

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, February 9, 2009 in the Aldermanic Chambers of City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

By roll call, members present: Nick Serednitsky, James Benanto, Andrew Cota and Red Clynych. John Walsh, David Mikos, Beverly Moran was excused.

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

Motion was made by Red Clynych and second by James Benanto. Move to nominate Andrew Cota as temporary chair, in the chair's absence. Motion carried unanimously.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Red Clynych and second by James Benanto. Move to accept the minutes of January 12, 2009, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Daniel R. Waleski of 23 Elm Street, Derby, CT. stated that he had obtained a copy of the Greenway Engineering Report Phase III. He was unsure which City agency was the correct venue to express his comments. The \$2.6 million project is in the design phase and he found the report poor in content. He has lived on the east side all his life and knows the area pretty well. He felt the report should be more in depth considering the projected costs. Big decisions will have to be made and he felt that the City should be receiving the technical information at the start of the planning so that informed decisions will be made. He felt the City should insist on receiving said information and it behooves the City to gather as much information as can be gotten.

The Chair, while appreciating his comments, noted that there is a separate committee in place that Mr. Walsh serves as a member and the Board of Alderman oversees the project. Mr. Clynych believed the committee was meeting this week. The members have no knowledge of the report nor do they have involvement during the planning stage.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell noted that basketball season is concluding. The Derby Veteran's Community Center is very busy. Little League and Babe Ruth have begun registration. Girl's softball registration should be starting shortly.

Mr. O'Connell has been communicating with Mr. Cota in preparation for the 2009-2010 recreation budget proposal. Mr. O'Connell will be meeting with the program directors to discuss their needs. At this time he does not anticipate any increases in the program allocations. He stressed that if any of the

allocations were to be reduced by the Board of Apportionment and Taxation, it would result in a need to increase registrations. The Board of Apportionment and Taxation has been receptive to the program's needs for many years and he is hopeful, even during these difficult financial times; that they will continue to fund the requests. The proposal should be finished for presentation at the next meeting. Mr. Cota indicated that the capital projects will also be reviewed and presented.

While the current budget is going well, Mr. O'Connell anticipated end of year transfers within the current budget. Utilities and maintenance are always unpredictable. He tries each year to address facilities needs while still remaining within the budget allocations.

Capital projects that are being pursued. The Little League fencing project will be going out to bid. Proposals were received but the materials varied with each vendor making it difficult to compare them. Capital Planning questioned these differences and it was decided that specific specifications and bids would clarify the request. Mr. Clynch encouraged Mr. O'Connell to verify that the specifications require reinforcement at the bottom so as to prohibit the fence from curling. Mr. O'Connell has been investigating equipment for the health club. He has asked Alderman Hughes to come with him to inspect used equipment. Possibly, this will allow them to purchase quality equipment at a lesser cost.

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

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Benanto asked if the increase in the daily open swim fee, instituted last year, had an effect on the numbers. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the numbers did go down a bit but the purpose of the fee increase was to provide better management of the users and this action did have a positive result. The previous rate was the lowest in the area, resulting in a rowdy group sometimes congregating at the facility. Behavior problems were occurring and the members and staff of the Derby Veteran's Community Center felt uncomfortable with the situation. He noted that the pool is used for swimming lessons, members swim, open swim and a private physical therapy group does pay to use the facility.

Mr. Benanto noted that the building is dedicated to the WWII veterans. The fee schedule has remained the same for many years with the WWII veterans receiving a preferred rate. He questioned whether other veterans, from other wars and actions, should also be provided a preferred rate. Mr. Waleski noted that the WWII veterans looked at doing something to honor the WWII veterans and decided that rather than placing a monument on the green, they sought a living memorial and as such, the Derby Veteran's Community Center was constructed. Members felt that consideration was favorable to looking at offering DERBY veterans a preferred rate. This will be studied further.

Mr. Benanto questioned whether the bleacher replacement is complete. Mr. O'Connell indicated that they were not, but funding is not in place at this time for their completion. With the move to the NVL league, it was discussed whether the bleachers should be revisited. Speaking of the football field, other needs to look at are replacing the visitor's bleachers that were taken down a few years ago and replacing the lighting. In pursuing funding, it is a matter of priorities. The capital planning projects will be reviewed during the budget preparation process.

Mr. Clynch questioned whether Pop Warner could pursue grants such as the Matthies grants, as he understood that it had to be a private organization and that the city was not eligible to pursue such grants. With the city's funds so tight, he encouraged looking at other opportunities for receiving funding for recreation projects. Mr. O'Connell noted that the Pop Warner recently was successful in being awarded state funding for equipment.

Speaking to the lights, Mr. Clynch wondered if the lenses on the lights had been cleaned to possibly increase their brightness. Mr. O'Connell indicated that they had not. Mr. Clynch noted that the Fire

Department ladder truck was used when they needed to replace bulbs in the past. He questioned whether they could assist accessing the lenses. Mr. O'Connell was uncertain but would investigate. He noted that the Public Works also has a bucket truck that may be available. There was a capital proposal to replace the bulbs and ballasts but funding has not been secured.

Motion was made by James Benanto and second by Red Clynch. Move to adjourn the meeting at 7:52p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.