



Board of Parks & Recreation

Meeting Minutes

July 25, 2018

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 September 26, 2018.

Board Attendees: Scott Johnson, Gary Dell'Abate, Frank DiVincenzo, John Hartwell, Kirk Schubert, Rick Loh, Tom McGarrity, and Nancy Chapin

Staff Attendees: Joe Siciliano, Tom Greco, Lou Berlingo, and Brian Kerzner

Ex-Officio Attendees: none

Guest Attendees: Dean Gamanos and Jill Oberlander

- I. Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. at the Griffith E. Harris Golf Course. A motion was made by Mr. DiVincenzo and seconded by Mr. McGarrity to approve the Board Minutes from the June 27, 2018 meeting. 6-0-0

- II. **Golf Course Report, Lou Berlingo**

Mr. Berlingo reported that the golf course is doing well financially and physically. The course was chosen to host the MGA 2018 Public Links Championships---everyone raved about the course. The Town Championships went very well.

Completed work:

Purchased a new gazebo by the 11th green, this will provide shelter and lightning protection. Cart paths were partially renovated on 8 holes; added a new gold tee (helps younger/older golfers who cannot hit the ball as far), 2 equipment sheds were replaced, extensive work on the pumps, new irrigation software system installed, purchased new aerator that is bigger and faster than the old ones, this will allow for quicker and more frequent aerification.

Scheduled work:

Finish gold tees on all holes in the fall

Re-level existing tees in the fall

Replace lightning alarm system

Tree work-the past winter was too wet and couldn't get the trucks in; will do double duty this winter

Financials:

At year-end estimated balance was \$870,000. The final loan payment on the administration building was paid on June 10.

Mr. Berlingo reported that rounds, carts, and buckets were all slightly down at year-end. The weather has not been great this season, other than June and a few good days in July. The course opened 3 weeks later than desired. Fortunately, the good days have drawn out big numbers, which has helped.

Mr. Berlingo stated the course has had the same amount of outings as last year; mostly returning groups that have been coming for a long time for charitable outings. The outing fees are 50\$/player with a minimum of 72 golfers.

Mr. Johnson inquired if they typically eat at the restaurant. Mr. Berlingo responded that many groups have lunch and dinner at the restaurant.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired about the contract period for the restaurant vendor. Mr. Berlingo stated that the initial contract is for 2 years with 3 option years, the current vendor is in his second year. Mr. Berlingo stated that he and Mr. Siciliano are in discussions about the 1st option year and if it should be renewed. The renewal is based on mutual agreement between the Town and the vendor.

Mr. Berlingo stated that the last time the restaurant went out to bid, the current vendor was the only bidder. Mr. Siciliano further added there are not an overwhelming number of people who bid. There are a few of issues; (1) the location---there is not a lot of traffic (2) no liquor license---only beer and wine are sold the state permit is expensive and also the additional insurance---not cost effective, (3) the rent, currently the annual rent is \$60,000.

Upon extensive discussion, Mr. Siciliano stated it is a tough business and not that many want to take the risk.

Mr. Hartwell offered kudos to the junior tournament participants for having done so well. Mr. Hartwell credited the pros Joe Felder and Pat Massi; they have done a phenomenal job.

III. Director's Report, Joseph Siciliano

Mr. Siciliano reported that the fireworks displays went well with the new vendor this year. Mr. Siciliano expressed his desire to extend the shows at Greenwich Point and Binney Park by 5 minutes. The ideal show lasts 25 minutes; our shows fall a little short at 22 minutes. In years' past the department ran a fund-raising campaign to raise funds to extend the shows—"Bang for Your Buck", this campaign raised \$6,000 in one year, which afforded six minutes, 3 minutes per location.

The current shows run \$35,000 for shooters and shells; this doesn't include staffing (police, fire, etc.).

Greenwich Capital had sponsored \$25,000 for the fireworks for 20 years, but has since moved on. Other towns charge for a fee for their fireworks display to offset costs.

Mr. Siciliano stated he's been thinking about seeking a new sponsor.

Mr. Siciliano reported that the Byram Pool has been busy since opening; there has been an average of 1,100 visitors a week, and the numbers are dropping a little bit.

The complex capacity is 240 people at one time. The polices will be reviewed at the end of the season.

Mr. Siciliano stated the department is rounding the corner on summer. Tonight is the Music and Art Program concert at the high school. Mr. Siciliano suggested next July's board meeting be held there. The concert is really impressive.

Mr. Johnson inquired about how Kamp Kairphree was doing. Mr. Siciliano replied that Kamp Kairphree has great participation. The program is a full day, provides transportation and takes up a void for daycare. It is a good program for working parents.

Mr. Siciliano advised that the Scholarship program is solid; there are great supporters of the program, which includes private foundations, special organized groups and private individual donors. The Fund gave over 60 partial scholarships last fiscal year.

IV. Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, (EGCC)

Mr. Siciliano reported that the survey for the EGCC closed last Friday, there were 2,400+ surveys submitted. The consultant, SFA is working to compile the information, the report will be complete by the end of August. The survey went out to 18,000 households, groups and organizations sent the survey out as well, the department also sent out a constant contact communication, and an email to all of the RTM district chairs to pass along to their constituents. Mr. Schubert added that he sent the survey out to members of OGRCC.

Mr. Johnson suggested the subcommittee have a conference call with SFA before the report is issued.

