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 January 27, 2016.

Board Attendees: Nancy Caplan, Hans Christian Thalheim, Patrick Slyne, Gary Dell’Abate, Scott Johnson, John Hartwell, Frank Cantelmo, and Rick Loh

Staff Attendees: Joe Siciliano, Jeff Freidag, Susan Snyder, Bruce Spaman, and Tom Greco

Ex-Officio Attendees: None

Guest Attendees: Leslie Yager

I. The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. In the Cone Rm., Town Hall.

II. A motion was made by Mr. Slyne seconded by Mr. Thalheim to approve the Board Minutes from the October 28, 2015 meeting. 8-0-0

III. Mr. Hartwell expressed his support for artificial turf fields at the middle schools and inquired what the Board can do to push for this project.

Mr. Siciliano added there is $40,000 in the budget this year to complete a feasibility study at the three middle schools. The Town contracted with Malone and MacBroom, they designed the Cos Cob Park field and other work in Town. A site review of the fields were conducted, each field has two proposals; the department is reviewing the plans. Additionally, the department has asked Malone and MacBroom for cost estimates for each layout. Mr. Siciliano suggested placing a barrier on the existing fields and build the turf fields up rather than disturbing the existing soils. Mr. Siciliano said the department will reach out to the Town’s environmental consultant to determine if this “top down” approach is an acceptable practice. Artificial surfacing will allow for more playability and better serve the users. There is a place holder in the budget for 2017-18 of $1.2M for one artificial surface. If soil samples are taken and contaminants are found, there is no turning back, the fields must be remediated.

Mr. Cantelmo advised that more and more publications are coming out about insight to remediation; people are more aware of microbial degradation including pcb’s. Mr. Cantelmo expressed his support for the “top down” approach and advised that scientific literature supports this approach.

Upon discussion, Mr. Siciliano stated he committed to have the information; the department is working on it and will have the information put together prior to the next budget proposal in February. When the Cos Cob Field was in the beginning stages, representatives from P&R and DPW interviewed several turf companies and picked the turf product, infill and installation the best suited the site. This experience will aid the selection with the middle schools.

IV. 2016-17 Fee Schedule, Joe Siciliano

Mr. Siciliano stated that each budget year the department goes before the Board of Selectmen (BOS) with their proposed fees in December, the BOS then will digest the information; ask any questions prior to their vote at their subsequent meeting. This year, the fees are slated to go before the BOS on December 17th.
The Division Superintendents make recommendations based for their fees based on industry trends, competition, etc. The philosophy of the department has been to have a steady gradual fee increase on an alternating basis to avoid a spike in fees. The increase typically amounts to 3% each year. Mr. Siciliano added that he reviews the proposed fees with each Superintendent prior to them going to the BOS.

Mr. Siciliano acknowledged Mr. Thalheim’s interest in the Department’s fees, and asked that he reach out to the specific Divisional Superintendents to answer specific questions.

There is an ongoing discussion regarding the beach fees and the access policy. The Board subcommittee chaired by Mr. Slyne has met with the department to go over the issues and discuss recommendations. Also, the Law Department is working on doing the same. A meeting will take place in the near future to discuss the Board’s recommendations with Peter Tesei and the Law Department.

Ms. Caplan suggested the Board’s Subcommittee would set up a meeting with Mr. Tesei to review their recommendations. Mr. Siciliano stated that it would be advantageous for Mr. Tesei to have an understanding of the Board’s perspective.

Mr. Thalheim reviewed and distributed the analysis of his interpretation of the proposed fee schedule (Attachment A)

Upon extensive discussion regarding fees, Mr. Thalheim suggested he would follow up with the department regarding his questions.

Mr. Slyne reported the Beach Policy Review Committee has met to discuss the issues that came up this beach season. The committee is working on recommendations to address the following issues:

- Increased Crowds/congestion-too much publicity
- Parking/Traffic/Aggressive Drivers-inconsistent police presence
- Enforcement issues-inconsistent police presence
- Competition for high quality lifeguards
- Fishing in picnic areas

Mr. Cantelmo stated the Town is reaping the problems of being too successful, everyone needs to do their part and it starts a home.

