



Board of Parks & Recreation
Meeting Minutes
December 5, 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 January 30, 2019.

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

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

Guest Attendees: Leslie Yager, Karen Fassuliotis, and Katherine Lobalbo

- 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. Hartwell and seconded by Ms. Chapin to approve the Board Minutes from the October 24, 2018 meeting. 8-0-0

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

Mr. Siciliano reported that he is not prepared to review the budget information as it has not yet been reviewed with the First Selectman. The budget discussion will take place at the January meeting.

Mr. Siciliano stated that Brian Kerzner is working on the Byram dredge project. The project is slated to be executed this winter.

Mr. Siciliano indicated that the Friends of Binney Park are working to accomplish some projects in Binney Park with the funds that are currently in the budget. Ms. Chapin will provide an update in greater detail.

Mr. Siciliano advised that the first-round interviews for the position of Superintendent of Parks and Trees were conducted. The candidates are being evaluated, he will confer with the interview panel. The position may be re-posted as the applicants are focused on the Tree Warden responsibilities and their backgrounds do not cover the multitude of responsibilities of this position. The department needs a Superintendent that has administrative skills, and one that can manage people, fields, and parks. The charter reads that the Superintendent of Parks and Trees shall be the Tree Warden. The laws and regulations of the Tree Warden responsibilities are administered by the State. The requirement for a state Tree Warden is to be a licensed arborist.

Mr. Siciliano stated he will try to re-work the job description---to be determined.

Mr. Siciliano reported that the department's RecTrac program has been upgraded, it went smoothly, no major glitches. The upgrade will allow for opportunities to expand services.

IV. Binney Park Advisory Committee, Nancy Chapin

Ms. Chapin reported that the committee is re-forming. She has been fact gathering. The committee had 2 site meetings thus far. The committee members are; Bruce Spaman, Nancy Chapin, Pete Uhry, Mary Hull, Frank O’Gorman, Lynne Davenport, Bill Rutherford, Linnea Stenberg and JoAnn Messina. There have been some questions from the public regarding some of the work that has been done. There will be a work session held on December 11.

Community concerns include; communication, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWA) work on the north bank across Perrot Library, tree plantings, signage, “gateway” entrances and the need to move forward with the Master Plan.

In an effort to better communicate with the public, Ms. Chapin suggested utilizing the Town website for updates. Mr. Siciliano stated that this can be done. Mr. Siciliano further replied that as things transpire, a representative of the committee can produce some bullet point updates that can be posted on the website. Tree postings follow a separate formal posting process that is required as per state statute.

Mr. Siciliano stated that the Town hired a professional Landscape Designer, Martha Lyon to produce a Master Plan for Binney Park with some recommendations. The Tree Warden will have the final say for the plans in their capacity as Tree Warden. For those that do not agree with the removal of any trees, they can provide a formal protest which will precipitate a tree hearing. The protestor(s) will have an opportunity at the hearing to discuss the reasons for their protest.

Ms. Chapin added that there has been some concern about the selection of plantings that are not aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Siciliano responded that as part of the dredging plan, Wetlands required a particular planting schematic. This was part of the permit for the project. Parks and Recreation *may* be able to do some other things for improvement.

Ms. Chapin advised that there is a lot of opportunity for a public/private partnership for Binney Park.

Ms. Chapin stated that it is clear that the project did not grade properly, may be as a result of the horribly wet season, hopefully it will dissipate. Mr. Siciliano stated that the engineer from the Department of Public Works can attend the next meeting to provide an update and take the issue of grading back to the contractor.

Mr. Siciliano advised that Pat Sesto, IWWA Director is putting together a Request For Proposal for a study on the effects of global warming and sea rise.

V. Lia Fail Way, Frank DiVincenzo

Mr. DiVincenzo provided photos of the original amphitheater where the monoliths were recovered. The footings at Montgomery Pinetum were poured in early November. After a few weeks of curing, the monoliths were placed by Vitti. Mr. DiVincenzo shared photos of the completed project. The Greenwich Time published an article on the project, Mr. DiVincenzo encouraged members to read it.

Mr. DiVincenzo stated that the original amphitheater had a circular center. Tony Vitti offered some stones to replicate the original design.

Mr. Siciliano replied that when he went to Wetlands and Planning and Zoning for the project approval, the plan was signed off on based on the original design which did not include impervious material. Mr. Siciliano stated they should talk after the meeting.

Mr. DiVincenzo added that he has donors for two stone benches.

Mr. DiVincenzo reported that Tony Marzullo will work on the landscaping.

VI. Field Sub Committee, John Hartwell

Mr. Hartwell stated that the committee is meeting next week. The committee will put together an action plan on turf fields at the middle schools.