V. Lia Fail Way, Frank DiVincenzo

Mr. DiVincenzo reported that things are moving along. Mr. DiVincenzo reported the project received a donation in the amount of \$22,500 from a private donor; he is uncertain if they want to be identified. Mr. DiVincenzo stated he is working with Bea Crumbine on a narrative for the September RTM application for a gift acceptance.

Mr. DiVincenzo stated he has estimates from A. Vitti Construction (Town approved vendor); \$12,000 for the footings and another \$7,000 to bring the monoliths out of storage and place them. Mr. Johnson added the installation should be videoed.

Mr. DiVincenzo further added that there would be an additional \$5,000 in reserves for land restoration.

Mr. Siciliano stated that the project has been reviewed with Planning and Zoning and Wetlands.

Mr. DiVincenzo added that he proposes an upward light on each monolith.

Mr. Siciliano suggested solar lighting. When the lights would be on, there wouldn't be anyone in the park; it closes at dusk.

Mr. DiVincenzo replied that lights should be on a timer so they would go on when there are people at the park to enjoy it.

Ms. Chapin stated from an environmental standpoint, lights negatively impact a moth lifecycle; you do not want lights.

Mr. Siciliano added this is up for future discussion.

VI. Field Sub Committee, John Hartwell

Mr. Hartwell advised that as part of the field committee – members are asked to participate on the athletic disciplinary committee. The committee holds hearings to review incidents and rule on the penalties. Don Mohr coordinates the hearings as necessary.

Mr. Johnson said the hearings are for Town athletics and are very much like a real trial.

Mr. Dell'Abate added that he saw a story on Real Sports on how officials at high school games are under violent attack to the point where they park their cars nose out so they can leave abruptly.

Mr. Johnson recalled that there have been some very violent incidents.

Mr. Siciliano added that several years back, little league parents were the issue. Parents got into it with the umpire leading to the umpire suspending the game. Mr. Siciliano stated he ruled on the hearing to setup a perimeter on the field, if parents passed the boundary, it would be an automatic forfeit—this seemed to help. The children were not the issue it was the parents poorly demonstrating their frustration in front of the children who just wanted to play ball.

Mr. Siciliano stated the department sponsors a Positive Coaching Alliance seminar each year.

VII. Dorothy Hamill Rink Sub-Committee, Rick Loh

Mr. Loh advised that the committee met. They are making progress in preparing the information for the Request for Proposal for the facility study that was recently funded. The committee discussed parameters and fine-tuned the language. The first step will be the study of the facility, which will identify where the rink is behind the times. The following step will be the feasibility study, which will help determine the demand for ice time and if the demand could support two ice surfaces.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if bubbling the tennis courts at the high school was still being considered.

Mr. Loh replied that it is being factored in. If the high school teams could use the bubble for practices, that would open up ice time at Hamill to support the demand by other user groups.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if the surface would be useable to other groups when the high school was not using it. Mr. Siciliano stated that the high school would make that decision and manage its use/rental.

Mr. Siciliano stated that there is a benefit to having a bubbled ice surface at the high school.

Mr. Siciliano added that the Rink is approaching its 49th season and he gets nervous each time the compressors boot up.

Mr. DiVincenzo asked if the bubble at the high school would include spectator seating.

Mr. Loh responded that the bubble would only include team benches.

Mr. Loh suggested the other possibility would be to place a new rink on the baseball field next to Hamill Rink and Hamill could be the second surface used for practice and ice skating (not sized appropriately for hockey). This would solve a lot of the existing problems at Hamill today, build a facility next to it and connect the two. They can share amenities like locker rooms, restrooms, etc.

Mr. Siciliano added that there is an item on the Board of Selectmen agenda that talks about the litigation for lights at the high school. This will play into the possibility of a bubble.

VIII. Unfinished Business

None

IX. New Business

Mr. Johnson stated he and Mr. Siciliano attended the Beach Ball fundraiser for the Greenwich Point Conservancy. They raised over \$500,000. The event is so popular there is a waitlist for people to get in. The funding goes back into Greenwich Point. Their next project is the Chimes Building.

Mr. Dell'Abate reported Tim McGraw was selected to perform at the Food and Wine Fest. Mr. Siciliano stated portion of the proceeds from the event will go to the Parks and Recreation Foundation for scholarships.

Mr. Gamanos stated he attended the open hearing for the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD); the topic of fields came up. He suggested the department get into the plan with the goal of adding more parks; they are what attract people to Greenwich, one of the Town's greatest assets. Mr. Johnson stated the Board submits written comments for the POCD. Mr. Siciliano stated the department meets with P&Z and the consultant.

Mr. Johnson added that the previous P&Z Director had a proposal in the POCD where all artificial surfaces were countered as FAR in the computation of site plans, which would have eliminated the ability to have any artificial surfaces at any school. Luckily the Board/department caught it. Mr. Gamanos added that the FAR discussion is being postponed until September as people were away.

Mr. Siciliano added the Town has acquired parkland in many different ways including donated land and scheduled payments for land.

Mr. Dell'Abate thanked everyone for a great turn out to the meeting.

Mr. Siciliano reported that Mr. Berlingo will be retiring in September, he has by far has done a fine job. Mr. Siciliano added that he is in the process of interviewing for the position.

Mr. Berlingo expressed how great the job has been.

Mr. DiVincenzo stated that Mr. Berlingo has set the bar high.

X. Public Comment

XI. Meeting adjourned 7:52 p.m.