

MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT
January 27, 2011

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held Thursday, January 27, 2011 at John Sullivan Independence Hall, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Ellery Plotkin; Barbara Rifkin; Bob Seirup; John Mitola and Brian Nerreau

ABSENT: Michael Hahn; Jack Tetreau; Dante Gallucci; Bob McMaster

ALSO PRESENT: G. Lombardo, Dir Parks & Recreation

The meeting was called to order at 7:05p.m.

I. ACT ON MINUTES: December 15, 2010

MOTION: B. Rifkin made a motion seconded by J. Mitola to approve the minutes as written.

VOTE: Unanimous

II. COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Joe Fischer- Pal Kite Flying Event- Sun., Sept. 20, 2011 Jennings Beach

G. Lombardo recommended approval of this event as it “fits nicely with the beach and the Connecticuters are a wonderful addition. Mr. Fischer let the Commission know that the correct date is actually Sept. 18.

Motion– B. Rifkin made a motion, seconded by J. Mitola to approve the request for the event on Sept 18.

Vote- Unanimous

2. Kelly Weldon- Duckie Derby – Present to request permission to hold their 4th Annual Rubber Duck Race on the Mill Plain River on Sat., May 21

Motion – B. Seirup made a motion, seconded by B. Rifkin to approve the request.

Vote- Unanimous

3. Joe Riccio- Bpt, YMCA- Christine’s Run – Jennings Beach Lot- May 15, 2011

J. Riccio of Warren St. Racing was present to request approval for the 2nd Christine’s Race. G. Lombardo reported that he had had a discussion with Mr. Riccio regarding the proceeds from the race and that he felt confident that things were in order, however he asked that the Commission be very careful when approving future events so that the Town doesn’t wind up allowing people who are running events to earn large profits while giving little to the charity. They asked for an accounting of the proceeds when the event is done. Mr. Riccio agreed and let the Commission know that he takes no Director Fee.

Motion – B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by B. Rifkin to approve the request.

Vote- Unanimous

III. PUBLIC INPUT – None

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

1. National Little League Proposal for Melville Park-

National Little League Field Comm. Chairman, Craig Curley, 109 Lakewood Dr. was present to give a Power Point presentation to the Commission explaining the improvements that the National League would like to make to the ball fields at Melville Park. (see attached). Fences will be raised for safety and benches will be covered for shade and protection. Mr. Curley explained that the improvements would all be paid for by the League. He has reached out to the neighbors and had a face to face conversation with one. No one had any objections. If approved, their hope is to have it installed during March and ready for April. They are using VNH Fencing after recommendations from many parents.

Motion – B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by B. Rifkin to approve the request.

Vote- Unanimous

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Vote on Smoking on the Beach Proposal –The sub-ctte., consisting of M. Hahn, B. Rifkin and B. Nerreau met with G. Lombardo prior to last month's meeting and made the following recommendation: *From Memorial Day Saturday until Labor Day of the 2011 beach season, Jennings Beach will have designated smoking areas and will prohibit smoking in other areas on that beach. Smoking will be prohibited in Concession areas at all beaches.*

There would be signage to let beachgoers know the exact areas and certain parts of the Penfield deck would still allow smoking. 2011 Summer will be a test. E. Plotkin remarked that we are joining other places such as City College and Yale and NYC's parks and beaches who are prohibiting smoking. He feels that this is something whose time has come. "It's a small step but a good one." G. Lombardo remarked that it would be self-enforced and that the Department will do both signs and press releases prior to the season. B. Rifkin suggested placing the rule somewhere on the Beach Stickers.

Motion – B. Rifkin made a motion, seconded by J. Mitola to adopt the rule.

Vote- Unanimous

2. To act upon Beach Rules/Fun Zone Issue- Following a discussion at the July Commission meeting where a group came to ask that the beaches allow, skim boards, inflatables and balls, Mr. Lombardo met with Steve Berecz, the Waterfront Director who, along with his staff, has concerns allowing these types of activities. However, he and Mr. Lombardo came to an agreement that they would propose the following compromise:

Skimboarding is not permitted in any of the Town's swimming areas except for a conditional skimboarding area at Jennings Beach. No ramps or any other hard objects can be brought into that area, and the area can be closed to skimboarding at any time by representatives of the Fairfield Recreation Department including the Waterfront Director, and/or Assistant Waterfront Directors for reasons of safety and crowd management. Swimming can also take place in that area. The use of skimboards in that area should be considered at the participants' own risk, and individuals participating in these activities in what is considered a reckless manner by the beach staff, can be excluded from the skimboarding area by representatives of the Recreation Department including the Waterfront Director and the Assistant Waterfront Directors.

After discussion about who would enforce this and close areas if they felt it was becoming unsafe, the Commission felt that the wording should read as follows to include any lifeguard, etc. who may need to take action:

Skimboarding is not permitted in any of the Town's swimming areas except for a conditional skimboarding area at Jennings Beach. No ramps or any other hard objects can be brought into that area, and the area can be closed to skimboarding at any time by representatives of the Fairfield Recreation Department and Waterfront staff for reasons of safety and crowd management. Swimming can also take place in that area. The use of skimboards in that area should be considered at the participants' own risk, and individuals participating in these activities in what is considered a reckless manner by the beach staff, can be excluded from the skimboarding area by representatives of the Fairfield Recreation Department and Waterfront staff.

Motion – B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by B. Rifkin to change the wording to read *representatives of the Fairfield Recreation Department and Waterfront staff.*

Vote- Unanimous

The members understand that this is not everything that the kids wanted but after consulting with the Waterfront staff, they believe that this is the safest option.

Motion – B. Rifkin made a motion, seconded by J. Mitola to adopt the rule as amended.

Vote- Unanimous

3. Field Renovation at Gould Manor Report– G. Lombardo reported that he; J. Tetreau and Brian Nerreau have met with the representatives of Gould Manor Neighborhood Assn. and discussed what compromises could be made to make this proposal amenable to the neighborhood. G. Lombardo read into the record a memo outlining the meetings and the compromises that Little League made and corrected the memo. Stating that on Nov. 29, Tony Pontecorvo and Walter Bernd were also in attendance (see attached). This memo was also sent to First Selectman, K. Flatto. B. Nerreau remarked that no trees other than the one near the dam were to come down. This was agreed upon by the Tree Warden. There will possibly be turf of some sort placed between the two fields rather than gravel but this would be done by the Town. B. Nerreau added that he believes that these three people who have chosen to speak for the GMNA are not necessarily speaking for all the neighbors and that they don't even live adjacent to the

Park. The Commissioners all feel that since they have already approved this plan, there is nothing else to be done. B. Rifkin remarked that she wished something could be done about the parking situation and somehow placing it adjacent to the field rather than across the street, but Mr. Lombardo stated that this was too expensive. No action was taken.

4. Tennis Center Renovation Plan Report – G. Lombardo was pleased to report that the proposal for the 20-year lease and the plan to rebuild the Old Dam Rd. Center by the Fairfield Indoor Tennis concession was approved by all the RTM. They were very excited that the Town would get a brand new facility at no cost. The contracts need to be firmed up and final meetings with TPZ and Conservation as well as the Tree Warden who agrees that one tree may need to come down. But it all looks like it is a “go”.

5. Girls Softball Field Report – G. Lombardo reported that they are moving forward and are tentatively scheduled to be on the TPZ’s March 8 agenda. E. Plotkin asked about the status of the Organic Farm on the property. G. Lombardo replied that to his knowledge the group was not planning to use the property. E. Plotkin asked that they be contacted and put it in writing so that at the March meeting the Commission could rescind the approval. He felt that March would give them enough time to get back to the Commission.

6. Penfield Renovation Project Report – G. Lombardo reported that there was going to be a Monday, Jan 31 meeting to go over how things were moving along. The snow is really slowing things down though R. White is doing his best by putting up scaffolding and heaters to put down the cement. R. White has met with the Tree Warden and trees are being removed where needed to put up the ramp where needed. A landscape designer has been hired. E. Plotkin suggested that the plan from that designer be forwarded to the TPZ as requested as well as to this Commission. A plan for the ramp was shown to the Commissioners. The ramp is longer than they hoped but must be designed according to the elevation of the building. They included a few recessed benches along the length of it. Parking will be adjusted as well. Concession deliveries will be using this ramp as well.

7. Tree Warden Resolutions – Following the discussion at last month’s meeting and the Tree Warden’s oversight responsibility to Parks and Recreation facilities, E. Plotkin recommended that no action be taken. If an issue arises again, it can be revisited.

VI. BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT: John Mitola reported that the BOE passed a budget with a 4.9% increase, stating that most expenses in the budget were fixed costs. Raises are included this year as none were given last year. Budget hearings will be upcoming.

VII. DIRECTOR’S REPORT: G. Lombardo reported:

- Under the direction of S. Kiraly, the Department launched a new website in January. It is web-based which allows them to update it from home and put in minute to minute news, closures and cancellations. He encourages everyone to take a look.
- The Department’s big Registration for Summer programs is scheduled for Wed., Feb 2.
- Recreation Budget hearings are set for March 16.
- As directed by the BOF, \$100K was turned over to the General Fund.
- The Penfield Concession bid is going out soon. The plan is to open in May but if construction prohibits that, they may need to allow a trailer or something similar. The contract will be for 3 years with 2 one year extensions or 2years, with 3 one year extensions. Concessionaire pays the utilities.
- The Fireworks bid is also going out for the first time in years. The company that we have always used was purchased by another company so they elected to go out to bid to be sure that we’re getting the best deal.

VIII. PROGRAM REPORT - None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, B. Seirup made a motion to adjourn at 8:15

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Ryan, Recording Secretary