

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, June 12, 2006 in the New City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, Beverly Moran, David Mikos and James Benanto. Al Felice, Karen Izzo and Matt Cripps were excused.

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 Beverly Moran and second by James Benanto. Move to accept the minutes of May 8, 2006, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public came forward at this time.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell reported that Babe Ruth, 13-15 year old division has 18 players. Senior Babe Ruth has one team and is playing with Ansonia.

Little League is hosting the 9&10-year-old division district tournament.

The Summer Program will run for six weeks from July 5th through August 15th. It will be run at Bradley School from 9:00 am to 2 pm. Flyers are being distributed in the schools. Kim Yagovane is the director and staffing is in place. The Free Lunch Program will be run again at the Derby Veteran's Community Center and open swim will also be provided in the afternoon.

The Capital projects funded include the pool resurfacing, replacement of the main pipe at the Derby Veteran's Community Center, Ryan football field home-side bleacher replacement, girls softball backstop replacement and left field fence replacement.

Mr. O'Connell will be speaking with the Mayor to explore the available resources to design and prepare the bid specifications for these projects, as this work is very detailed and beyond the department staff expertise. The bleacher project is quite complicated, as the design will have to satisfy current building, safety and disability codes. There is concern with the timeline of the project being that the funding becomes available in July and with the design, bidding process and construction needing to be done quickly, it is going to be difficult to accomplish the task before the fall programs begin. The Board of Education and Pop Warner will be advised of this concern.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee – Mr. O'Connell is watching the budget and making end of the year transfers as needed. He indicated that the projected revenue figure should be reached. Due to the absence of a janitor, the Derby Veteran's Community Center scheduling was curtailed thus reducing a possible revenue source.

A question arose whether the water bill reflects a municipal rate. Mr. O'Connell will investigate the charge with the Finance Director.

Programs Committee – The Committee did not meet.

Facilities Committee – The grand opening for Phase I completion of the Greenway is June 25th. The bridges are in and there are minor touches yet to be done. There still is a problem with vandalism, mainly on the Housatonic side. The fountain will be moved and in place for the dedication with possible restoration being done at a later date.

At Witek Park, the fields look great with some issue with the clover still growing in the fields. The drainage problem in the swale between the fields is still being discussed. The City has not yet accepted the complex from the contractor. Members are encouraged that the fall season will go forward.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

A.) Discussion of 2006 – 2007 Parks & Recreation Budget: The operating budget and the capital improvements submitted have been approved. Figures will be available at the next meeting.

A.) Discussion of Recreation programs: Members noted the accomplishments of the past few years, Witek Park and the Greenway. It is felt that success breeds success and these accomplishments add support to the department's credibility in achieving excellence.

Ongoing concerns are the Little League complex is not suitable to play, it is too small in terms of the Mayor League field size and the overall space in terms of the number of divisions being played in the complex. Second, Pop Warner has no place to practice as the Little League field conditions are strained by the level of use and the picnic grove is too small. Third, the lack of a track, which is more a school use but still falls under this plan. Members felt there needs to be more interest and participation by the Board of Education in the planning beyond just creating new programs. Fourth, the Derby Veteran's Community Center is a hidden treasure. It is not being utilized to the fullest but the center needs to be updated to draw more members. Improvements to the health club are needed in terms of overall aesthetics and equipment upgrade. Also, the Commission continues to explore new programs geared toward all ages. The question always arises as to where such programs could be held. This too could be discussed with the Board of Education in terms of use of their facilities.

It was suggested that the Commission explore programs in the adjoining communities and bring back suggestions to the next meeting. At that time, members could start a thoughtful discussion on the future needs of the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Motion was made by David Mikos and second by Beverly Moran. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary