



Board of Parks & Recreation
Meeting Minutes

October 24, 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 December 5, 2018.

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

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

Guest Attendees: Leslie Yager, Sue Baker, Bill Drake, Jill Oberlander, Dean Gamanos, Victoria Martin Young, and Jean DiVincenzo

- I. Mr. Dell'Abate called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. at the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center.
- II. A motion was made by Mr. DiVincenzo and seconded by Mr. McGarrity to approve the Board Minutes from the September 26, 2018 meeting. 7-0-0

III. **Director's Report, Joseph Siciliano**

Mr. Siciliano reported that the RTM request for an RTM subcommittee on fields has been postponed indefinitely. Mr. Siciliano stated there was confusion and redundancy.

Mr. Gamanos stated that the topic came up at the P&R Committee meeting. The intentions were good, but there is a group of mothers who are frustrated because there aren't enough fields to go around. Following the discussion at the meeting, the committee decided to withdraw the item, because there wasn't proper preparation. Mr. Gamanos stated that one committee member commented that there were too many committees and that the P&R Dept./Board should be the ones to take on the field issues.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if there was such frustration, why hasn't anyone come to the Board to discuss the issues prior to forming a subcommittee? The Field Subcommittee is a public meeting. Mr. Gamanos replied it should have been done, it wasn't well thought through.

Mr. Johnson stated that he contacted Kathleen, it was a good conversation and she was very receptive. Mr. Johnson advised her of the two other committees that are doing the same thing; the First Selectmen's Committee on turf, and the users committee. Mr. Johnson stated he left an open invitation for her to contact him for further information.

Mr. Siciliano reported that while Bruce Spaman is retired, he is working 2 days/week. He is working on getting a subgroup together to talk about finishing the work in Binney Park (plantings, pathways, signage and bridge access). This was one of Nancy Caplan's projects

she had solicited for some private funds to incorporate with the budgeted funds for the project.

Ms. Chapin asked if there was a time limit on the donations. Mr. Siciliano replied that the Town funding is what needs to advance and there are commitments to move forward.

Mr. Siciliano inquired if there was a member of the Board that would like to sit on the committee for Binney Park. Ms. Chapin agreed to sit on the committee.

Mr. Siciliano stated that he is in the process of reviewing some of the concession contracts that are in their option year phase. Specifically, the Greenwich Point Concession, and the Griffith E. Harris Golf Course. At this point, the contracts are based on mutual agreement.

Mr. Siciliano added that the review will include speaking with the concessionaires regarding the feedback received from the public. A determination will be made around the middle of November.

Mr. Dell'Abate questioned if the golf concession is open year-round. Mr. Siciliano replied that there is a primary season they are required to be open per contract. They could be open year-round, but there really isn't any winter business. The beach concession could run an extended season also; they are responsible for a particular season any time after that is optional on their part.

Ms. Baker stated she hears a lot of the concession complaints and wonders if the complaints get to Mr. Siciliano. Mr. Siciliano replied that he hears many of them via email, phone, and letters. The complaints are cataloged and they are addressed with the concessionaire during their contractual period before the option years are exercised. The concessionaire is given the opportunity to correct the issues. The complaints play a role in determining if the department wants to exercise the contract option years. Mr. Siciliano stated that the preferred method of contact for such complaints are via email, comments from the public are important.

IV. Chairman's Report, Scott Johnson

Mr. Johnson reported that the Foundation needs to have a Board meeting by the end of the year. The First Selectman would like to amend the bylaws to have a smaller Foundation Board. As they are currently written, the bylaws require the First Selectman to appoint 6 members to the Foundation Board, however he's never appointed more than one member.

Mr. Johnson stated he is working on re-creating who he thinks the members currently are and coordinating the annual Board meeting, the Board is required to meet at least once per year. Board member terms are for 3 years. Mr. Johnson stated that the Foundation is financially in good order, he and Mr. Loh have a good checks and balances system in place with the department and accountants.

Mr. Dell'Abate asked who started the Foundation and what the intended purpose is. Mr. Johnson replied that he handled the legal filings but the Foundation was started by Dave D'Andrea about 18 years ago. The purpose of the Foundation is to receive tax deductible donations for Parks and Recreation purposes, however it is not a Town agency. Mr. Johnson reviewed the make-up of the Board membership which includes representation from the Board of Parks and Recreation, BET, Appointments Committee, RTM P&R and Ex-Officio members.

Mr. Johnson advised that people do not get too excited about participating on these types of Boards.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired what the funds are used for. Mr. Johnson replied that in 90% of the cases, donors designate what they want the funds to go towards. There are currently accounts for the Golf Course, Binney Park, Youth Scholarships, Skating Awards, Memorial Benches, Showmobile, Lia Fail, Shelter Our Strays, etc. There are administrative fees which include, website hosting, accounting fees, PayPal account, and insurance.

Mr. Siciliano reviewed the process for memorial benches; the donor makes their check payable to the Foundation, the Foundation designates the funds for a bench. The department will execute the install. The bench, plaque, and supplies are charged back to the memorial bench account. Mr. Siciliano stated that the department tries to take care of vandalized benches. It happens once in a while; so far the bench fund has been able to support the repairs.

