



Board of Parks & Recreation

Meeting Minutes

October 30, 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 December 4, 2019.***

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

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

**Guest Attendees:** Mike Bocchino, Miriam Kreuzer, and Candace Garthwaite

- I. Mr. Dell'Abate called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Keegan Conference Room.
- II. A motion was made by Mr. McGarrity and seconded by Mr. DiVincenzo to approve the Board Minutes from the September 25, 2019 meeting. 9-0-0

Mr. Dell'Abate announced that this would be Mr. Hartwell's last meeting and thanked him for his invaluable service on the Board. Mr. Hartwell reported that he's enjoyed his time on the Board, and thanked members of the department for all their help and support.

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

Mr. Siciliano thanked Mr. Hartwell for his steadfast approach to the various initiatives the department has faced, John has been a strong advocate for many initiatives.

Mr. Siciliano reported that the department is currently preparing the budget and fees for next year. This is due by the end of November.

Mr. Siciliano advised that there have been conference calls to discuss the Western Middle School field remediation and the Greenwich High School, (GHS) fields 6&7 carpet replacement and remediation. Both projects are moving in the right direction. He, Amy Siebert, Tim Coughlin, Dan Watson, and Toni Jones participated in pushing for forward movement on the projects. The GHS carpet replacement for 6&7 is scheduled for next summer.

Mr. Johnson inquired if there is a remediation proposal. Mr. Siciliano replied that there are several proposals on the table for consideration by the regulators. The Town has retained Jane Warren (environmental attorney) to represent the Town.

IV. **Field Study Committee**

Mr. Siciliano reported that the Field Study Committee met with the two engineering finalists for a presentation. The committee scored each presentation. The Committee selected Weston &

Sampson, there are some items that need to be worked out, then the contract will be compiled. Once the contract is final, the kick off meeting will be scheduled.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired about the timeline. Mr. Siciliano replied that the goal is to have the report in six months. If the report is not complete, and we miss the budget cycle for 2021, there will not be any money in the budget until 2022.

Mr. Siciliano added that he and Mr. Greco met with the Town Administrator and decided that the Department will include some place holders in the 2021 capital budget for engineering services and construction to improve field(s). The numbers are an estimation; the Department will otherwise miss a whole budget cycle to begin the execution of projects. Once the study is complete with a schedule and build out of cost, the fields can be placed in the 15-year capital plan.

Mr. Dell'Abate asked who will interpret the report. Mr. Siciliano replied that the 7 member-committee which is comprised of members of the department staff, BOE staff, BOE Board, and members of the P&R Board (Joe Siciliano, Tim Coughlin, Sue Snyder, Greg Kramer, Dan Watson, Kathleen Stowe and John Hartwell).

Mr. Dell'Abate stated that another Board member would need to be selected to replace Mr. Hartwell on the committee.

Mr. Siciliano added that the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to nominate Mike Bocchino as Mr. Hartwell's replacement on the Board. Mr. Bocchino is a longtime friend of the Department; he has participated in many sports, and had provided leadership as a State Rep. Mr. Bocchino represents the Byram section of Town as Mr. Hartwell did. He needs to be approved at the RTM's December meeting.

Mr. Siciliano introduced the new Golf Operations Manager, Steve Pyo. Steve joined the team in August 2018. Steve has an extensive background in golf with management experience in two different private golf courses and an engineering background with a certification in teaching. Rick Massi retired as the Assistant Golf Operations Manager, the department hired Bob Morel as his replacement, Steve and Bob complement each other and work well as a team.

#### **V. Griffith E. Harris Golf Course, Steve Pyo**

Mr. Pyo reported that there was a software upgrade of the RecTrac system (RecTrac is used for POS and reservations) in the spring. There were some reservation issues with the new RecTrac, it has been resolved and is working well. Also switched the credit card machine from Plug and Play to Card Connect and it works well.

The lightening alarm system was also upgraded.

There is a new concessionaire at the restaurant, he has a 3-year contract with 2 option years. The food is good. The concessionaire has had some staffing issues. Mr. Pyo stated he has received requests from golfers for additional items on the menu other than BBQ. The concessionaire has expressed an interest to stay open for the winter.

Mr. Siciliano added that there hasn't been a vendor up there that has stayed open for the winter in 20 years. However, some vendors have stayed open to host holiday parties. Attendance drops off after daylight savings time.

Mr. Hartwell further added that the concessionaire is also trying to build up a take-out business.

Mr. Pyo advised that the golf season is typically end of March – early April, it is weather dependent.

Mr. Johnson inquired if the restaurant infrastructure is adequate. Mr. Siciliano responded that there was standing equipment in place for use. The concessionaire required equipment that was necessary to produce the food he was serving; therefore, he was responsible to bring in the equipment. He owns a couple of other restaurants, he knows the business. He will face some challenges as people are not accustomed to going to the Griff in the winter.

