

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M
AT THE YOUTH CENTER, CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT

Present: Jim Nankin, Chairman, Patrick Duffy, Paul Fracasse, Dan Nowak,
Steve Trifone and Karen Bertoni

Absent: Mike O'Donnell
Peter Talbot, Council Liaison

Staff Present: Bob Ceccolini

Guests Present: Pete Grevelding
Dave Fowler
Mike Bowman
All representing the Cheshire Youth Sports Coalition

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Nankin called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Commission Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER MEETING

MOTION: Mr. Duffy made a motion to accept the October 7, 2015 minutes.

MOVED: Mr. Nowak seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Mr. Ceccolini had a change after the vote was taken. The change is on Page 3 under the Parks Update – the partial closing of one of the fields is to be corrected to say Quinnipiac not Bartlem.

COUNCIL LIAISON

Mr. Talbot is absent from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cheshire Youth Sports Coalition

Mike Bowman told the Commission the Coalition was created in mid-September for all youth field sports such as rugby, lacrosse, softball, football and soccer. He said some sports are not included, only the groups that use the primary fields. He said an e-mail was sent out to various people and the first meeting has already taken place. There are approximately 2,000 kids in the groups that were mentioned and the number one goal is to improve communication. The communication desired does not include the other youth groups that are not being represented. A goal is also to improve the fields and let the kids have a better experience. Mike said he has met with Bob Ceccolini and Steve Trifone already.

7:10 PM Karen Bertoni arrived.

Pete Grevelding told the Commission the group looked at all different issues and the field conditions came up for every sport. He wanted to know what the Coalition could do to help with maximizing space. Another subject he touched upon was letting other members know when we aren't going to use fields on certain nights, to give them an opportunity to use the fields; looking at lights; a turf field (s); and what other spaces are available. Pete said he would love to hear from P&R what their thoughts are.

Mr. Ceccolini said the Coalition wanted to come here tonight and introduce them and why they exist.

Pete said they have travelled to towns to see what they have to offer vs. what Cheshire has to offer.

Mr. Nankin responded and said he likes what he is hearing and wishes it was done years ago. He said P&R has fought for lights on the fields many times. He added if you have the numbers in members the Council will listen. He added that more people are outdoor-orientated not just for sports. Mr. Nankin said we have facilities other towns do not and they have facilities we do not have. He added he hopes the Coalition and P&R can work together. He said some of the things we may not be able to get involved in, others we can. He informed the Coalition that P&R requested lights at Bartlem and received opposition from Chipman Drive and the developments behind the park. He said P&R tried to get lights on the soccer field and the neighbors banded together and fought us; same at MacNamara. As far as the upkeep of the fields, any way the Coalition can help would be appreciated. He told the group they are on the fields more than P&R is, but anything that would be done would have to go through Bob Ceccolini.

Dave Fowler said there are different needs for the fields. He asked how the fields get as a top priority on Bob's list.

Mr. Nankin replied if someone gets hurt; that is a top priority.

Pete asked if P&R has long-term plans with the fields.

Mr. Ceccolni replied he hasn't had the opportunity to work with a coalition group before. He responded that the use of the fields is unique from group to group. He added football is odd because they only use the fields for practice; lacrosse has specific fields; and baseball has done a lot of work on the fields. He suggested the Coalition and P&R have regular meetings.

Mr. Nankin suggested quarterly meetings with agendas.

Pete said they have support from the groups, it's a long-term project. He wanted to know how we do field rotation; can we add onto fields; what can we do as a town.

Mr. Nankin responded we have to get organized together. Quarterly meetings may not be enough or too much. He suggested getting a Maintainer to join the meetings; these are all things to think about together.

Mr. Ceccolini said if other groups want the lights in the town then they need to come forward besides P&R.

Mr. Fracasse said the Coalition needs to determine what their wish list is, what P&R's wish list is and what the reality is. He suggested getting together because their needs may not match Bob's needs.

Mr. Ceccolini said P&R is asking for another Maintainer with the upcoming trail. He also said this is good that they came tonight and got in the meeting minutes which would hopefully have people aware of the this newly-founded group. He said the Coalition needs publicity now.

Mr. Fracasse said they need to prioritize items on the agenda.

Mike Bowman said they need to recognize short-term goals and long-term goals.

Mr. Trifone said he would like to be invited to the Coalition's quarterly meetings. He told them to believe in what they are doing and good for them. He said any way he can help, he will.

Mr. Nowak said the Coalition is a great idea and should have been done years ago. He said he has been a sports writer for 36 years. He added all sports are field-related and suggested the Sea Dogs swimming be included. They would probably be insulted if they weren't included.

