

# *Park and Recreation Commission*

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## **Minutes**

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, September 12, 2011 in the City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, Nick Serednitsky, David Mikos and Ronald Sill. Beverly Moran, James Benanto and Red Clynch were excused.

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

### **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

Motion made by Ron Sill and second by Nick Serednitsky. Move to accept the agenda, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion made by David Mikos and second by Nick Serednitsky. Move to accept the minutes of August 8, 2011, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC PORTION:**

Greg Genna, president of Pop Warner, was present this evening to speak on an incident that occurred on September 10<sup>th</sup> during their games at the Ryan Field Complex. He stated that one of the coaches was assaulted by visitors from the opposing team. He stated that he could not recall an incident like this ever happening at a Pop Warner game.

Motion made by Ron Sill and second by Nick Serednitsky. Move to add the Pop Warner incident to the agenda under new business. Motion carried unanimously.

### **CORRESPONDENCES:**

Nothing was presented.

### **NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:**

Derby Pop Warner incident: Mr. Genna stated that Derby was playing the Park City teams from Bridgeport. At approximately 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup> towards the end of the midgets game two minor girls from Bridgeport were inside the field fence and were asked by a Derby coach to move back behind the fence. They refused to leave and became belligerent. They struck the coach. The EMT on the scene, observing what was happening, requested police response. The police arrived and the girls were arrested. It was his understanding that the girls were released to their grandmother who was at the game. Apparently, a relative was playing on the Park City team. The coach had scratches and bruises and did receive medical attention.

After the incident, Pop Warner has been discussing avenues to take to avoid an incident such as this from occurring again. They are assessing how to control access to the field. They weighed locking the gates but this would be difficult and not favored. They stressed the need for visiting team bleachers so as to separate the opposing teams and their fans.

Mr. O'Connell noted that visitor bleachers will cost approximately \$50,000. They have been on the list of capital projects and have a high priority but funding has not been secured as of yet. He encouraged Pop Warner to communicate with the Capital Planning Commission to stress the need for these bleachers.

Members discussed whether there was a need for more security at recreation events. Generally, there has been no call for a police presence. Mr. O'Connell noted that if spectators become unruly it is standard practice to stop the game immediately. This action has been successful in defusing the situation and the game can then continue. It was decided that the director will speak with the police department and discuss protocol for recreational events. The results will be presented next month.

#### **DIRECTOR REPORTS:**

**Parks & Recreation Director's Report:** Mr. O'Connell reported that the football field is showing wear in the middle. He and Mr. Orazetti have been discussing the practice schedules seeking to lessen the use and maintain the field primarily for games.

The recreational areas suffered little effect from Hurricane Irene. Some trees were damaged at the picnic grove and behind the Derby Neck Library parking area. The area behind the football bleachers did well primarily due to the project done earlier this year where dead trees were removed. After the storm a tree did fall across the driveway at Witek Park resulting in no access to the fields for a few days until it was cleaned.

The first home High School soccer game will be played at Witek Park this week. While the field maintenance was delayed due to the storm, the field is getting groomed and lined for the game.

Basketball registration will start next month.

Mr. O'Connell has been overseeing the emergency lighting project at the football field bleachers. The project has experienced some delays and there is concern that the trenches dug for the project do present a hazard. Excavated materials including rocks and asphalt are strewn in the area of the field. All efforts will be made to expedite the project.

Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Orazetti are studying possible policy that would dictate whether games should be played depending on weather conditions. While there are standards in regards to lightning storms, there is no clear standard for windy conditions. Mr. Cota noted that they will be exploring standards for commercial equipment use under windy conditions such as cranes, bucket trucks and such. As many of the fields are in hilly areas surrounded by established trees members felt it important to establish this policy. As it stands now the directors make a case by case decision on the conditions. Officials at the games also will call a game if they feel a safety concern is present.

**High School Athletic Director's Report:** Mr. Orazetti participated in the discussions under the Recreation Director's report. He noted that Emmett O'Brien football greatly appreciates the use of the football field for their game on Wednesday. All is going well with the High School games.

Motion was made by Ron Sill and second by David Mikos. Move to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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