.

The Parks and Recreation Department is not all sports, and does a great deal for active adults in Town. Mr. Ceccolini said one of the needs is a nature-outdoor center which would serve all ages in the community. Mr. Voelker commented on Cheshire putting a lot of money into its organized sports programs and its facilities. He said there is a place needed, for public health purposes, an area where kids can play at random. This would be included as part of a capital project if, and when, Bartlem Park is expanded.

Mr. Linder stated that in the past when his kids played ball, it was on 2 unfenced ball fields, which were often used for other activities such as flying kits. Now fields are all fenced.

In response to this statement, Mr. Ceccolini explained that the Town cannot host a tournament without fences around the fields. On the biggest field at Bartlem the fence has been taken down for easier public accessibility for other activities.

Mr. Ceccolini advised that Cheshire is the most progressive town for purchase of open space.

According to Mr. Voelker there will be use of more state and federal money in purchase of open space as a result of ADA compliance for use of these sites.

Roaring Brook - is maintained by the Parks and Rec crews, and it is considered a park. Lock 12 is also a Town owned site and has much public use.

Regarding the Jarvis Street 10 acre parcel, Mr. Linder asked if the Town could excavate, grade and level this site, so it could be used for some recreational purposes.

This could be done but Mr. Ceccolini explained that every time you walk on this field, someone from the prison makes a stop. The prison would have to know the Town has a plan; money has to be spent to level the site; and for a sports team to come in and do the work the Town will not pay anything. It is possible the Town could level an area, plant grass seed, and the site would have to be mowed and maintained...trash barrels and emptying, parking lines, etc. He noted that the Town is in the process of picking up 9 more miles of the Trail, and Bartlem Park now has 8 fields. In the last 22 years the Parks and Rec Department has increased staff by one person, and with adding

facilities, more staff and equipment is needed. The 10 acre field could be opened up, made an open field, do kite flying and other activities there...and this is better than what the site is being used for at this time. When this property is developed it will be tricky, with an entrance off Jarvis or Route 10, with the prison authorities not wanting people to wander the prison site. There will be security issues.

Linear Trail - in next 3 years there will be 3 different parts of the trail developed -- West Main To Jarvis, Jarvis to Southington line, Cornwall to West Main. The State has picked up much of the cost of the trail design and development. The Town has grant money and Town money to get the project done as quickly as possible. Regarding dredging on the West Main Street side of the trail, Mr. Ceccolini advised the Town did not do dredging, but the State did the culvert work.

ADA Compliance - Mr. Ceccolini informed the Commission that the Town uses a high standard of ADA compliance, i.e. the Bartlem Playground which has certification under ADA with 70% compliance. The new playgrounds (Cheshire Park, Quinnipiac Park and McNamara Park) will have compliance.

For open space, Mr. Kardaras said the parking lot should be level enough. He expects there will, eventually, be something for people to have use of the space, i.e. beach wheelchairs.

The dog park has handicap accessibility.

Mr. Linder commented on declining school enrollment and the effect on all the fields in the parks.

Mr. Kardaras pointed out there are children and adult leagues now using these fields.

The Commission was told by Mr. Ceccolini that towns cannot "rest a field" because people would be upset with practice and game schedules set, and every field is mapped out 7 days a week. By resting a field it for a season it becomes a better field, but it cannot be done due to the schedules. The best thing is for all fields to be artificial turf so games can be played in any weather.

Quinnipiac Field - more parking is needed, with potential to use the parking when the treatment plant construction is completed. Installation of lights at this field is a possibility, without resident opposition.

McNamara Legion Field - new playground in 2015, and resurface basketball court.

Mixville Park - water quality is good following dredging; pond is stocked with fish for the fishing derby each year; following the dredging there is another area for public use; there are plans for a walkway over the dam to walk from one side to the other; there is an Eagle Scout project on the other side. There will be more use of this park with these changes.

Casertano Farm - Jarvis and Marion Roads. This is another area of town property for future potential.

Cheshire Park playground will be moved up to the north end of the park where it will get more use.

There is great support from PZC and Town Council for recreational facilities and activities.

The Commission thanked Mr. Ceccolini for his presentation and information.

**VII. Review of Municipal Infrastructure & Communities Chapter.**

Town Planner Voelker informed the Commission that he took the information from the Historic District Commission (HDC) and adapted it, as appropriate, for the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). He distributed a draft copy of the "Historic and Cultural Resources" to the Commissioners for their review and recommendations. Mr. Voelker explained that some of the HDC items were not included in the POCD.

**VIII. Review of Municipal Infrastructure & Communities Chapter**

This chapter of the POCD will be reviewed by the Commission.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Veleber; seconded by Mr. Linder.

MOVED to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk  
Transcribed from tape.