Mr. Duffy said then you would have to go to basketball and other indoor non-field sports. Mr. Ceccolini said if they ask indoors and leave out groups besides the Sea Dogs it wouldn't be good. It is better off leaving as they have it, field sports only.

Mr. Nowak said he could get a story in the Cheshire Herald, Citizen and the New Haven Register and the website Game Time CT.

Mr. Nankin said as Mr. Ceccolini said we are going into budget season. It would be nice to have a Coalition at the meetings. He said he thinks P&R can be a huge help and support and the Coalition could be a huge help/support to us.

Mr. Trifone suggested putting a meeting out on the sign board. Mr. Ceccolini suggested having an open meeting and having it here at the Youth Center.

Pete asked what P&R expectations are. Mr. Duffy responded as long as it helps Bob and doesn't cause more work for him.

Mr. Ceccolini said P&R is looking for more fields and a rectangular field. If we could get one with lights and one with turf, that would be great.

Mr. Trifone said as this is a great starting point. He said he thinks things will go forward from here.

Mr. Fracasse told the group to maintain their leadership as their kid's age; remain consistent.

Communications

There weren't any communications to share.

Pool

Mr. Ceccolini said the pool is still on schedule. They are pulling electrical wires and conduit. They have put in insulation and the membrane. It is supposed to be done by the end of December to open by the end of January. He said he was concerned with snow sliding down the structure but was reassured the snow would not slide down.

Mr. Duffy asked if they figured out the 100-year storm for the trusses. Mr. Nankin replied yes, they did.

Mr. Ceccolini said Brian Blair will stay there to shovel and keep his eye on it. He said most of the staff is coming back. Dave Rochford started with us two weeks ago, the pool is moving along.

Mr. Nankin suggested the next meeting to be at the pool on January 6, 2016. Mr. Ceccolini said he would have Sheila Adams attend.

Rec Person of the Year

There was a brief discussion of some people the Commission is thinking about for the award. The criteria for nominating a person is that the person added significantly to the department; not a town employee; does things for the community; is a volunteer and it can be an organization not just a person.

Proposed 2016 Meeting Dates

MOTION: Mr. Fracasse made a motion to accept the 2016 meeting dates (attached).

MOVED: Mr. Duffy seconded the motion.

VOTE: All were in favor of the motion, the motion passed unanimously by those present.

BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION

Mr. O'Donnell is absent from the meeting; therefore, there is not report given.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dog Park

Mr. Ceccolini said a stone dust walkway is being installed up to the gazebo so people do not have to walk in the mud. There are a few more benches at the park and the park is always crowded.

Parks Update

Mr. Ceccolini said the irrigation systems and the fields are shut down for the winter. This is the first season AFC did not use Quinnipiac, the fields look great. For Bartlem infield #1 had material brought in and this field will be good in the spring. With the new employees they are trying to improve irrigation and do the deep core aeration on the fields.

Mr. Trifone said the track at the high school was set on fire recently. If you cut and patch the spot to repair it, it would be noticeable so they decided to paint a ram or something to blend it in with the other parts of the track.

Recreation Update

Mr. Ceccolini said the winter program brochure is out and the tree lighting is this Friday. The church asked us to change the date; it will go back to Sunday next year.

Mr. Ceccolini informed the Commission basketball starts Saturday and the high school will have 24 teams.

The sign board is going great and working out well.

COMMISSIONER'S FORUM

Mr. Nankin wished everyone a Merry Christmas and will meet in January.

Mr. Nowak wished everyone Happy Holidays. He said the pool is moving forward but for years it has had a bad reputation. He said that needs to change with marketing to get people in the doors to change their minds. He suggested having some free press; a press release. He suggested making the Open House an event, obtain a guest speaker. Do specials for people; offer a free week to get people in the doors.

Mr. Ceccolini said these are all good ideas. He has a meeting with Michael Milone tomorrow.

Mr. Nowak suggested put together a business plan to break even or make money for the facility.

Mr. Nankin said the biggest expense was the fuel for the pressure. They don't have that anymore.

Mr. Ceccolini said the cost of running the facility would be a lot lesser.

Mr. Nowak said a group of synchronized swimmers from the shore are always looking for a place to swim. Make it an event.

Mr. Nankin asked Mr. Ceccolini to forward tonight's thoughts to Michael Milone for the free admission or reduced admission and some kind of event.

Mr. Duffy wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukah.

Ms. Bertoni wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Mr. Nankin thanked Ms. Bertoni for the treats she baked for tonight.

Mr. Fracasse wished everyone Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukah.

Mr. Trifone wished everyone to enjoy the holiday season. He thanked Bob for the parks they all look nice and it is a testament to the crew.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Duffy made a motion to adjourn.

MOVED: Ms. Bertoni seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion was passed unanimously by those present. The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Attest:

Claudia J. Baron, Clerk
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