V. Lia Fail Way, Frank DiVincenzo

Mr. DiVincenzo reported that the project is at the mercy of the contractor, Vitti who has several other projects going on. As per the contractor, the surveyor needed to come out to survey the area with for a CAD report which took about week. Mr. DiVincenzo stated that he visited the site and it appears that all they did was place a pin at the center of the radius. Mr. DiVincenzo added that he knew more work was required, an in the interest of time, he did it himself. He measured, and spray painted out the plan. Mr. DiVincenzo stated that he sent Vitti an email to let him know the plan is all mapped out and ready to go. Mr. DiVincenzo stated he is waiting for the contractor to work the project into his schedule---he removed the monoliths from the original site, so he knows what to expect, therefore he's worth waiting for. Mr. Siciliano added that Vitti meets all of the Town's requirements.

VI. Field Sub Committee, John Hartwell

Mr. Hartwell advised that the last meeting was cancelled. The biggest problem has been the weather, lots of rain. As per Don Mohr's report, the fields impacted to a greater degree are; Binney Park, Central Middle School, EGCC, Eastern Middle School, Glenville School, Lower Havemeyer, Loughlin Ave., North St., Parkway School and Western Middle School. Mr. Hartwell stated he is a proponent of artificial turf and feels the Field Committee should take a stance.

Mr. Siciliano added that there is an appropriation in the Board of Education (BOE) budget to look at the middle school fields. Central Middle School field was selected, the BOE contracted with Malone and Macbroom as their consultant. Do date, they have some preliminary mapping work. They schedule regular meetings with the team. Turf Operations Manager, Tim Coughlin represents Parks and Recreation on the committee.

Mr. Siciliano recounted that the field analysis report template that he put together with a consultant and the Board of Education includes information for both a natural turf field and synthetic turf field; the report will include lighting, traffic analysis, drainage, soil analysis, impact of play, scheduling, etc.

This comprehensive report will aid in providing the completed information before the project gets sidetracked by folks who do not have enough information or have misinformation.

Mr. Siciliano stated that one of the weak links is that the folks that are anti-turf seem to rally together and voice their opinions. The user groups have many complains about the current field conditions, but they don't show up and voice their wants publically.

Mr. Hartwell suggested one of the Field Committee members speak at the next Field Users meeting and let them know that they need to get behind what they want.

Mr. Siciliano added that those in favor of field improvements need to have a process to follow and get people behind the project and support it.

VII. Dorothy Hamill Rink Sub-Committee, Rick Loh

Mr. Loh reported that there were 5 responses from the Request for Proposal (RFP) that went out. In retrospect, the RFP that went out may have been too broad-based. This is a one-step –at-a-time project. The initial phase is a study of the existing facility. Some of the proposals received, took the project all the way through architectural design. Some of the proposals are from national companies with healthy resumes, another is from a local consultant who has completed these projects in other venues and has knowledge of Fairfield County, another was the company that helped the Town with the Fire/Police station design and build.

Ms. Snyder added that she has asked purchasing if the scope of the proposal can be limited and negotiated for initial phase or if it needs to be rebid.

Mr. Loh further added that back in 2004-05 a study of the existing facility and a study on market demand were conducted. It was determined at that time that the facility was way behind the times and needed some improvements. Mr. Loh stated he is pretty sure that the new facility study will say the same thing. At this point, we need to look at current facility and determine if any of it is salvageable or is it best to start over.

Mr. Siciliano advised that the slab is too short and is 48 years old.

Mr. Johnson stated that in talking with the consultants for the civic center, he learned that locker rooms with showers are an insurance liability due to abuse scenarios.

Mr. Dell'Abate further added that the conversation was specific to civic centers rather than the hockey rink. Mr. Loh reported for 30 years Greenwich has invited high school teams down to play, and sending them home on the bus without showering. Showers are standard in ice rink facilities and Dorothy Hamill Rink is behind the times.

Mr. McGarrity further added it is a hygiene problem.

VIII. Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, Gary Dell'Abate

Mr. Dell'Abate reminded everyone that the facility was gifted to the Town and the Town made the facility work, and now there is an opportunity is to make the facility work for the Town.

Mr. Dell'Abate stated that the subcommittee worked with consultant, SFA to put together a survey. The survey went out to 22,000 households. There were 2,500 returns on the survey which is an above average participation rate. The committee met and had an extensive conversation with the consultant and are working to move the project to the next level.

Mr. Siciliano added that the committee members have been asked to submit the initiatives they'd like to see in the building based on the documentation received from the survey.

Mr. Dell'Abate further added that the possibilities of what can be are impressive.

Mr. Siciliano reported that at some point, the survey will be published on the Town website. In the future, there will be a public input session.

IX. Unfinished Business

None

X. New Business

None

XI. Public Comment

Ms. Baker asked who was responsible for the 100-year old greenhouse at the Garden Education center in Pinetum and why the glass was removed.

Mr. Siciliano replied that there was a \$2M proposal by the Garden Education Center to renovate the greenhouse. Karen Sadik-Khan was a big proponent, and she gave it a valiant effort, but it never got off the ground. Mr. Siciliano stated that the greenhouse was in disrepair and started to leak.

Mr. Siciliano informed that the Town once used the greenhouse to propagate its own plant material, but discovered that it was cost effective to order the plant material wholesale. The Town has been maintaining a building that did not have a purpose for our operations any longer.

Alan Monelli of Building Construction and Maintenance surveyed the building and determined that the structure should be removed. The project to remove the greenhouse was laid out in the capital plan and went through the funding process.

Ms. Chapin stated that it is sad to see the Lord and Burnham greenhouse go and that it is historically plaqued. Mr. Johnson stated if it is plaque, it needs to go through a process.

Mr. Siciliano suggested questions be directed to Alan Monelli. Mr. Johnson suggested any building that is plaqued be confirmed with the historic district to confirm historic integrity. Mr. Johnson further added that this is a policy that should be implemented.

XII. Meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m.