



Board of Parks & Recreation
Meeting Minutes
June 26, 2019

Please be advised that these minutes are in DRAFT form and will not become “Public Record” until the Board of Parks and Recreation formally approves them at their next regularly scheduled meeting planned for July 31, 2019.

Board Attendees: Gary Dell’Abate, Nancy Chapin, Rick Loh, Frank DiVincenzo, John Hartwell, and Kirk Schubert

Staff Attendees: Joe Siciliano, Sue Snyder, Brian Kerzner and Tom Greco

Guest Attendees: Dean Gamanos, Leslie Yager, Nancy Ramer, and Jeff Ramer,

- I. Mr. Dell’Abate called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Keegan Conference Room.
- II. A motion was made by Mr. Hartwell and seconded by Mr. DiVincenzo to approve the Board Minutes from the April 24, 2019. 5-0-0

III. **Summer Recreation Programming, Sue Snyder**

Ms. Snyder displayed some flyers and information for summer programming and gave a brief summary of each program which included; camp, concerts, jazz on the sound, Skatepark ramp camp and clinics, baseball, soccer, swim, tennis, pickleball, softball, fireworks, Sandblast Festival. All program information is available on the Town’s website, www.greenwichct.gov.

Ms. Snyder further provided the following highlights and concerns:

Concerns

- Seasonal staff backing out just before program starts.
- The minimum wage bill was passed; going up Oct. 1 to \$11.00/hr increasing by \$1.00/hr every eleven months thereafter. This will impact the budget for 230 temporary employees many of which start at minimum wage.

Mr. Siciliano added that since the budget has been set, and the new budget will take effect on July 1, we’ll just need to keep a handle on it.

Highlights

- Kamp Kairphree has filled for the summer
- Adventurers Camp is nearly full
- Included dance component to the Music & Art Camp
- Added private swim lessons
- Added online tennis reservations
- Being proactive this year and collecting immunization records for all camp staff as a result of the measles outbreak.

Ms. Snyder added she recently ordered a grass mat that will go from the sidewalk to the entrance of the tennis court at Loughlin Ave. Park. This will allow for handicapped accessibility.

Ms. Snyder reported that the Jim Fixx Memorial Day Race and Fun Run was successful; there were 477 runners which is up from the last few years.

Ms. Snyder also advised that the division has rentals at the civic centers and the Rink. The division is also responsible for the permitting process for special events.

IV. Director's Report, Joseph Siciliano

Mr. Siciliano reported that the Junior League provided their final payment for the pool at the Board of Selectman Meeting. Their fundraising efforts totaled \$2.5M.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if the Junior League selected their next project. Mr. Siciliano replied that it is worth a discussion with them to see if they are interested in other department projects.

Mr. Siciliano stated that the pool is open and there has been a lot of activity. The attendance has picked up since school got out. Last year (60 days) the pool averaged 460 people per day with the highest day for attendance being 1,109 people. This year the weather has been iffy, currently averaging about 300/day.

Mr. Siciliano advised that he has been working with the Committee for People with Disabilities in Social Services. A beach mat has been installed at Greenwich Point by the first concession walkway to the edge of the water. The mat is fully accessible for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers. Mr. Siciliano thanked the Lions Club for their donation to make the mat possible.

The Town Golf Tournaments were held this past weekend. The men's tournament had 75 players while the women's' tournament had 25 players. It was a great day, the course is in great condition and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Mr. Siciliano informed that John Hartwell will be the liaison for the Field Study Committee. The Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET) appropriated \$75K for a compressive study of the current field conditions, usability and what it would take to bring the fields up to a higher level of playability. Don Mohr put together an inventory of fields.

Mr. Siciliano added that he talked to some people he knows in the business and obtained sample RFP's from other towns. The sample RFP's will be put together in a packet to be used as a template. The committee consists of two Board of Education (BOE) representatives; Dan Watson and member of the Board, John Hartwell and members of the Parks and Recreation Staff.

Mr. Dell'Abate questioned if \$75K was enough for the study. Mr. Siciliano responded that the original casual estimate he obtained from a consultant, was \$150k. The Request for Proposal, (RFP) will be built such that items can be added or deleted.

Mr. Siciliano advised that he had a conversation with Leslie Moriarty who advised him to obtain the results of the RFP, and see how much more the cost is. The results of the field study will help determine how much to invest in each field and help establish prioritization.

The committee will meet early July. The goal is to have the RFP out on the street by early August.

Mr. Siciliano reported that the Memorial Day weekend special events were successful. The Town Party drew 8,000 and the car show 10,000+. The Serendipity Food & Wine Festival's Fun Run from this past weekend donated \$5,000 to the Foundation for Scholarships.

Mr. Siciliano advised that he will be meeting with the Greenwich Alliance for Education, they will also like to make a donation for Parks and Recreation Foundation. The department is able to use the foundation as a funding mechanism; it helps a budget time. There are more needs than the department asks for in the budget. These donations help supplement the needs. It is a nice way to keep the programs elevated and get the nice to have things.

