

**DRAFT**  
**Draft Minutes are subject to the review, correction and approval of the**  
**Parks & Recreation Commission**

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT**  
**May 19, 2010**

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held Wednesday, May 19, 2010 at the Eunice Postol Parks & Recreation Center, at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Ellery Plotkin; Bob Seirup; Bob McMaster; Brian Nerreau and Stacey Zahn

**ABSENT:** Michael Hahn; Dante Gallucci; Barbara Rifkin and Jack Tetreau

**ALSO PRESENT:** G. Lombardo, Dir Parks & Recreation

**The meeting was called to order at 7:10p.m.**

**I. ACT ON MINUTES: April 21, 2010**

**MOTION:** B. McMaster made a motion seconded by B. Seirup to approve the minutes as written.

**VOTE:** 4-0 in favor (S. Zahn abstained)

**II. COMMUNICATIONS:**

**1. Congregation Beth El Summer Services-** See request attached to use Jennings Beach for Friday evening services throughout the summer. As in previous years they will provide Car Tags to go in the windows. G. Lombardo suggested approving this request as they have had no issues in the past.

**2. Pet Protectors-** Marion Simmons was present to make request (see attached) to use Sherman Green for a fundraiser to aid in animal rescue projects.

**3. Chamber of Commerce – Sidewalk Sales at Sherman Green July 30 & 31** (Agenda was incorrect).

**4. Chamber of Commerce – Trick or Treat on Safety Street on Sherman Green, Fri., Oct 29.**

**5. Chamber of Commerce – Holiday Santa Visit on the Sherman Green Nov 27, 2010**

**Motion –** S. Zahn made a motion, seconded by B. Seirup to approve all requests under Communications.

**Vote- Unanimous**

**6. Patti Dyer- Ice Cream Truck at Owen Fish Park-** G. Lombardo explained that the in an attempt to see if there would be an audience for concerts on that side of town, the Parks & Recreation Dept. is hosting a Father's Day concert at Owen Fish Park and at the request of the Stratfield Residents Assn., there will be an ice Cream truck on the premises which is not normally permitted. This was more of an informational report by Mr. Lombardo than a request.

**III. PUBLIC INPUT – 1. George “Mike” Harrington- 93 Rolling Ridge Rd.** was present to discuss 3 matters of interest with regard to the South Benson Marina

1) The channel has filled in dramatically due to the March 13<sup>th</sup> storm and need emergency dredging. Two large boats cannot pass. It is also not clear at times like this as to who has the right of way. He believes that there should be no “sailing” into the channel and that signs need to be posted that boats be under power. He also feels that there is an issue with kayaks in the channel and that they are in danger when other boats are in the area.

G. Lombardo explained that R. White and R. Bimmel have been working on the dredging issue and have permission to dredge on an emergency basis. They are awaiting permission from Bridgeport which he believes is forthcoming. They only have a small window to do this before

the spawning season begins. He agrees that there should be no “sailing” in the channel and will post that on the June Agenda in order to change the rule and post signs. R. Bimmel will likely send out a letter to that effect to boat owners.

2) Mr. Harrington feels that there is an issue with people accessing the Marina – Sees a real problem with people stating that they are going to the Conservation area and then moving to the Marina or beach. He wants more tickets given out to those who have no Beach Stickers. G. Lombardo agreed and even stated that there has been discussion of moving the shed back for this reason. It won’t happen this season but may over the winter.

3) Security Force – Would like to intensify the Police he feels the Marina Police should be on duty all boating season. He knows that there have been security issues already this season and feels that once the season starts the Marine Police should be on duty.

**2. Sandye Mann- 120 So. Pine Creek Rd.** – Stated that she was in agreement with Mr. Harrington’s issues and also asked if the matter of raising the rates for the Marina Fees had had a Public Hearing. She felt that there was no Public Forum and felt “it was offensive to take that action in the middle of the winter when more than 50 % of boat owners were not aware and did not have an opportunity to react to it..” E. Plotkin stated that the meeting had been properly “noticed” as required.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Organic Teaching Farm request for land on Parsells Property-** E. Plotkin explained to the Commission that when the RTM approved the purchase of the Parsells property, they did not designate who should oversee the property and therefore under the Town Charter, it automatically goes to Conservation unless they deem otherwise. The Town Attorney will be making a ruling on July 8<sup>th</sup>. There are 3 properties that have fallen into this category; Haydu, Binger and Parsells In the meantime the Conservation Commission is meeting tomorrow May 20<sup>th</sup> regarding the Parsells property and they would like a recommendation from this Commission as to the request by the Organic Teaching Farm.

Pam Jones – 1495 Cross Hwy was present to make the presentation (see attached). She explained that they are applying for a 501-C3 and forming a Board of Directors. So far about 400 people have expressed interest and 5 to 10 are actively participating in the project. Tom Steinke, Dir. of Conservation was present and stated that he was asked by his Commission to take the group around to find a feasible location. They liked the Haydu property but it is not available for several years. The front portion of the Parsells property came up but parties understood that the Parks & Recreation had plans for the land. They are here today asking for a small portion of that land. They hope to start off small and then grow and move to Haydu Farm.