Mr. Pyo reported that the following are items to be completed for next season:

1. Redo cart paths on #9 & #10
2. Add new cart path #1
3. Install new awning at the restaurant
4. Driving range net replacement #1
5. Tree work #13 & #14
6. Build new back tee on #16 (30-40yds back)
7. Purchase new rough mower and utility cart

Mr. Pyo summarized the financials for this season compared to last:

1. Rounds are up by 7%
2. Greens fee revenues are up by 10%
3. Cart revenues increased by 8%
4. Driving range revenues are up by 18%
5. Memberships are down 13%

Mr. Dell'Abate informed that he's seen golf reports on T.V. that talked about the difficulty in getting young people to play golf.

Mr. Siciliano stated that he's found that young people do not want to be bound to a membership at a specific course, they want to play at various courses.

Mr. Dell'Abate suggested bundling rounds of golf to provide golfers a discount.

Mr. Siciliano stated that he has been working with the course management to look at ways to generate play. Looking at providing incentives to play at times that are slow such as mid-days during the week.

Mr. Siciliano added that the course turf is in phenomenal shape. Each year the USGA conducts an evaluation and each year the course gets better and better as a result of their recommendations. The air circulation is an issue, there are temporary fans to move air around and avoid taking down trees.

## **VI. Chairman's Report, Gary Dell'Abate**

There are open positions on various subcommittees to be filled. Everyone should think about where they can pitch in. Mr. Johnson added the Greenwich Point Master Plan Committee.

Mr. Siciliano advised that he put together some framework of what the Greenwich Point Master Plan Committee should look like. There is \$100k in the current budget to execute some of the work that came from the plan. The committee should include members from the P&R Staff, Board Members, Conservation, and Land Use.

Mr. Johnson added that 2-3 years ago a consultant was hired from Stantech to produce a master plan. At that time, the committee met with Stantech several times. Mr. Johnson stated his opinion that this master plan is not detailed like the ones Martha Lyon did for the parks.

Mr. Johnson indicated that he received a call from Sue Baker indicating that the stakeholders want to have a voice (Friends of, GPC, Board members, conservation, wetlands) on the committee. If you are going to do something, it needs to be run through the applicable agencies beforehand. Mr. Johnson asked those interested in serving on the committee, to send him an email.

Mr. Siciliano stated that anyone can be on the committee, he just wants to keep moving forward.

Mr. Siciliano added that the Greenwich Point Master Plan is more of a master inventory comprised of input from stakeholders, staff, and other Town agencies outlined in the report. The report highlights 80+ items; some can be done, some are being considered, some will get funded and others will not. Mr. Siciliano further added that he felt the collection of information from the public hearing, workgroups, stakeholder groups, and staff groups was very inclusive.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if the Town owns everything at Greenwich Point. Mr. Siciliano replied that it is all a Town asset. Even though the Greenwich Point Conservancy, (GPC) is helping to fund projects at Greenwich Point, they gift the finished project to the Town, they are all Town assets.

Mr. Dell'Abate stated he's seen the plans for the Chimes Building and inquired if they are the Town's plans. Mr. Siciliano responded that he, Alan Monelli, Chris Franco and Chris D'dario met for a conceptual discussion. Mr. D'dario created some drawings and they reviewed them as draft one. Following a site visit, some changes are being worked on, this will be draft two. The drawings will go through the planning process, then the Conservancy will go through the gift process with the RTM. The RTM will review and approve the plans and the funding, then execution of project can begin.

Mr. Johnson inquired if there are funds in the capital budget for the project. Mr. Siciliano replied that there is no money in the budget. The GPC asked for the Town to fund a new septic and additional electrical systems in conjunction with the renovation of the building which is currently in discussion. Mr. Siciliano stated that the goal is to start next October; however, he is not sure it will happen; the project could take 6 months to get through the P&Z approval process. The Department has a great partnership with the GPC and there is a desire to upgrade the building while keeping it in a historical state. The GPC will present the plans to the Board when the operational conversations have been resolved.

Mr. Johnson reported that the Plan of Conservation and Development, (POCD) is being updated (required every 10 yrs.). The report is generated by P&Z and is in draft form circulated for review (available online). many items in the report are relevant to P&R and the Board, it is important for the Board to review it.

Mr. Siciliano advised that he's been participating on the implementation committee for the POCD. The committee includes Planning and Zoning (P&Z), Public Works (DPW), Board of Education (BOE), Administration, and Inlands Wetlands. There have been several meetings; the committee has been looking at the format and content of the document and are reviewing how items are assigned. The document is a work in progress.