Mr. Slyne advised that formal recommendations will be forthcoming prior to the BOS meeting on December 17th.

Mr. Cantelmo stated there is an interesting trend with people claiming space at the new concession. Mr. Siciliano stated it will not be acceptable to stake ground for the whole day, the turnover should be more regular, there will be an enforcement issue.

Ms. Caplan added she spoke with the Mayor’s office in Stamford and they stated they only sell weekend passes for the beach a couple of days in the season. For the rest of the season, they sell tickets only Monday- Friday at the government center.

**VI. Director’s Report**

The RFP went out for the Golf Pro, we have received one proposal. The proposal is currently under review.

The RFP’s for the concession contracts at Island Beach (1) and Greenwich Point (2) will be going out shortly. The package at Greenwich Point is for both concession stands, they will not be separated and the awarded concessionaire will be required to operate both stands.

The license agreement will be one year with four option years; the concessionaire is charged a flat fee. The concessionaire will be selected on various criteria including; experience, proposals, menu selection, menu pricing, etc.
VII. Chairman's Report
Ms. Caplan reported that she is working with the Bruce Museum to transfer the remaining funds from the “Save Our Strays” campaign to the P&R Foundation, Mr. Johnson will help in accomplishing this by the New Year. Still working on identifying new members for the Parks and Recreation Foundation.

VIII. Unfinished Business
Mr. Johnson stated comments regarding the Harbor Management Plan are being collected from the various agencies.

Mr. Dell'Abate reported that the Greenwich Point Dog Season Committee has had some difficulties in putting together a meeting in the near future.

IX. New Business

X. Public Comments
Ms. Yager inquired how interested parties can respond to the RFP for the concessions. Mr. Siciliano replied that they can contact the Purchasing Department, RFP information is also on the Town’s Website under Purchasing.

XI. Meeting adjourned 8:25 pm.
Town of Greenwich Department of Parks & Recreation Revenue and Fee Analysis

Hans Christian Thalheim, Board Member of Parks and Recreation

Draft 12/1/2015

Layout:

1.) Data sources
2.) Analysis & Discussion of Data
3.) Recommendations
   a. Broad/Overarching
   b. Specific
4.) Errors/Typos/Lack of Clarity
5.) Disclosures/Further Investigation

1. Data Sources:

1.) P&R 2016-2017 Capital Plan received October Board meeting
2.) 2015-2016 Approved Fees .pdf received 10/1/2015
3.) Proposed Fees 2016-2017 received 12/1/2015
4.) Revenue Report 14-15 .xlsx received 10/30/2015
5.) Various internet website (municipal and otherwise) for comparison of fees

2. Data Analysis & Discussion:

Analysis:

See included spreadsheet. Note that I utilized a fair amount of discretion in dividing them into different “codes”.

Discussion Points:

1.) Resident versus Non-residents
   a. To what extent do we want to encourage/discourage non-residents to utilize our facilities?
   b. What are the legal implications/considerations/limitations involved with changing fees and accessibility for non-residents? What facilities is this applicable to?
   c. What % more expensive should it be for non-residents vs. residents?
d. Should we extend town employees resident-like fees, as is currently the case with the Griff, why shouldn’t that also occur with the beaches etc.

2.) Revenue vs. Cost
   a. Obviously not running a for-profit entity however people speak with their money and presumably the higher yielding are the most utilized.
   b. Alternatively, one point could be that lower yielding programs are underpriced and properly utilized, certain programs ought to be subsidized, or they are overpriced and underutilized
   c. Note that the current spreadsheet indicates nothing of the relative cost of what these fees allow the purchaser access to. Therefore it is heard to determine the value of these programs.
   d. Is it a fruitless exercise since the “value” offered is very difficult, maybe impossible, to measure objectively? This is especially true with preventative and proactive measures as well as aesthetic programs. I doubt there is one universal metric to measure how worthwhile a project or program is and therefore a holistic approach ought to be taken.
      i. E.g. hard to tease out the value the tree maintenance program provides but few, if any, would argue it is not providing a value to the town.
      ii. Many ways that what P&R offers is not measured and therefore making judgments is presumably inaccurate/imprecise.