Mr. Siciliano added that a petition from various user groups was received in the Selectman's office. The petition supports turf fields at the middle schools, this information will be shared at the committee meeting.

VII. Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, Scott Johnson

Mr. Johnson reported that the committee will schedule another meeting, Alan Monelli has been out as he had surgery. Mr. Johnson advised that the SFA report is a draft, some major questions have yet to be answered.

Mr. Johnson added that some board members requested that the report be simplified. Rather than amending their scope of work, Mr. Johnson suggested to schedule a face-to-face meeting with SFA. The feeling is that there has not been transparency in the exchange with SFA. Mr. Dell'Abate reiterated that key questions have not been answered, these answers will help move forward.

Mr. Johnson advised that the survey and the initial report were distributed by the First Selectman's office directly to some of the user groups without the knowledge/consent of the committee. Since it went out to some, it was only fair all had access to it, therefore it was posted to the Town's website.

Mr. Siciliano added that people are encouraged to attend the committee meetings, that is why the meetings are posted. There have been side meetings taking place and comments being passed to non-committee members. If people have comments, they should be taken up at the committee meetings. Mr. Dell'Abate stated that this is counterproductive and asked the Town Administrator to direct people to the committee. Mr. Siciliano added that this is what has created the issues over the last 20 years, various groups try to splinter out and it doesn't work. Mr. Johnson recommended a public hearing.

VIII. Dorothy Hamill Rink Sub-Committee, Rick Loh

Mr. Loh reported that there were 5 responses from the Request for Proposal (RFP) that went out. The RFP that went out was too broad-based. The committee decided to narrow the focus of the request. Sue Snyder, Bill Drake and Alan Monelli developed some criteria that will make the request more focused. The goal is to get someone to come in and look at the full picture and come up with a more concise plan as to exactly what the shortcomings are in the current

facility. There will come a point that justification will be needed to explain that it will be more prudent to tear the facility down than it will be to patch up the existing facility.

Mr. Siciliano advised that Alan Monelli conducted a building evaluation within the last couple of years. This report could be the launching point.

Mr. Loh recounted that in 2004-05 money was allocated to refurbish the rink. The case was made that something has to be done, but at that point in time, the Town committed funds to fix up the existing facility. As time went on, the rink is falling further behind the current standards.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if the rink is in danger of closing. Mr. Loh replied that the concrete slab which contains the piping that freezes the ice is approximately 50 years old. There is the possibility that the slab could crack.

Mr. Siciliano detailed that there was a scare 2 years ago, when it was thought that the coolant was leaking, but it turned out to be an air pocket in the system that had to work its way out.

Mr. Loh stated that in preparation for when the work was to be done, additional funds were allocated for a temporary facility for the season when Hamill would be out of service for construction. Technology has improved on temporary rinks. You can have a rink put up in month.

Mr. Siciliano added that in the most recent budgetary preparation for the 15-year plan, no one seems to have an appetite for the \$2M cost of a temporary rink. DPW has taken it out of their budget.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if the previously discussed idea of putting a temporary rink at the high school tennis courts is still being considered. Mr. Loh stated it is still a possibility.

Mr. DiVincenzo inquired if a new slab can be placed on top of the existing slab in an emergency. Mr. Loh replied that there may be a way. What they use now is sand and lay pipes in the sand and make the ice.

Mr. Siciliano stated there are many scenarios being discussed.

Ms. Snyder added that the new RFP asks for an evaluation of the current rink, and asks if it can be brought up to code and meet all requirements of the committee without losing ice time. Or is it more cost effective/efficient to construct a new rink while the existing rink is in operation then shut down the old rink once the new one opens. These are the questions being asked in the proposal.

Mr. Johnson advised that there is value in getting something designed so if something happens, the bulk of the site plan will be ready to go.

Mr. Siciliano informed the study will include the initiatives the Town wants in the rink. The first appropriation will be for the site plan with 30% design which is sufficient for Planning and Zoning.

X. Unfinished Business

None

XI. New Business

None

XII. Public Comment

Mr. Johnson shared a flyer that has been going around Town regarding a lost dog that was lost by a commercial dog walker at Babcock Preserve. The walker had 7 dogs off leash and the dog got lost.

Mr. Siciliano reported that Jessica from Paws and her group have been helpful in getting the word out about the rules regarding dogs in the parks such as; dogs must be on leash, clean up after your dog, your dog must have proper identification and licensing.

Mr. Dell'Abate inquired if the department had any involvement in the placement of the new score board at the stadium, it's a great scoreboard, but it is hidden in the corner. Mr. Siciliano replied that the project was handled by the Board of Education.

XIII. Meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m.