

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, October 10, 2006 in the New City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, Al Felice, Beverly Moran, James Benanto and Nick Serednitsky. David Mikos was excused. Chairman Walsh noted that the Mayor has appointed Gary Zinnis to the commission. Mr. Zinnis was unable to attend this evening.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti was excused.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Al Felice and second by Beverly Moran. Move to accept the minutes of September 11, 2006, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public came forward at this time.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Susan DeLuca, a certified yoga instructor, e-mailed the commission inquiring whether the City was interested in her services. The message was referred to Mr. O'Connell.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell reported that the body sculpting class has started and is going well. He also noted that someone interested in teaching a Tai Chi program has contacted him.

Speaking on the possible yoga class Mr. O'Connell noted he has been conversing with an instructor who would be available daytime, this e-mail notes availability at night so the two timeframes can be explored. The city has limited space to hold indoor activities and may approach the Derby Public Library to see if their meeting room could support this type of low impact activity.

Mr. O'Connell has been communicating with Mr. Orazetti regarding gymnasium space. The athletic programs will be using Irving school afternoon and nights for the latchkey program recently created through grant funding. This results in a serious impact to the recreational youth basketball program that has previously been using it five nights a week during their season. The Middle School athletic programs will be using the Derby Veteran's Community Center five afternoons per week from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and this is not an issue as the recreational programs run during the evening. Because of this intense scheduling, the Derby Veteran's Community Center will have to be used to the fullest on the weekends for the recreational programs. This will require discontinuing birthday parties thus resulting in a loss of income. Members discussed the seriousness of this gymnasium space problem and its effects on the programs. It was suggested that the usage be assessed to make certain the time is fairly distributed. The school facilities are strongly used for the athletic programs leaving little open time available. It was suggested that the two directors study the schedules to see if there is any open time at any of the facilities

that could be utilized. Another suggestion is to see if there is time in the parochial schools or possibly private facilities. Members questioned whether the upcoming referendum on the school would address the gymnasium space limitations and they were hopeful that this need is an integral part of the project.

The numbers for the Derby residents utilizing the skate park were not impressive. The joint partnership with Shelton proved beneficial considering said numbers. The directors from the cities will be meeting with the YMCA to discuss the arrangements of supervision and oversight that the YMCA has been providing.

It was noted that publicity for the Parks & Recreation programs are minimal. During the next budget process consideration will be given to seek funding for flyers or some other form of publicity. It was noted that in previous years flyers regarding city information was included with the mailing of the tax bills. Other possibilities could be information in a local newspaper, further utilization of the website, newsletters and looking at other towns methods that have proven successful. This publicity effort could also be expanded to include citywide information.

At Witek Park the programs are well underway. The programs are being watchful of the usage so as not to overtax the surface. It was noted that parking is occurring in areas not designated for parking. The coaches will be advised and the Public Works director will be contacted to explore additional signage.

Work on the pool is slated to begin October 23rd and will take approximately two weeks. Use of the center will be restricted during this time.

The aluminum bleachers for Ryan Field have been ordered. The company providing the material has visited the site to take necessary measurements and delivery should be in three to four weeks. The company will be installing four sections and bracket installation will be done prior to the delivery of the seating material. There will still be four sections that will have to be done at a later date. They have been inspected and interim repairs have been made, as needed.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti was excused.

Mr. Orazetti approached Chairman Walsh about athletes taking on a community project. The suggestion was made for them to mark the trails at Witek Park. The project would entail clearing of brush and spray-painting markings throughout the path. Chairman Walsh noted previous conversations with Ansonia for connecting the trails with the trails at the Ansonia High School. This is also a possible consideration and he will approach the Ansonia Mayor.

While on the subject of community projects, Chairman Walsh noted that there used to be a beltline trail that ran from Derby into Ansonia that looped around. It followed the trolley route from the Derby Green, down Seymour Avenue to Atwater Avenue to Bridge Street in Ansonia then to Main Street up to Derby Avenue to Main Street (RTE 34) to Elizabeth Street. Residents would walk this route socially many years ago and there are still some who continue to follow the route. A stencil on the sidewalks, possibly a stencil of a trolley, could identify it.

A motion was made by James Benanto and second by Beverly Moran. Move that the Parks & Recreation Commission endorses the community projects for marking the trails at Witek Park and marking the Beltline Trail. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Discussion on Sub-Committee Structure: Members felt that the matter should be tabled until the committee looking at Parks & Recreation maintenance and jurisdiction matters has concluded their work.

On the Greenway – benches, trash receptacles and bike racks will be delivered and installed shortly. The Board of Alderman approved lighting on the Greenway utilizing the UI Light the Night program. They are also looking into surveillance cameras.

The Derby Historical Society will be conducting a fundraiser on the Greenway using lanterns and discussing historic features of Derby.

Mr. Serednitsky noted that the girl's softball is currently in second place in the state.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he was exploring developing a second diamond up at Bradley School. This could provide relief to the Little League program. Members suggested that the Little League Directors be invited to the next meeting.

The Bradley School playground has been closed and the facility is being reviewed for required repairs and the costs associated with said repairs. It was noted that the jurisdiction has not been clarified but it was noted that the letter from the insurance carrier was sent to the Finance Director for the Board of Education with a list of people to be carbon copied, Parks & Recreation was not on the list. It was also noted that research has shown that the playground was purchased from fundraising efforts and the remaining funds were turned over to the school system.

A motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by James Benanto. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary