Board of Parks & Recreation
Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2015

Please be advised that these minutes are in DRAFT form and will not become “Public Record” until they are formally approved by the Board of Parks and Recreation at their next regularly scheduled meeting planned for December 2, 2015.

Board Attendees: Nancy Caplan, Hans Christian Thalheim, Patrick Slyne, Cathy Weisenburger, Scott Johnson, Frank Cantelmo, and Rick Loh

Staff Attendees: Joe Siciliano, Jeff Freidag, Billie Schock, Bruce Spaman, and Tom Greco

Ex-Officio Attendees: None

Guest Attendees: Sue Baker

I. The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. at the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center.

II. A motion by Mr. Cantelmo seconded by Ms. Weisenburger to approve the Board Minutes from the September 30, 2015 meeting. 7-0-0

III. CIP, Budget Worksheets, Tom Greco
Mr. Greco distributed and reviewed the draft 2016-17 Capital Plan (ATTACHMENT A).

Skatepark Court Upgrade: Ms. Caplan and Mr. Slyne inquired why there were capital funds allocated to a facility with low usage. Mr. Greco replied that many kids skateboard throughout Town and the Skatepark is a facility where they can skate safely. The new design will attract new participants. There is a workshop scheduled for the public to have input into the new design.

Heating system for Platform Tennis Courts: To be installed at the Loughlin Avenue Platform Tennis courts-this will allow more playability.

Air Conditioning Module to be installed at the Dorothy Hamill Rink: This will greatly improve the condition of the ice, as well as the use of the facility in the summer months.

Tree inspection program: Came about as a result of the unfortunate situation of the tree that fell on the Riverside School playground; fortunately no one was injured. The Town contracted with a TRAQ professional to conduct a visual inspection and air spading into the root systems. Visual inspections were conducted on all other trees at the school locations.

Going forward; on an alternating annual schedule the first year there will be a visual inspection conducted by the professional contractor on all school properties and non-school playgrounds. The following year, all street trees will be visually inspected.

Ms. Caplan inquired about trees in the parks. Mr. Greco confirmed that park trees are included in the inspection program for 2017-18 and every other year thereafter.


Binney Park Improvements: Implementation phase of the findings from the Martha Lyon Report.
**Playground inspection and Upgrade:** Quarterly and annual playground inspections by a professional—any unsatisfactory findings are entered into our work order system that routes to the responsible party for repair.

**School landscape renovation program:** This is for curb appeal, was previously $50,000 every other year, going forward it will be $25,000 each year.

There was consensus among Board members that this amount for curb appeal was too low. Mr. Siciliano added that these funds were never meant to be a full landscape modification only minimal for curb appeal.

Ms. Weisenburger inquired about the grass dunes between the parking lot and turf fields at the high school. Mr. Siciliano replied that is all part of the restoration project.

**Handheld radios Parks and Trees and M&FO:** To replace nonfunctioning and insufficient units. The current handhelds are not repairable as they are not compatible with the new system that the Police Department is installing.

**Compact Tractor:** To replace a 20 year old tractor.

**Utility carts:** Provides the ease to move things around without the necessity of a dump truck.

**Infield Grooming Machine:** To provide infield maintenance.

**Grass Island Drainage maintenance and parking areas:** Re-grade and make improvements to the front of the Grass Island maintenance shed.

**Greenwich Point Master Plan Phase I:** Develop a plan similar to the Binney Park Master Plan to include but not limited to: Erosion control, facility improvements, invasive plant management and dunes.

**Dredge Arch Street Ferry Dock:** For site studies, regulatory, hydrographic analysis, and volumes and disposal plans.

**Ferry Drydock Inspection and Maintenance:** Inspection for the Town’s vessels. Ms. Caplan inquired if this expense is factored in when determining the ferry rates. Mr. Greco added all operating costs are factored in.

**Repair Greenwich Point Causeway:** North side of Eagle Pond where it meets Greenwich Cove. Will discuss with DPW as to where in the budget the funds should be placed. Over decades the causeway has eroded and is slowly being undermined. The fill is washing out producing sink holes in the pavement. Causeway from the pillars to the holly grove to the end of the crossing of eagle pond lacks a guard rail. Plans include a guardrail on the north side of the area.

**Ferry Dock Headwall Repair:** Pipe surrounded by concrete that supports the gangways to the ferries. Really in need of repair.

**Seawall Repairs:** General repairs at all locations.

**Replace Byram Launch Ramp & Install Dock:** Replace existing ramp and build and install launch dock extending them to connect to extend to the existing dock.

Mr. Greco added that the Capital Project listing is subject to change. The requests will go to the Office of the First Selectman then to the BET and may be tweaked in the processes.

Mr. Slyne inquired about the license plate recognition system in the budget for 2017-18. Mr. Greco replied that the use of this technology is an attempt to eliminate the vehicle sticker process and make it easier for residents. Mr. Siciliano added that the Parking Services Department is experimenting with this technology.
IV. Playgrounds & Courts
Mr. Spaman reported that the Riverside School playground has been replaced following the incident of the fallen tree. The tree was 200+ years old and came down with the absence of wind; an investigation into the cause is underway.

Mr. Spaman advised that there are 34 playscapes the department is responsible for. There is now a defined process with the Board of Education as it relates to playgrounds; if there is whole replacement, the BOE Capital will handle the expense and P&R will make sure it gets complete and monitor the project. Mr. Spaman reported he worked with the playground inspectors to lay out a plan for playground replacements at the Board of Education; they will be replaced as they come up on 10+ years old.

The North Mianus playground will be replaced next then Byram Park. Ms. Caplan inquired about Binney Park Playground as there have been requests. Mr. Spaman replied that the department needs to take an objective approach; the inspections will determine what needs to be repaired and replaced.

