

## **Park and Recreation Commission**

### **Minutes of the Meeting**

**January 11, 2023**

**Meeting called to order:** Chairman Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

**Commissioners in Attendance:** Toby Lewis, George Caye, Genevieve Coursey, James Hennessey, Renee Powell and Miguel Proano.

**Also in Attendance:** Molly Keays, John Caldwell, Leah Margelony and Erica Evans.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion made by Chairman Lewis and seconded by Commissioner Powell to approve the December 14<sup>th</sup> minutes. Not unanimous - two abstain and five yes. Motion passed by majority.

**Public Input:** None present

**Report of Council Liaison:** Council Liaison Evans reported HRC, and Mayor's Day of Service are coming up on January 16<sup>th</sup> collecting back packs, gloves, mittens and hats. There is a collection spot at the Community Center and there is also an Amazon wish list for those who wish not to go into a store to purchase items or are unable to deliver to the Community Center. On Monday there will be a group to distribute the items. Liaison Evans also followed up with her question from last months meeting from the Strategic Planning Committee who are working on a survey for the community, and they asked if Parks and Rec had 1-3 questions that they would like included in that survey. Commissioner Powell suggested they ask the community how they feel about Parks and Rec and what type of building they expect to be made, a more structural based question. Commissioner Hennessey suggested – what are 1-2 amenities or programs that we don't have that they would like to see in the new center. Commissioner Coursey added to that in requesting a wish list from the community. The format of the survey will be clarified by Liaison Evans, should the Strategic Planning Committee have any questions or remarks. There are three groups planning to do surveys for the town. It is important that they are spread-out, so the community is not overwhelmed by these surveys and something to keep in mind for PARC. The target dates for each survey should be discussed amongst the groups. Commissioner Proano also added that it is important to avoid redundancy and focus on forward moving questions that will help guide a five-, or ten-year plan. Late spring is when Strategic Planning need these questions. Chairman Lewis suggested that the Commission review the meeting minutes next month and decide which questions will be submitted to them.

Questions to review at the next PARC Meeting for the Strategic Planning Committee:

- What are your feelings about Parks and Recreation? What type of building do you expect to be built?
- What are 1-2 amenities or programs that we don't have that you would like to see in a new Parks and Recreation facility?

**Report of the B of E Liaison:** None due to the absence of the liaison.

**Special Reports/Task:** No special reports/tasks other than the subcommittee's meeting Monday January 16<sup>th</sup>. Discussion about the online survey to be updated and move towards a campaign for a new Recreation Facility. Big picture topics such as how the survey should be structured, what tools can be used along with the methods of delivery and timeline. Additional meetings for in-person engagement sessions as well as having representatives from surrounding towns with newer facilities speak at a few PARC meetings. The subcommittee will be meeting again on January 30<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to have the questions ready for publication around Fall, in time for that brochure.

**OSTF:** No report, Commissioner George Caye reported that their meeting was canceled.

**Report of Parks and Rec. Director:** Molly Keays, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided updates on the following:

- Starting to look at 2023/2024 projects based on the Master Plan. Potential for \$200,000 for CIP Project. That committee is working on a new ranking system for funding – it was noted that it is important to continue to fund the Master Plan Projects.
- \$200,000 to update the lights at Rye Street Park. Plans to have installed in 2023.
- South Windsor Walk and Wheel Ways: First phase is being finalized for the Cross-Town Trail. Full project will be \$8 million. First phase is all the permitting including wetlands permitting and working with Eversource permits to gain the proper permissions. This entire project will be across 3-4 years.
- Basketball started before the holidays and are in full swing with practices and games. Adult open gyms for volleyball, pickleball, throwball for South Windsor residents. The schedule for open-gym time can be provided by the office, and in the upcoming brochure.
- Grinchmas had over 400 families in attendance, Letters to Santa delivered 559 letters, Skate with Santa had over 160 guests and 65 toys donated, Sensory Santa was an opportunity for youth with disabilities to meet Santa, Merry and Bright had 25 contestants, Monday Night Social Club had a surprise with the Firetruck and Santa's helpers.
- Preschool registration for C & D Thursday for residents, only – 8A.M.
- 4<sup>th</sup> "R" is full, and all sports are doing well.
- New Athletics Recreation Supervisor, Jordan – jumping in and making himself visible at the program.
- Aquatics vacancy to be posted next week.
- The brochure is anticipated to go out in March for spring/summer.
- Working on Fiscal Budget for 2024, to be proposed in the spring.

Message from John Caldwell, Superintendent of Parks:

- COVID memorial is complete down at the Donnelly property.
- Vendors for the Splash Pad – putting together a design for the pad.
- The Parks Crew has been over at Orchard Hill assisting with painting and cleaning.
- Work being done at the Little League Complex another set of batting cages and another backstop for pitching with nets. Also mimicked the left field fence and put in an 8-foot fence to make it safer for those attending the games on the side lines.
- Major improvements to the Rye Street parking lot by the basketball court. It was a dirt/gravel lot, the Parks Crew brought over millings and graded the area. Come summertime when it gets hot, they will roll it again.
- Opened a PO Wednesday for the Rye Street Retrofit Lighting – improvement to the facility and benefit for the town.
- Trails are being worked on every day to clear out deadwood. Bird sanctuary is finished and are they are over by Wapping currently.
- Major clean up at King Street Pond. Removed the dead trees and mowed the lawn. Piping will be removed and replaced.
- Interviews for Maintainer I position. Second rounds will be next week.

## **Discussion Topics**

Master Plan: The subcommittee will naturally cause for the update of the Master Plan by working on the feedback regarding new programs and projects identified by the community.

**Other Business:** Commissioner Caye spoke on behalf of South Windsor Little League – They are looking to get a press box storage shed put up at the high school softball field. An architect designed the build already. However, there are no cost outs for it. Commissioner Caye will have something for the commission next meeting, and for Molly as well. Commissioner Caye also spoke to a few people in the area that build and set up Disc Golf Courses – both to which would be interested in putting something up at Lawrence Road Park. Hopefully by this summer they'll have something set up and will work with John and his Crew to move forward.

**Meeting adjourned** at 8:06 P.M. – A motion made by Commissioner Caye and seconded by Commissioner Hennessey motion passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting:** February 8, 2023

Respectfully Submitted –

Leah Margelony