

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes of the Meeting

April 13, 2022

Meeting called to order: 7:30pm

Commissioners in Attendance: George Caye, Srinivasa Chalikonda, James Hennessey, Michael Kelly, Toby Lewis, Renee Powell, and Dan Rezende

Also in Attendance: Molly Keays, John Caldwell, Kerry Macchi, and Erica Evans

Approval of Minutes: Motion made by Renee Powell and seconded by Mike Kelly to approve the March 9, 2022 minutes. Passed unanimously.

Public Input: None present

Report of Council Liaison: Councilor Evans shared that the new Park and Recreation Facility Planning and Implementation Committee is meeting tomorrow night to tour the Old Orchard Hill building. The committee knows that they have a large task ahead of them and they are excited to take some steps forward. They will be presenting to the Town Council at the April 18th meeting. The Council is currently working its way through the budget process and will vote to approve next month. Erica commended the Parks crew on the new sign that was installed at the John J. Mitchell fairgrounds, and said that it was a lovely unveiling ceremony.

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

OSTF: George Caye reported that they did not meet this month.

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

- The Parks and Rec department presented the budget to Council last week and it went very well. The Capital Projects committee also presented for the light replacements at Rye Street, and all sections of the budget will be voted on in early May.
- The Parks and Rec Department had a very successful Spring/Summer registration last week, which was very exciting! Most of the programs that we are offering have waitlists, and we are working to figure out if we are able to accommodate some of the residents on them.
- We held a successful Fishing Derby last weekend, which hosted over 200 participants over the course of a few hours.

John Caldwell, Superintendent of Parks, provided updates on the following:

- John wanted to address some recent comments on social media regarding the state of the baseball fields. He wanted to remind the public that the Parks department works very hard to maintain all the fields in town, but also has many other responsibilities. The weather has been crazy over the last few weeks and they have worked hard to get them to a playable state. All fields are open now and the issues have been rectified for the time being. Rye Street fields are also ready and the crew also installed another cricket pitch at the fairgrounds.
- John addressed the increase in the Parks budget this year, stating one reason for the increase is for the purchase of a piece of equipment which would allow for a lot more work to be done in-house instead of hiring out, which in turn would save the town money. Another reason for the increase is for the increase in cost of certain materials that are necessary, such as grass seed and fertilizer.
- The pool covers at VMP come off next week, and all looks great there in terms of the mechanical aspect of the facility.
- The crew is ready to start work at the dek hockey and pickleball courts, after a few other details are ironed out.

Mike Kelly and Jamie Hennessey commended John and his crew for the hard work that they always put into the fields.

Other Business: Toby asked if Molly was in the process of applying for any grants. She stated that she applied for one through the South Windsor Greater Together Community Fund for money to be used for the Splash Pad project. We are also currently working on adding more sponsorships to the department to help fund some of our events and programs.

SWW&WW: Cross Town Trail update: Not many updates to share from Eversource. Jamie asked how long the whole project will take once Eversource is on board. Molly said it would only be able to be completed in short sections at a time, so it will take a number of years.

George said that he went to one of the last Walk and Wheel Ways meetings, and reported to John about a few things they talked about. One topic that was discussed was if the bike racks can be barcoded, so that they can keep better track of them in case they get moved to other locations. John said he would look into it, but it is a possibility.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54pm – motion made by George Caye and seconded by Jamie Hennessey- passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: May 11, 2022

Respectfully Submitted – Kerry Macchi, Administrative Secretary