Mr. Spaman reported that the basketball and tennis courts are on a regular program for maintenance. Most recently Bruce Park Tennis court was fully resurfaced, others had fence replacement. Bible St. had a new backboard installed.

Mr. Cantelmo recalled an incident where a large tree branch came down moments after a large group of children disbursed. Mr. Cantelmo inquired if there was anything that can be done to determine predicted value as this tree outwardly looked fine.

Mr. Spaman replied that there is inherent risk in trees, sometimes trees fail without defects. There are efforts to reduce risk by eliminating those with obvious defects. All failed trees are cataloged in a very detailed manner. As a result of the Trees at Risk Program there has been a significant decrease in calls.

V. Director’s Report, Joe Siciliano
Mr. Siciliano reported that the Greenwich Common Project is 98% complete; the official re-opening was on October 19th. This project was part of the POCD.

The “Old Barn” at Greenwich Point is now the Susan S.H. Baker Pavilion and the deck is open. The project is slated to be complete by April 2016 for concessions.

Ms. Caplan congratulated all on a great job with these projects.

Mr. Siciliano stated that work commenced on the Byram gift project from the Dalio Foundation. Work will be ongoing throughout the winter into the early spring. The project includes; path renewal, new playground, new lighting on the tennis courts, walk ways, tree work, and beautification. This project will have no impact in the pool area.

Mr. Siciliano added that the Byram Pool Project went before the BET Budget Committee last month; the drawings are 90% complete. Currently in the process of compiling a bid document with add alternates, the project is anticipated to go out to bid mid-end of November. A contractor is expected to be awarded by the first of the year.

Mr. Siciliano conveyed that the bids for the Byram soil remediation project are due back shortly and work is expected to commence around mid-November with a contract for the soil remediation and demo of the pool and associated structures. Remediation is required not matter what happens with the pool, the money has already been appropriated and the bids came back $300,000 under what was estimated.

Mr. Siciliano informed that Martha Lyon has met with Bruce Spaman and representatives of DPW regarding the dredging project as to not interfere with the landscape plan.

Mr. Siciliano advised that the department has put together some statistical data for the Beach Policy Review Committee, Chaired by Mr. Slyne with a copy to the Law Department. Mr. Slyne added that the Committee will meet Thursday, October 29th at 4:00 pm in the Parks and Recreation Conference Room; all Board members are welcome to attend. Mr. Slyne further added that the committee has been working on collecting data from Parks and Recreation, Parking Services and from the Police Department.
Slyne informed that he has conducted an online search for Greenwich Point Park and has found that Greenwich Point has been widely advertised including on the state website. Upon extensive discussion, those interested in the conversation were invited to attend the Beach Policy Review Committee meeting on October 29th.

**VI. Chairman’s Report**
Ms. Caplan advised she has been working with SNAC to identify new members for the Parks and Recreation Foundation who are interested in fundraising. Ms. Caplan reported that Peter Tesei was contacted by a SNAC member; Leora Levy who had previously sat on the Bruce Museum Board when the “Save Our Strays” Committee was formed to move the dog pound to North Street. Ms. Caplan advised that she and Mr. Siciliano met with Ms. Levy to discuss the possibilities for funds that were remaining from the “Save Our Strays”.

Ms. Caplan called for a vote on the "Winter Village in Greenwich" proposal submitted by TMK Sports & Entertainment, LLC. Upon discussion, the Board adopted the following:

**RESOLVED, That the Board of Parks and Recreation endorse the Winter Village in Greenwich proposal as presented and submitted through October 28, 2015 by TMK Sports and Entertainment, LLC. (0-8-0)**

While many of the Board members were enthusiastic about having an external ice skating rink available to the community, the Board unanimously voted not to endorse the proposal as presented and submitted through October 28, 2015. As part of their review, the Board took into consideration the impact that this event would have on:

- Access to the Roger Sherman Park during the proposed five month usage (Oct - Feb)
- Parking and traffic (multiple activities already at this location- skate park, Arch Street Center, commuter parking)
- Overall security (in particular weekends)
- The quality of life for neighbors/neighborhood (lighting/traffic)
- The limited P&R department resources

Additionally, there were concerns regarding the overall viability of the business case, and potential conflicts with the POCD (ie. non-water dependent activity)

Mr. Thalheim acknowledged he reviewed the fee schedule from 2015-16 and stated the fees seem reasonable. Mr. Thalheim expressed his objection to the paddle tennis fees as compared to pickleball and tennis. The difference the department charges many times are based on age, rather than means. Mr. Thalheim suggested the fees should be more means based rather than age based. Mr. Siciliano replied that the fees are voted on by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Johnson reported he is in the process of reviewing the draft Harbor Management Plan. Mr. Johnson reported he foresees an issue with the ability for interagency cooperation, interagency ability to trump other agencies. Mr. Johnson stated in his opinion, the agencies that with the ability to trump everyone is the Shellfish Commission and the Board of Health because of their statutory power.

Ms. Sue Baker advised that Land Use has decided that each agency will conduct their own review and provide comments on the draft plan. Land Use was on the agenda for the last Harbor Management Commission (HMC) meeting, but they were withdrawn because they were not ready. There has been confusion about the Commission vs. the Plan.

Mr. Freidag stated that the HMC should dovetail in with water quality.

Mr. Siciliano added that the HMC doesn’t need to be a regulatory commission but rather one who comments on water usage. The plan is mandated by the State of CT.

Upon further, discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

**VII. Unfinished Business**
VIII. New Business

IX. Public Comments

X. Meeting adjourned 8:20 pm.