Mr. Hartwell reported that there is a new organization being formed, the Friends of Byram Park. Mr. Hartwell advised that the idea is to have activities at the park. Mr. Hartwell advised that he will be the board liaison to the group.

Mr. Siciliano added that similar to the Friends of Greenwich Point, the group will address the daily operational needs, improvements, standards, events, etc.

Mr. Hartwell further added that Byram Park was packed over the weekend, there were so many activities going on. It was beautiful, people were out as late as they could.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if wiffle ball was still played at Byram. Mr. Siciliano responded that they took the fence and didn't come back. When the New Lebanon School Field was lost to construction, the play was shifted to Byram. The wiffle ball tournament was moved to the polo fields.

V. Chairman's Report, Gary Dell'Abate

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if there was any news concerning Western Middle School. Mr. Hartwell replied that Don Mohr provided some information that Western Middle School field is in a holding pattern with respect to remediation.

Mr. Siciliano added that he heard that it is in the regulatory hands of the DEEP, they are waiting for a reply. Mr. Siciliano further added that he was pretty certain that all the submittals have been submitted to the DEEP.

Mr. Dell'Abate asked what was going on with the stadium at the high school. Mr. Siciliano stated he is not in the loop on that it is a BOE project.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired what they did for graduation. Mr. Siciliano responded that they did a completely different layout, not utilizing the bleachers just chairs. It worked out nicely.

VI. Binney Park Advisory Committee, Nancy Chapin

Ms. Chapin reported that the warming hut fireplace has been removed, they did a great job. It would've never been able to be used again. Ms. Chapin encouraged everyone to take a look.

Ms. Chapin further reported that Alan stated the warming hut will also get a new roof.

Ms. Chapin advised that Pat Sesto of Inlands Wetlands came out for a site walk with the committee; they wanted to make sure the plans were in compliance with wetlands. Greg Kramer is very knowledgeable; he and Pat have a great rapport. You will start to see improvements by Parrot Library where the grasses abut. More work is taking place on the North End. Darrin Wigglesworth organized some work for a Volunteer Day, everyone worked together and had a great day. The Park Foreman, Jon Fasone was inspired, he went to the other side and did more work. There is still a lot of work to do, but it is much improved.

Ms. Chapin reported there is a hold up with Vitti to work on the patio off the warming hut. The committee is working to find a landscape architect. Pete of Gro-Pro offered to develop a design for free, however Mr. Kramer has taken the lead on interviewing various landscape architects. The idea is to use an outside consultant to landscape the island. Jon Fasone is interested in designing around the clubhouse. Waiting for Vitti to do the hardscape first. They will also try to get trees in.

On the walk through with Pat Sesto, the committee discussed the maintenance plan following the dredging. The access is missing (pavers). Ms. Chapin stated she will reach out to Public Works. The goal is to make sure everyone is on the same page with the maintenance plan.

Mr. Siciliano stated that there are some funds in the capital budget; there is an additional \$47K (\$30K of which was donated by the Crucitti family) that was raised privately through the Parks and Recreation Foundation.

Ms. Chapin suggested that the Crucitti donation go towards the island project. Additionally, trying to complete the loop trail. The community identified the loop trail as a priority.

Mr. Gamanos reported that he was in the Park for “Art in the Park” event, it was spectacular.

VII. Dorothy Hamill Rink Sub-Committee, Rick Loh

Mr. Loh reported that the committee met with KG&D, the architects who are in the midst of conducting the facility study. The architects went through the plan step-by-step, it is becoming clear with the findings thus far, that it may not be feasible to renovate the facility but rather rebuild—the wish list may not be met by renovating. The proof will be in the final report. The report is expected for the next meeting on July 18, 2019.

Mr. Siciliano stated that as of July 1, there is \$250K in the budget that is subject to release. once the final report is in, a presentation should be made to the BET in an effort to release the funds to take the next step.

Ms. Snyder provided a timeline; the committee will review the initial report, provide feedback, and the final report will be issued—hopefully by September.

VIII. Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, Gary Dell’Abate

Mr. Dell’Abate reported that there was a Public Hearing held on June 12. Over 100 people were in attendance. 45 people signed up to speak. While there were attendees from various groups, the bulk of the attendees were OGRCC users. The two common themes were doing the fields at the same time as the building and building a bigger building. The hearing was for comments only; answers were not provided. OGRCC members suggested they may be able to raise private funds for a bigger project. Many parents spoke regarding fields as it relates to a lack of playability.

Mr. Dell'Abate suggested that addressing the fields at the same time would make the project too expensive and it may not be approved by the BET.

Mr. Dell'Abate reported that they are moving ahead nicely. The committee will be meeting with the top 5 of 13 architects that submitted proposals on July 9 when they will present their concepts.

Mr. Dell'Abate advised that he spoke with Alan Hahn, member of the Riverside Association. There were some rumors about the project that needed to be addressed. The Association wanted their voice heard; they are in favor of making the facility a civic center and not a sports only facility. Mr. Dell'Abate filled him in on the facts of where the project is.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if the Rink and the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center (EGCC) projects can be done in the same fiscal year.

