

## **Park and Recreation Commission**

### **Minutes of the Meeting**

**January 3, 2024**

**Meeting called to order:** Chairperson Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

**Commissioners in Attendance:** George Caye, Genevieve Coursey, James Hennessey, Mitchell Marks, Michael Kelly, Kirsten Kozikowski, Toby Lewis, Braden Migneault, William Nowak

**Commissioners Absent:** Srinivasa Chalikonda, Renee Powell, Miguel Proano

**Also in Attendance:** Molly Keays, Director of Parks and Recreation, John Caldwell, Superintendent of Parks, and Jennie Tetreault

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion made by Commissioner Hennessey and seconded by Commissioner Marks to approve minutes from the November 1, 2023, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**Public Input:** Will Coursey of 65 Lewis Drive South Windsor, CT 06074. Mr. Coursey an active member of the South Windsor Patriotic Commission, expresses gratitude to Parks and Recreation for support and partnership on various events that the patriotic commission holds. These events have included Armed Forces Day Celebration, Memorial and Veterans Day parades and ceremonies.

**Report of Council Liaison:** Council Liaison Toby Lewis is appointment the new Town Council Liaison for the PARC Commission.

**Report of the BOE Liaison:** Councilor Liaison Marks states the BOE has a plan to improve the South Windsor High School campus, including a new turf, lighted field, 7 new tennis courts, 4 new pickleball courts and a new safer driveway. On December 12, the BOE approved the improvements unanimously, and it has been moved onto the town council with a referendum date of March 5.

**Special Reports:** None

**Open Space Task Force:** Commissioner Caye reports no meeting last month.

**Report of Parks and Rec. Director:** Director of Parks and Recreation, Molly Keays provides updates on winter programs that are well underway as well as the upcoming Spring/Summer season and Capital Projects.

- Director Keays speaks on the phase I funding for the Crosstown Trail. The cross-town trail has received a total of \$2 million dollars. These funds are from a “Community Connecticut” grant and a Senate Bond. Designs are still being finalized for Phase I and will need to be complete before it is sent out to bid. Director Keays also states she will be meeting with Walk and Wheel ways to discuss applying for further grants to fund additional phases.
- 225 people attended the Grinchmas at the South Windsor Parks and Recreation facility. It was the first community event that has been held at the new building.
- Snow Much Fun was a new event put on by Parks and Recreation this year. This event was put on for our special population, and included story time with Santa, activities and a take home hot chocolate kit for the kids.
- Letters to Santa brought in 502 letters. The letters were replied to by “Santa’s helpers” on the parks and recreation staff
- Skate with Santa was successful event this winter as well.
- Merry and Bright contest had 21 registered decorated houses. The Parks and Recreation Staff judged the homes and prizes awarded to the top 3 houses.
- Monday Night Social Club had an outing to the Hartford Wolf Pack game and held their annual holiday party.

- Basketball practices have begun, and games will begin January 6. This year we have seen an increase in registration in both boys' and girls' basketball.
- Men's basketball has 150 adult participants and is underway.
- Adult volleyball been going since October and will continue through March and has 300 participants.
- After school Ski and Snow club will begin this month.
- Creation cardio, yoga, food explorers and open gym will continue throughout the new year.
- Spring/Summer brochure is being put together and will be mailed out in March. Director Keays also makes mention that camp will have its own registration date this year, to make registration processes easier for the public.
- Capitol Project Committee is underway, Director Keays mentions that Parks and Recreation's asks would be a new VMP pool cover, John J. Mitchell fairground improvements, and (in conjunction with Building Maintenance) funds to bring the New Recreation building to code.

Commissioner Coursey asks director Keays about the 5-year grace period on ADA compliance and confirms that after the five years there would be penalties for not complying.

Commissioner Coursey also goes on to confirm that the \$339,000 that Parks and Recreation's will ask for from Capitol is just to bring the building to ADA compliance, and then the additional \$13 million estimated would include costs to bring the building to "best practice" compliance, per the ADA and building modifications (including an indoor pool).

Commissioner Hennessey reiterates that within 4 years or so there is a multimillion-dollar bill coming due. And that bill will be one that is either to renovate the existing facility or to build a new one. Commissioner Hennessey emphasizes there is not a no cost option.

Commissioner Coursey asks for more detail of the ADA requirements. Director Keays is happy to put together a document of ADA requirements and best practices for recreation and community facilities.

Commissioner Caye asks about any meetings with the Public Building Committee with regards to a new build and Director Keays shares that the Public Building Commission will hold a meeting January 6.

### **Message from John Caldwell, Parks Superintendent**

#### **Facility Update:**

- The parks have finished their area cleanups, went well but the rain has proved making some of this difficult.
- The Buckland islands have been decorated for the holidays; the Christmas tree is up at Nevers.
- A bar has been installed at the pickleball courts to provide more stability to the fencing.
- The South Windsor Senior Center got quotes to paint the lines on their indoor pickleball courts and given the cost, asked if the parks crew were able to paint the lines instead. The parks department was able to do that successfully.
- Superintendent Caldwell thanks Mario Costa and Costa concrete. They were able to put some stamped concrete around the Splash Pad and the build the ADA compliant sidewalk that will run up to the top parking lot.
- P & J playgrounds installed a new fitness center at Nevers Rd Park. The fitness center was funded by ARPA and the Max Challenge of South Windsor.
- Superintendent Caldwell reports with the forecasted snow coming Saturday, the Public Works and Parks Department are ready for the cleanup.

**Discussion Topics:**

Chairperson Kelly inquires about the need for a new chair of PARC as Toby Lewis has moved onto his new position with the town council. Commissioner Hennessey makes a motion to nominate Commissioner Coursey to be the chairperson of the commission, commissioner Marks seconds the nomination. Motion passes unanimously.

**Other Business:**

Director Keays asks Chairperson Kelly if he would like to remain Vice Chair of the commission once a new chair has been established. Chairperson Kelly agrees to remain Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Coursey mentions the need to fill her position as secretary now that she is the Chair of the commission. Commissioner Hennessey makes a motion to nominate Commissioner Marks to be Secretary of PARC, Commissioner Caye seconds the nomination. Motion is passed unanimously.

**Meeting adjourned** at 8:01 p.m. A motion made by Commissioner Hennessey and seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting: February 7, 2024**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie Tetreault