Mr. Johnson advised that anyone interested in the POCD contact him, he will help them through it as he's been through several versions of the plan.

## **VII. Field Committee, John Hartwell**

Mr. Hartwell reported that it is known that there is a problem with a lack of fields/field conditions. Mr. Hartwell advised that he is pro turf and attended many meetings and spoke in favor of turf, and in many cases, was the only one to. Eventually, many did get behind turf. He's hopeful that the Board gets behind a solution. There is a need for fields and it is necessary to figure out how to support the demand.

Ms. Nolan stated that there is an evident lack of fields that is noted by those that need them. There is public outcry for the current state of the fields. There is frustration and disappointment with programing. She's been witness to taunting from other communities that travel to Greenwich to play, it is an unfortunate reality. The reaction of the sports parents is that they are ready to do something in the way of donations.

Ms. Nolan noted that she attended a football game at GHS and fields 6&7 bubbled with water underneath.

Mr. Siciliano reported that fields 6&7 have been identified by the engineers as in need for an upgrade, there are some spots where the drainage has begun to fail. The drainage will be addressed. They cannot do the drains until they lift the carpet and do the remediation and the subsurface. There are some isolated sections of contamination under 6&7 the spots have been identified and will be remediated first, soil removal. There are a bunch of layers before you get to the actual contaminated soil. The goal is to go out to bid in December. Contractors are lining up the work now for next summer. The timeframe to do the work is mid – June to mid-September. Remediation cannot take place until school is out of session. There are different systems for carpeting and infill that are available. The BOE will ultimately decide.

Mr. Schubert stated that he and Mr. Johnson visited Brunswick to see their new field, it is very nice.

Mr. Siciliano added that Westport recently put in two new synthetic turf fields, they have a very high-tech infill that they used. Tim Coughlin and Gus Lindine are going to look at it and talk with the staff.

Mr. Dell'Abate advised that he had an opportunity to talk with the person in charge of the MetLife field. He was surprised to hear they use crumb rubber and sand infill. They budget to change the carpet every three years. He discussed why they chose turf over natural grass, in

the northeast climate it is impossible to maintain natural grass through the season. Mr. Dell'Abate advised that with some research he discovered that the NFL has 50% natural grass surfaces and 50% artificial turf (usually the bad weather locations or indoor ones are turf). They don't treat the field with chemicals for MRSA, they just use soap and water.

Mr. Siciliano added that many artificial surfaces on the pro level use a crumb rubber and sand mixture, you can see it pop up when they slide on the surface. There are new interesting infill products on the market. Each one has inherent issues, not necessary environmental issues but more maintenance issues. The grooming manual says the field should be groom every 60 hours, we have an attachment to our equipment that rakes and evens it out, an impact test is conducted annually. The glued seams (they separate) are checked annually and re-glued (as necessary), the infill is replenished as needed. We've gotten up to 13 seasons out of some of the fields. The new product is Envirofill, it's a silk base.

Mr. Dell'Abate stated that he learned that there's an NFL requirement for the measurements of how high the turf is. Mr. Siciliano added that you can tune each field for a specific sport. You can take out the infill and put it in for various sports, but it requires a lot of maintenance. P&R picks a middle ground to support various sports.

#### **VIII. Dorothy Hamill Rink Sub-Committee, Rick Loh**

Mr. Loh reported that the committee continues to make progress.

Ms. Snyder added that the committee is preparing for the RFQ to go out. The committee will review the responding companies and invite 4-5 of the companies to present, then select one from the presentations.

Ms. Snyder further added that the Facility Evaluation Study is complete and available on the website (Parks and Recreation Page at the bottom, P&R News).

Mr. Siciliano informed that there is \$250K in this year's DPW budget; \$250K proposed for next year (might change, better scope) and a placeholder for construction the following year.

Mr. Loh advised that the committee prepared a more specific outline of what amenities they'd like to see in a new facility. They are planning some field trips to look at some facilities to help refine their "wish list".

Mr. Johnson inquired if they've had site plan discussions. Mr. Loh responded that the Greenwich Preservation Trust, (GPT) has plans to move the Lyon house that is on the property someplace else on the property. The GPT will have a representative on the rink committee so they may have input.

Mr. Bocchino asked if there is a proposal for a renovation vs. a teardown-rebuild. Mr. Siciliano responded that the analysis of a renovation vs. a renewal are very close in cost estimates.

Mr. Bocchino advised that the GPT's wish is to move the Lyon house to the top of the hill at the south corner of the parking lot, which would provide better access.

Mr. Loh stated that one of the rink proposals suggests that the most efficient way build is to construct a new rink where the parking lot is, and put a parking lot where the current rink is.

Mr. Siciliano added that there's a general commitment and some direction by the Board of Selectmen that they be incorporated in the discussion.