Mr. Ramer responded that the projects are independent of each other and can be done at the same time.

Mr. Siciliano recalled that back in 2004 a field report of the EGCC field. The report included a deep test hold study (6). The report is not encouraging. The field was built on a bog wetland and there is a lot of fill material. Not a stable foundation. The report was conducted by a notable soil scientist made recommendations to top-dress the field to improve the surface, but it doesn't do anything for the drainage or anything below the surface.

Mr. Schubert inquired if the middle school field discussion is still taking place.

Mr. Siciliano responded that the Board of Ed. has money in their budget to explore the middle school fields. Central Middle School has a contract to see what it would take to do some field improvements there. Both artificial surfacing and natural grass options.

Mr. Siciliano stated that the field studies that he's seen talk about what is needed to improve the current surface, usability and playability. The reports also include recommendations. Its often suggested to buy more land and convert to field space or convert existing fields to artificial surfacing for more consistent playability. Many towns are converting fields to artificial surfacing and including lighting to achieve more playability. A big issue with natural grass is that once you increase playability, there is no time to rest the field to grow grass.

Mr. Schubert inquired if the installation of new rugs on fields 6 and 7 at the high school will be subject to the debate on health risks.

Mr. Siciliano responded that on fields 6 and 7 there are a couple of spots that need attention, these will be incorporated in the remediation issues that DPW is dealing with.

Mr. Loh reported Avon, CT is installing two new artificial fields.

IX. Field Committee, John Hartwell

Mr. Hartwell reported that the committee met. The committee had a discussion on artificial turf vs. natural grass. Historically the opposition of artificial turf have always been vocal and

speaking out against it, while the proponents do not. This is changing, people are recognizing that the availability of fields will impact their programs. There were some parents in attendance who expressed their concerns regarding playability.

Mr. Hartwell suggests that artificial turf fields will allow for more playability.

Mr. Hartwell advised that scheduled makeups for adult softball is expected to go into the fall, many players are college students, once they go back to school, there is no program, its done.

Mr. Hartwell credited Scott Johnson for going back to review the health boards' records regarding health issues of artificial surfacing. The state of CT has conducted a report and that is what should be followed. The Town does not use crumb rubber. The state of CT does not come out with health warnings for artificial turf, they have evolved so much.

Mr. Hartwell stated that the committee reviewed an application for two girls' softball teams from Greenwich Country Day School for spring of 2020, people are looking ahead.

Mr. Hartwell added that New Lebanon field will be used in fall of 2019, people are excited.

Ms. Chapin asked if the department could work with Country Day School to share fields.

Mr. Siciliano responded that the department has helped them out as much as possible, however there hasn't been any reciprocation. Some private schools do rent their fields to private organizations.

Ms. Chapin suggested that consideration for shared fields be part of the field study. It may even be cost effective to rent their fields.

X. Lia Fail, Frank DiVincenzo

Waiting for Vitti to build the stairs. Suggested having the dedication without the stairs.

XI. Beaches and Boating, Brian Kerzner

Mr. Kerzner reported that there is a statewide shortage of lifeguards, despite the shortage he is comfortable with the numbers the Town has.

Mr. Kerzner advised that handicapped mats have been installed at both Greenwich Point and one similar at Byram.

Mr. Kerzner stated that Island Beach sand was regraded, Byram is in good shape, Greenwich Point is steady.

Mr. Kerzner notified that there is a new concessionaire at Greenwich Point, working out well.

Mr. Kerzner notified that the pool is in good shape, and getting lots of use.

Mr. Kerzner stated that geese droppings have been a big problem at Byram. Trying to negate the issue by using a combination of coyote cutouts, construction fencing, and geese dogs. It is currently molting season for the geese where they don't fly. Working on altering the dog schedule so the geese don't know when to expect them.

Ms. Chapin suggested a vegetative buffer. Mr. Siciliano replied that there is a walkway that would prevent it, the fencing serves that purpose at night and is removed in the morning.

The marinas are running well. There is a new Dockmaster at Grass Island; he's doing a great job.

Mr. Kerzner acknowledged that the ferry service is going well, older boats, a lot of surprised issues, mechanical breakdowns. The Ferry Captain, Jeff Devlin is doing an amazing job being proactive keeping up.

Mr. Kerzner advised that there have been a lot of administrative changes this season, new Beach managers, and pool manager who are doing an awesome job.

XII. Unfinished Business

none

XIII. New Business

Mr. Siciliano stated that he and Alan Monelli had a preliminary meeting with the Greenwich Point Conservancy to discuss their next project; the Chimes Building. Reviewed some very basic drawings. Once the plans are more solid, Mr. Siciliano suggested the Conservancy come make a presentation to the Board.

Mr. Dell'Abate advised that he is on the Board of the Emily Catherine Fedorko Foundation. The Foundation is making a sizable donation towards the project. There will be a boating safety section named after her.

Mr. DiVincenzo reported that he ate at the Griff Concession, it was fantastic.

XIV. Public Comment

none

XV. Meeting adjourned 8:01 p.m.