

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of January 16, 2013

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, January 16, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Eunice Postol Parks & Recreation Dept. Fairfield, Connecticut 06824.

PRESENT: Ellery Plotkin, Dante Gallucci, Chairman; Alexa Mullady; Jessica Gerber; Barbara Rifkin; Jack Tetreau and Brian Nerreau

ABSENT: Patti Dyer and Robert Seirup

ALSO PRESENT: Gerry Lombardo, Dir., Parks & Recreation

Chairman Plotkin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Act on Minutes of December 12, 2012: B. Nerreau *moved*, and J. Tetreau *seconded* to approve minutes of 12/12/12 as written. Motion passes 6-0-0. B. Rifkin not yet present for vote.

II. COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Steven Day- Memorial Bench for Marjorie Day- Mr. Day 132 Haviland St, Ridgefield was present to request that the Commission approve the placement of a Memorial Bench to honor his mother who loved the Southport Beaches and lived in Town for many years. The Commission asked Mr. Day and Mr. Lombardo to speak and decide on an appropriate location, if one is available, and then return to the Commission for final approval.

2. Kristen Tierney – 5K and Equipment donation – Ms. Tierney, 263 Putting Green Rd. was present to request permission to use the Jennings Beach lot on March 16 for the dual purpose of collecting equipment for children in the Rockaways, NY after Storm Sandy and also to raise funds to send her son's AAU Baseball team to Florida for Nationals in June. There was a lengthy discussion among the members as to whether this might open the door to other Travel Groups, etc. using the Town's property to raise funds for their own benefit. While the members liked the collection of equipment they were concerned with the other purpose of the gathering. They felt that there was a distinction between being a 501-c3, which this group is, and being a charitable organization. B. Nerreau asked whether they could raise the money solely for the equipment. Ms. Tierney felt that the idea was a good one but was not sure whether the AAU Team would pay for insurance, etc. for that purpose alone. She would be glad to make the request of the Titans organization and let Mr. Lombardo know their response.

B. Nerreau *moved*, and A. Mullady *seconded* to approve the Titans Baseball Travel Team's use of the Jennings Beach Lot on March 16, 2013 for a 5K with the understanding that the totality of the funds raised at the Walk would be used as a donation to the Rockaways, NY.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Mr. Lombardo let the Commission know of the approvals that he made on their behalf during the previous month (see attached).

There was a short discussion regarding the recent requests for Memorial Benches and whether there continues to be room for them, or exactly how they can determine who is worthy of such a memorial. After discussion, the members agreed that the Director would determine when the time comes that there are no longer appropriate places for benches and then it would be addressed.

III. PUBLIC INPUT – Chairman Gallucci asked as a follow-up to a resident’s concern last month, whether the electricity at the Marina docks had been restored and was told by Mr. Lombardo that it was immediately taken care of last month.

IV. NEW BUSINESS –

1. Southport Conservancy- Ye Yacht Yard Revitalization - G. Lombardo explained that Mr. Rosow from the Southport Conservancy was not able to come to tonight’s meeting and asked to be heard next month. They are hoping to work with the Town on some revitalization, especially in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. R. White had done some preliminary drawings for some improvements. **The matter was tabled.**

V. OLD BUSINESS:

1. To hear and act upon Beach Bus Rates – At last month’s meeting, Mr. Lombardo had recommended an increased entrance fee for buses that come to Jennings Beach throughout the summer (camps, etc.). Members had asked for the number of buses that come each season. Tonight he told the Commission that 40 buses paid to enter Jennings Beach last season. Mr. Lombardo suggested the increase in order to lessen the burden of the lifeguards and the over-crowding at the beach, especially in the possible case of Penfield Beach not being available.

A. Mullady *moved* and J. Gerber *seconded* to increase Bus Rates at the Beach to \$100.00

B. Nerreau *moved* and J. Tetreau *seconded* to increase Bus Rates at the Beach to \$125.00

The Second Motion was defeated 2-5 (Tetreau and Nerreau in favor).

