

**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of October 20, 2021**

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Brian Nerreau, Chairman; Bridget McBride, Bonnie Rotelli, Jamie Benton, Margaret Horton, Dylan O'Connor, MacKay Jameson, and Chris McCoy

ABSENT: David Weber

Chairman Brian Nerreau called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Act on Minutes – September 22, 2021 - Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved as written.

II. Public Input: To discuss any emails previously sent that are not on the agenda already. None Presented.

III. New Business: To hear and act upon:

A. Brooke Lalumieri, 546 Jackman Avenue – Request to hold the Stratfield Shop and Stroll in Lincoln Park on 11/20/21 with a rain date of 11/21/21. The event will feature approximately 20-30 local vendors at a cost of \$25.00 per table and all the proceeds will benefit Operation Hope with a similar layout as Parkapaloza. C. McCoy asked if there were going to be food trucks or beer trucks and would there be a need to hire a police officer. B. Lalumieri stated that there would be one food truck and no alcohol and did not feel there would be a need to hire a police officer. It is more of a community event. B. Nerreau asked how she would market the event, what would the estimated attendance be. B. Lalumieri said advertising would be through her personal social media and her mailing list of the neighbors. They were expecting approximately 150 people and about 80% would be on foot and did not feel that they would need to hire a police officer.

Motion: B. McBride made a motion to approve the event. B. Rotelli seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

B. Dylan O'Connor on behalf of the Stratfield Village Association is requesting to use Lincoln Park on Jackman Avenue to hold the second annual Lincoln Parkapalooza on September 10, 2022 with a rain date of September 11, 2022 from 2 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. D. O'Connor explained that this event would be the same as this year, with food trucks around the park and music and kid shows in the park. They would be blocking off Jackman Avenue but keeping in mind an egress for the fire department. Their volunteers will do all the cleaning and hire two police officers and portable restrooms. He explained that this year's event had no complaints and there was positive feedback. B. Nerreau asked when the Four Corners Project would break ground, which D. O'Connor explained that they were a little behind schedule and anticipate to break ground next spring and any additional funds raised would go to other projects in the neighborhood that they are spearheading. A letter had been sent from Daniel Ford regarding the Assumption Septemberfest holding their annual event the third weekend every year and stating that they would prefer that the SVA event be held after their event so as not to disturb the neighborhood two weekends back to back. D. O'Connor stated that in the past, they had held their event later, but felt there would be

no impact on them or the ability for either organization to raise money by having the events two weekends in a row and would have no impact on the neighbors. Assumption Parish told them they could not use their parking lot, which he felt would be fine because there is plenty of parking in the neighborhoods around there. This past year they raised \$35,000.

Motion: M. Horton made a motion to approve and J. Benton seconded.

Vote: B. McBride, B. Rotelli, M. Horton, J. Benton, C. McCoy, M. Jameson and B. Nerreau in favor. D. O'Connor abstained.

C. Mark Barnhart – Director of Community and Economic Development, 611 Old Post Road, requesting permission to have a portion of wooded land at the back half of Tunxis Hill Park that abuts 244 Greenfield Street dedicated for affordable housing.

The town is in discussions to purchase the property but it is a undersized nonconforming lot in a residential zone. The owner had approached the town and the First Selectwoman to inquire about selling a portion of the town property to him. The town asked if the owner would consider them purchasing his property for affordable housing. They have reached an agreement and it is subject to various Town boards, RTM, BOS, P&Z approval for the ability to conform to a legal lot similar to Greenfield Commons, which created 10 units of senior housing. They are looking to have a portion of Tunxis Hill Park (approximately 6/10 of an acre) to develop and construct 1-2 duplex units on the property. B. Nerreau ask if the duplexes would be rentals. M. Barnhart explained that they'll be affordable home ownership with deed restrictions and income eligibility. They will be partnering with a nonprofit developing partner to finance the construction, and ask the developing partner to prepare the plans and the Town would assist with the permitting process. B. Nerreau asked if there were any discussions with the contiguous property, subject to moving ahead and reach out to abutting owners to make them aware. The closest field is 400 feet away and that piece of property and they area is all woods and did not think that that piece of property would fall within the town's 50 year plan to be developed. C. McCoy concurred that the location is acceptable but has concerns about partnering with a development partner and asked if this would be a lottery system and how would it work and if it would be for families, elderly or disabled? M. Barnhart explained that part of the marketing plan is to make sure all have equal access to apply. There would be print publications, press releases and social media as part of their marketing plan so that everyone would have adequate notice of the lottery being held. If everything is approved, that they would close in December and break ground no earlier than 2023 since it is subject to all boards, financing and soliciting contracts. Without this approval, there will be no project. When asked if A. Calabrese had any concerns, he explained that this portion of land would never be used for park space.

Motion: D. O'Connor made a motion to approve and M. Horton seconded.

Vote: B. McBride, B. Rotelli, M. Horton, J. Benton, C. McCoy, D. O'Connor and B. Nerreau in favor. M. Jameson opposed.