3.) Profit versus non-profit
   a. Does the town want to subsidize (and if so, to what extent) for-profit entities so they use the town’s facilities? Presumably would want this to be an in-town entity. If not, how do we maximize the revenue we obtain from them?
   b. Does the town want to subsidize non-profit entities? Should in-town entities get preference? If so, how do we balance this with for-profit’s interest in using them especially from a revenue perspective.

4.) Internal & External consistency
   a. Unclear if P&R is supposed to be similar to municipal peers or disregard
   b. Unclear rationale about certain price changes and differences and what the reasoning for those changes is
   c. What is the process? What should it be?
   d. How are changes measured and gauged and reviewed?

3. Recommendations:

   Broad:

   1.) Change fee structure to be means based for adults.
a. I am of the opinion that Greenwich should be a family-oriented community; therefore pre-18 year olds should be subsidized at the current rates
   i. Within the pre-18 year old demographic, there shouldn’t be any discrimination unless whatever program requires significantly more resources based on a change within that demographic
      1. Ex. Page 5; why discrimination on different age groups for baseball, field hockey, soccer, softball

b. To broadly assume that seniors (65+) should not pay the same as other adults seems minimally unfair and more likely improper. To have a cutoff based on how old one is seems much more arbitrary than determining their need and subsidizing them accordingly. While this is obviously more labor intensive from an administrative standpoint, I think it would leave less money on the table. My guess is that more seniors take advantage of the subsidy that would otherwise be willing to pay the full price than people who would newly qualify for the subsidy. Furthermore, the newly qualified people would be much more “deserving” of that subsidy than the previous group.

2.) Continue staunch support of infrastructure related projects
   a. Seems to be a good value proposition of preventative maintenance; still should investigate
   b. Try and make more systems dynamic and only utilized when needed
      i. Ex. lighting at tennis courts

Specific:

1.) Eliminate $100,000 “Skate Park Court Upgrade". The revenue received from this indicates a current lack of use and interest. It seems to be an imprudent use of money which could be used on exploring providing new activities or “doubling down” on current more popular activities.
   a. Potential alternatives:
      i. Put in a discretionary fund that can be utilized upon approval of BET, BOS, our board to pursue irregular things (e.g. public outdoor skating)
      ii. Building a squash court. Currently no publically available squash court. I am personally very confident that this would be much more utilized than a skate park and is less of a liability than the skate park is, it could be used all year round. Very preliminary investigation indicates a squash court would cost less than $100,000.
      iii. Don’t spend it. Further analyze necessity, utilization, etc. of skate park. Just reduce expenditure of department
      iv. What is actual benefit or anticipated increase in usage due to improvement?

2.) Change Platform Tennis Fee from $325 to either $32 or $ 60.
   a. Former would be consistent with Tennis Pass fee. Note that there are only 2 Platform tennis courts in town versus dozens of tennis courts. Utilization is intermittent at best; lower barrier of entry may increase utilization and perhaps more revenue. Should be equally accessible as other racket sports.
b. Latter would be consistent with Pickleball fee. Utilizing same facilities (less lighting) but the pickleball players receive usage for less than 20% of the price seems very unfair. Disregarding age fee question.

c. Unrelated but “open” play is a very ambiguous term and the courts are locked which is also inconsistent with other sports facilities which can be utilized freely when not otherwise reserved. I think this is the proper for low maintenance sporting facilities, so long as they are not damaged, vandalized, abused, etc.

3.) Continue exploration of alternatives to current Ferry system.

a. Ferry Inspection & Maintenance on Capital Plan ($260,000) does not cover the Ferry Admission revenue line item ($148,232). I do not believe this includes the labor, fuel, and other operating costs of the ferries.

b. Consolidating the routes or running them more selectively seems prudent. Obviously the islands are very valuable assets of the town and should be enjoyed by residents but in a reasonable way; current way does not seem reasonable.