The original motion with a rate of \$100 was voted on and passed unanimously.

2. To hear and act upon extending the “No Smoking on the Beach” Rules-

Mr. Lombardo brought to the attention of the Commission that the No Smoking at Jennings Beach except in designated places had a sunset of one year and then was extended a year. He asked if they would like to make it a permanent rule.

B. Rifkin *moved*, and A. Mullady *seconded* to permanently institute the following rule: From Memorial Day Saturday until Labor Day of the beach season, Jennings Beach will have designated smoking areas and will prohibit smoking in other areas on that beach and smoking will be prohibited in Concession areas at all beaches.

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Rifkin noted that if she felt there was support she would institute this rule at all beaches. Mr. Lombardo understood her position but feels it is too difficult to police the rule without burdening the lifeguards. In the future, the Fairfield Police may have a new Beach Patrol and smoking, in addition to alcohol use and other actions may be something that can be policed under their patrol.

3. To hear an update report on Storm Sandy Damage: Mr. Lombardo reported that the Bd. of Finance met the prior evening and passed a \$5.15 million package to aid in repairing those Town facilities affected by Hurricane Sandy. They hope to get 75% back from FEMA and/or insurance. He noted that the deductible on the Penfield Pavilion is \$500,000. Presently, the initial plan is to raise the Penfield Pavilion to a 14.5 foot elevation to meet the code standard that will go into effect on May 1, 2013. He also mentioned that there will be reimbursement for loss of business for the fees lost for rentals, lockers, concession, parking, etc. There will be a coastal engineer hired to assure the Town that there are no errors in design. The RTM will meet in sub-committee next week and take a full vote to approve the package on Jan 28.

4. To hear and an update report from the Ice Rink Sub-Committee –The sub-committee had not yet formally met and had planned to do so following the meeting. Rather than continue after the meeting, they distributed to the sub-committee members, some handouts from A. Mullady with information from Westport’s Rink at Longshore, Simsbury Farms and The Rink in New

London. They decided to invite an interested party to come to make a presentation to the sub-committee and hopefully steer him in the direction of the HSR site.

5. To hear an update report on Tennis Center Renovation Plan Report: Mr. Lombardo reported that the asbestos and PCB removal is almost complete and they will then wait for tests to come back. Town representatives from different Depts. have been meeting to go over the plans both with the Tennis Group in attendance and without them. The tennis group plans to get their building permits soon and hope to have the project completed in July.

V. BD. OF EDUCATION REPORT: J. Gerber reported that the BOE approved \$820K for the PCB remediation and then Dr. Title spoke to Mr. Tetreau who felt that it might be best to Bond the project and include all the window replacements which brought it up to \$4.2Million. This will be voted on Jan. 28. Dr. Title proposed a budget with a 4.8% increase. The main driver for the increase is health insurance. They will be going over it line by line (see handout). Without the insurance the increase is .8%. Ms. Gerber also mentioned that after the Newtown incident, they are extremely concerned with security and this was also discussed (see handout).

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: G. Lombardo reported that he is working on securing money for new Tennis Lights at the Tennis Center through the Capital Improvement program. He also learned that the RTM may be asking them to increase the Marina Fees in order to bring in additional revenue. It's going to cost \$700K to do the dredging that is needed in the channel. Chairman Gallucci warned the Commission that increasing fees might possibly cut out a certain number of people who might not be able to afford certain things and "take us down the road to becoming an elitist Town." He added, "Before you know it only the wealthy can afford a locker or a boat slip or a Penfield Party."

VII. PROGRAM REPORT- Mr. Lombardo reported that the Department will have its large registration on Feb 5. He also mentioned that the Pop Warner league may be coming before the Commission next month to ask that anyone who attends school in Fairfield to be considered legal to join the league. This would, for instance, include those who attend Fairfield parochial schools but reside outside of Fairfield.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, B. Rifkin *moved*, and A. Mullady *seconded* to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.
Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Ryan, Recording Secretary