G. Lombardo stated that if the Commission agreed, it would be possible to share a small portion of the front SW corner. He felt that it would be a good fit and they would try to make the girl’s softball field an organic playing field. “It shows that Parks & Rec. is not just about ball fields.” This would be in lieu of the Community Gardens. He also stated that certainly this soil will need to be tested to see if this is usable for the Teaching Farm. He said that the Commission is only able to give up to 5 year leases. Animals were discussed and most felt that this was not a good idea in the beginning even though Ms. Jones stated that animals, chickens, sheep, rabbits, are an integral part of the farm.

**Motion** – B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by B. Seirup to go into Public Executive Session later in the meeting in order to continue with the agenda and discuss this further.

**Vote- Unanimous**

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. Guide Dog Training Locations – Betty Nelson–19 Falmouth Rd.** – was present as a follow up to a previous request asking for space to train guide puppies. The space needed would be enclosed, of a different surface than grass or road and yet allow for distractions (see attached). G. Lombardo recommended that the Commission allow this but only on the tennis courts and not in

parks. He is afraid allowing them would open a door to others believing that they can bring dogs. Also, some people, especially children, are not comfortable with dogs.

**Motion** – S. Zahn made a motion to allow training of guide dogs in Parks. There was no second and the motion failed.

**Motion** – B. Seirup made a motion, seconded by S. Zahn to permit the Guide Dogs to be trained on Town Tennis Courts when available.

**Vote- 4-1 E. Plotkin opposed**

**2. Tennis Center Renovation Plan Report** – G. Lombardo reported that the Town Asst. Attorney, Eileen Kennelly is still putting together the contracts and the goal is to go before the BOS in July, if not before.

**3. Little League Gould Manor Field Plans** – E. Plotkin reported that a meeting was held at Gould Manor last Tuesday. Four Commissioners were in attendance. A design plan was shown and there was discussion with a few residents who attended. E. Plotkin and B. Seirup both stated that they would not support this until the Girl's Softball League gets a dedicated field.

**4. Girls' Softball Field Report** – No Report- See Organic Teaching Farm.

**5. Penfield Renovation Project Report** – G. Lombardo reported that there was a meeting going on tonight at Pen I at 7pm. The design is complete but the estimated cost is higher than originally anticipated. There has been some discussion with Mr. Flatto as to how to reduce it. Some on the Building Committee feel that because this is for the whole Town they should let the RTM decide if it wants to pay the cost. A timeline with a goal for Sept will be outlined tonight.

**6. Request to relocate the Sturges Cottage** – Melanie Marks -3808 Redding Rd. was present along with David Sturges as well as David Scott an architect on the project. Ms. Scott presented plans and various scenarios that Mr. Scott had come up with (see attached). B. Seirup asked why this was not placed on Mill Plain Green and was told by Mr. Sturges that historically the Green is a common area and that is was deemed inappropriate. Also, parking would be an issue. There was discussion as to who was paying for the paving and reconfiguration of the driveway. Parties were not in agreement. Mr. Lombardo understood that in exchange for being able to relocate on Town property, the Chamber would be paying for the paving, etc. and that no Town money would be used. D. Sturges read an email from Mr. Flatto stating that he hoped to have it done through DPW's paving program. It was agreed that they needed clarification from Mr. Flatto.

**Motion** –S. Zahn made a motion to table the discussion until the June meeting.

**Vote- Unanimous**

## **VI. BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT: No Report**

## **VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: G. Lombardo Reported:**

- Staff is getting ready for Memorial Day Weekend.
- Program Directors are busy interviewing and hiring for the summer.
- The Handicap ramp is completed and installed with a lot of help from R. White and DPW. He would like to have a ribbon cutting and will let the members know when it will take place.
- After a suggestion, they will be adding a **van** handicap spot when they re-stripe the parking lot.

## **VIII. PROGRAM REPORT: None**

## **PUBLIC EXECUTIVE SESSION-**

**Motion** –B. Seirup made a motion, seconded by B. McMaster to go into Public Executive Session.

**Vote- Unanimous**

**Organic Teaching Farm Discussion was continued.**

T. Steinke showed a map that showed exactly where he felt the Farm could go. He stated that the Conservation Commission would like a recommendation from this Commission. G. Lombardo stated that the funding for the field is based on funding but that if the funding is not given the Little League will likely try to raise the money on their own. Ms. Jones stated that the project all depends on viability of the soil but if they are successful they would like to know that the Town will find them a more permanent home. G. Lombardo did not want to commit this as a permanent home and lose the possibility for active recreation on that acre of land.

**Motion** –S. Zahn made a motion, seconded by B. Seirup to come out of Executive Session.

**Vote- Unanimous**

**Motion** –B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by B. McMaster as follows:

The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Conservation Commission that the Organic Teaching Farm (OTF) be given a lease for one acre of land on the front Southwest corner of the property for the purpose of an organic teaching farm. The short-term lease would commence after the OTF provides proof of insurance and 501-C3 status, and would end on December 31, 2012 with an option of two, one-year extensions. These extensions would be at the request of the OTF but with approval by the Town. Additionally, the Commission stated that there should be no domestic or farm animals on the premises.

The Commission also approves a shed being erected on the property with the size agreed upon by both the Director of Conservation as well as the Director of Parks & Recreation.

It is also understood that there is a consensus that the OTF would prefer to be located permanently at Haydu Farm when it becomes available at the discretion of the Conservation Commission.

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, B. McMaster made a motion to adjourn at 9:45

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Ryan, Recording Secretary