D. Joseph Sargent, 525 Wormwood Road, representing the Knights of Columbus – request to have the Christmas Creche Vigil on the Sherman Green from 12/23/21 at 5 p.m. until 12/25/21 at 8 a.m. J. Sargent explained that in 1989 the board passed a resolution authorizing use of a certain aspect on the town green for three days. N. Cicarelli complied with all the regulations including the “no endorsement” by the Town. They have never challenged the Supreme Court rule about the need to staff it. Last year they asked to move to the Sherman Green because of better lighting, better traffic and the center of town has a predominant public forum, and the motion did not pass. This year's request was similar, with the addition of local priests' involvement to bless the crèche at the start of their vigil and perhaps have a procession from St. Thomas after the evening mass. He was not sure of all of the details because they would need approval to move forward. He explained

that this is a family friendly event where people stop by and say a prayer or drop off mass cards. There would be a sign stating that this was not endorsed by the Town of Fairfield. B. Nerreau stated he felt that this was a wonderful thing going back to 1989, however we did not support last year's request, mostly due to Covid, but that he would not be able to support this year's request. B. Nerreau explained that there were 162 events since 2019 and of those events, 157 were either in the afternoon or concluded by 8 p.m. There were some events held from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., however there were never any past 9 p.m. He also stated that of the 162 events, only four of them went longer than four hours. C. McCoy stated that the Menorah does not stay overnight and asked if the commission would consider a four-hour window as opposed to 24 hours a day. B. Nerreau stated that he supports what they are doing, however they do not support where they wanted to do it. C. McCoy asked if there was a particular reason why they want to be at Sherman Green as opposed to Town Hall Green. J. Sargent stated that it was for visibility. C. McCoy suggested that maybe they could compromise and perhaps set up the crèche at Town Hall Green and then relocate on Christmas Eve from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m or 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and conclude at that time to fall in line with all the other events duration and concluding times. J. Sargent stated that he did not see any specific rules to not allow them to be there or for any specific timeframe and it would be a burden on Christmas Eve because it is the hardest time to find people to man it. He asked how other organizations leave unmanned signs on the Sherman Green. M. Jameson stated that he did not believe that this was any different than the tree of hope display that is there each month and it is not manned the entire time. B. Rotelli did not see a problem with this at all and would support this. B. McBride felt that they would be setting precedence for other groups to ask for consecutive days. J. Benton stated that it will create more interest and they would have to expect more to come in the future and wanted to know what type of activity would he expect to happen after 9 p.m. J. Sargent said that he could only comment that in previous years, people would come down and bring cookies or to stop and say a prayer. The crèche is generally staffed with two people. Christmas Eve is when a lot of people come down. B. Rotelli said that they have always been careful not to set precedence and if they thought it will open the floodgates for more organizations to stay for multiple days. A. Calabrese was asked what the town's stance is on religious displays on town property. He stated that to his knowledge it was a freedom of speech issue. B. Nerreau stated that they need to be careful not to set precedence and be protective, such as waiving of fees. J. Benton asked about the timeframe and if there could be a compromise. J. Sargent said that he was not the sole applicant, only an elected member and he did not have the authority to negotiate that. B. Nerreau said that whether it be the 23rd through the 25th or the 24th to the 25th or two weeks, the relevant factor is overnight on the Sherman Green.

M. Jameson moved to approve the Knights of Columbus at the Sherman Green from 12/23/21 at 5 p.m. to 12/25/21 at 8 a.m. and that it should be manned 24-7 and continue all other aspects of the conditions. B. Rotelli seconded.

Vote: J. Benton, M. Horton, B. Rotelli, M. Jameson in favor, B. McBride, C. McCoy, D. O'Connor and B. Nerreau opposed. The motion did not pass.

V. To hear and act upon information in Reports:

A. Board of Education Report: - B. Rotelli said that the board applied as part of their capital waterfall to put out a proposed district wide air conditioning project in the amount of 75 million dollars. There will be an open Town Hall meeting on December 8th at 8 p.m. The Superintendent is not present, only board members and any other people can attend.

B. Director's Report:

We are finalizing our fall and winter programming. The basketball league will be held in the schools and all participants and spectators must wear masks.

The South Pine Creek playground has been completed and Gould Manor is progressing. The tennis court and playground equipment has been delayed about two weeks, but it should be completed in early November. The ARPA funding was approved and we have received the green light for phase 1 which will include five new playgrounds.

The damage at Lake Mohegan beachfront is estimated at \$500,000 and we are working with FEMA. We did receive one quote for \$400K. Dredging needs to be done and sand will need to be replaced.

We have a new staff member, Scott Buckholz, who came from the Stratford YMCA and he will be in charge of Aquatics, Waterfront, Parking and the Pavilions.

At Penfield Pavilion, the fill pile under the building and the parking lot needs to be remediated and they will not be accepting reservations after October 31, 2022 and they have offered alternate dates or refunds for any reservations after that.

IV. Good of the Order None

ADJOURNMENT: B. Nerreau stated with no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly J. Brown, Recording Secretary

[youtube.com/watch?v=NSc9Yahjwd0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSc9Yahjwd0)