Mr. Bocchino added that he was the one who started the GPT, they've been trying move the Lyon's house, but not getting a whole lot of traction.

Mr. Siciliano stated that is a very expensive proposition.

Mr. Johnson inquired if there is any traction for the double rink concept. Mr. Loh responded that at this point, the most logical use of the land, is to use the Baseball field. Mr. Loh stated he is happy to see that the Western field remediation is moving forward, if that field could be built with the proper dugouts and lighting that the Town would be proud of, then maybe Strazza field could be used for the rink and would open up additional possibilities. Others didn't agree because of the memorialized field. Mr. Loh suggested Western become the Strazza Field with lights and dugouts.

Mr. Bocchino stated what an opportunity it would be to upgrade with lights and dugouts at the current Strazza Field location. Western should be the showplace field for the Town. The Old Timer's Association put in an application for that field to be the showcase field because of the availability for parking and amenities.

Mr. Bocchino shared that he attended a game in Shrub Oaks with LED lighting controlled by the cloud (ipad), it was amazing, the field illuminates beautifully without a glare. The lights were installed in a well thought out manner. Greenwich doesn't have a field where kids can compete at different levels like a little league world series, because we do not have the proper facilities. Greenwich is so far behind.

**IX. Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, Scott Johnson**

Mr. Johnson reported that the contract was signed. The next step is a site plan survey-surveyor's data. Mr. Dell'Abate suggested not to make the selection public until all is finalized.

**X. Binney Park Advisory Committee, Nancy Chapin**

Ms. Chapin stated that Binney is looking great, the island is done. Ms. Chapin reported she is looking for input on the restroom building. The staff has done a great job landscaping the area, the committee wants to make it nice for the field users.

Ms. Chapin advised that Greg Kramer will review the financials with the committee. The Crucitti gift was used for the island. The committee is currently working on the stone dust loop trail; it will be a safe place for people to walk around to get to the tennis court will it will stop due to the pending bridge work.

The committee met with DPW to talk about their timeline and where they are with their projects. If the committee can come up with a landscape plan, DPW will put funds in their budget to landscape after they finish their work. Two recognition benches will be installed, one for Crucitti and one for Nancy Caplan. Ms. Chapin stated that she sent the Board an email with more detailed information.

Mr. Schubert indicated that the trash bins are great.

Mr. Siciliano stated that kids were rollerblading on the patio on the backside of the island shelter. Mr. Siciliano added that there needs to be furniture on it, so they cannot rollerblade on the surface.

## **XI. Unfinished Business**

None

## **XII. New Business**

Ms. Chapin stated she was forwarded an email from Ms. Rita Baker (League of Women Voters) resident on Forest Avenue. Who has been working towards obtaining signatures for a petition requesting that the RTM consent for an application to designate the Binney Park loop a scenic road.

Ms. Chapin stated that the need for the Town to recognize scenic roads is noted in the POCD.

Ms. Candace Garthwaite who represents the Eastern Greenwich Preservation Association, a group of residents from Riverside and Old Greenwich, (OG) summarized the progress the group has made.

There was a proposal for a large rotary and a raising of the road by 2.5 feet in front of the Perrot Library. Many many people in the area were alarmed at the impact this would have on what they consider as the iconic entryway into OG. When the grouped went to P&Z they were asked if there was a scenic road designation in that area, they decided after the project was postponed, to move forward with a scenic road designation. (designation for a road that has scenic views).

Their description for the designation starts on Sound Beach Ave. and Arch St. going around on Sound Beach Ave. to Wesskum Wood Rd., Wesskum Wood Rd. to Arch St.; a loop around Binney Park.

Ms. Garthwaite reported that the process has been erroneous. They are required to have approval from the abutters which include, the Church, Perrot Library, etc. all residents were reached with the exception of two who were unable to be reached as well as Binney Park as a major abutter. The group is required to gain approval from the RTM. Ms. Garthwaite stated that the designation will not change anything in the park ---the only restriction is that any changes to those roads would require that the Town go before P&Z and have a public hearing so that there will be transparency.

Mr. Siciliano stated that as the Parks Director, this is the first time he is hearing of this initiative. Despite the fact that the group has gone down the road with this, they will need the support of the Department and the Board and maybe even the Board of Selectmen to move forward. Mr. Siciliano inquired if this process is necessary or if the request is a result of the group being unhappy with the proposal DPW has for road changes and are using this process to take the plan in a different direction.

Ms. Garthwaite apologized for any missteps, the process is confusing.

Upon discussion, Ms. Garthwaite offered to send the information via email for all to review and requested that the Board provide feedback.

**XIII. Public Comment**

None

**XIV. Meeting adjourned 8:02 p.m.**