4.) Rental Fees inconsistent @ Eastern Civic Center

a. Large Auditorium vs. Small & Lounge

i. Large requires slightly over 7 hours for break even on flat fee

ii. Small/Lounge Requires 5 hours for break even on flat fee

iii. Why is there this discrepancy?

b. Outdoor Areas

i. Seems unfair that the marginal person from 25 to 26 (4% increase) costs the user $25 (13.2% increase) but going from 26 to 75 (188.5% increase) costs nothing similar logic applies to other fees. As such, I think it should a per person charge with a certain minimum number of people/charge (i.e. $190 reserves outdoor area and 25 peoples’ spots and each additional person costs $X). Doesn’t specify hours.

ii. Child’s Birthday Party has no limitation on people but specifies hours

5.) Rental Fees inconsistent @ Western Civic Center

a. No discount for Non Profits in Auditorium but occurs in activity rooms, should be made uniform

b. Amount charged for event versus hourly is very inconsistent, either increase hourly or reduce per event

6.) Ferry/Island Fees

a. Preschool/Day Camp: Same issue with 50 to 51 as discussed before regarding Eastern Civic Center, would make it a per person fee

b. Could probably make island reservation fee more discriminatory based on weekends and holidays versus non weekend and get a premium for holiday etc.

7.) Golf Course

a. Why discrimination on peak vs. off peak on weekends just for guests? Should be made uniform

b. Why so little price difference between 9 hole and 18 hole (and none for Guests)? Should be made uniform
c. Shouldn’t no-show during prime hours be charged more than otherwise? Either increase peak fee or decrease non-peak fee.

4. Errors/Typos/Lack of Clarity/Discrepancies

1.) A812-44210 (Page 2)
   a. Why no more non-/for-profit difference?
   b. What constitutes “in season” vs. “out of season”? Unclear why an out of season user would be charged a premium (presumably playing in season is more desirable)
   c. Why no difference for profit/non profit travel teams/tournaments?

2.) A812-44470 (Page 3)
   a. Extended Session value inconsistent format with prior values (e.g. 2386.8 vs. 374.4) doesn’t appear to make sense

3.) A812-44715 (Page 3)
   a. What does it take to become an affiliate?

4.) A812-46207 (Page 4)
   a. $30 for 2 hours seems very low unless very definite terms put on permit

5.) A81210-44300 (Page 4)
   a. Is this for a single hour or for a certain number of sessions?
   b. Hourly rate inconsistent

6.) A815-46202 (Page 8)
   a. What are list of “Community Centers”?

7.) A816-44010 (Page 9)
   a. No mention of 0-4 years of age
   b. Why completely free for seniors (vs. say new charge for seniors for platform tennis)

8.) A816-44170, 81616-44300. -8167-44300 (Page 9)
   a. No rate; is it monthly? Yearly? Quarterly? How many matches, lessons etc.?

9.) Price of events changes from $999 to $1000 on page 7 but not on page 10
   a. Think this is indicative of how inconsistent some of the policies are

10.) Increase of Day Care Facility contract but not weight room (Page 10)
    a. Think this is indicative of how inconsistent some of the policies are

11.) A833-44420 (Page 13)
    a. Do other entry fees apply? What about a person limitation (like at Civic Center)?

12.) May want to define Winter and Summer (Page 15)

13.) M824-44256 (Page 19)
    a. Doesn’t discuss quantity of tokens

5. Further Questions & Investigation
What is process to implement new programs/facilities or discontinue old? Ex. Fall Baseball vs Swimming Lessons & Adult Clinic Tennis respectively

Need to further discuss the Griff since that is obviously a large source of revenue and costs. Not very familiar with golf so don't know what the value proposition is to potential users and what might constitute too high or too low (want to optimize revenue).

Need to discuss Beach fees as that is also a large source of revenue, contention, and legal uncertainty.

Is there a system in place to measure the relative cost of various programs/facilities? Revenue seems to be well broken down but not cost (atleast as far I am aware). This would give a sense of what is losing the most money and allow the Board and other entities to make informed opinions and decisions on what to continue subsidizing, what to expand, what to downsize, etc. Ideally could go down into Fixed Cost versus Variable Cost.

What is internal review process to increase fees etc.?

No discussion of revenue from snack stand vendor on page 16 but discusses OGYC rental agreement.
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July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015
Department of Parks and Recreation