

# *Park and Recreation Commission*

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## **Minutes**

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, July 10, 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 David Mikos and second by Beverly Moran Move to accept the minutes of June 12, 2006, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC PORTION:**

No public came forward at this time.

### **CORRESPONDENCES:**

Mr. O'Connell advised the Commission of communications between Cirma, the City's insurance carrier and Ron Melnik, Board of Education business director, regarding the playgrounds at Bradley and Irving Schools. The letter from Cirma dated May 15, 2006 (attached) details a number of recommendations for both schools; states "the condition of the equipment and surfacing at Bradley School is poor" and the "play structures at Irving School are in good condition". The response from Ronald Melnik dated 6/27/06 (attached) states "Mayor Anthony Staffieri has agreed that the city parks & recreation department will be responsible to make the corrections to the items highlighted in your audit".

Mr. O'Connell indicated that he forwarded the letters to Public Works to explore what remedies could be accomplished with their staff. Public Works employees did go to Bradley School prior to the start of the Summer Program and redistribute the surface materials at Bradley School. Additional work is needed to satisfy the recommendations made by the insurance carrier. Mr. O'Connell indicated that funding was not requested for playground work within the department's budget.

Members discussed whether Parks & Recreation should be responsible for these facilities. The Parks & Recreation Department only utilizes the Bradley School playground for the Summer program and Mr. O'Connell said that previously he and Principal Duggan coordinated some allocations to maintain the Bradley School area. Both schools do use their areas during school session. There is a reoccurring issue of oversight and responsibility because of the shared use of facilities by the Board of Education and the Parks & Recreation Department. Members felt that a meeting should be arranged. Chairman Walsh will contact the Mayor and the Superintendent.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS:**

**Parks & Recreation Director's Report:** Mr. O'Connell reported that the Summer Program started on July 5<sup>th</sup> and will run through August 15<sup>th</sup>. There are 93 youngsters registered at this time. Three trips are planned.

Babe Ruth and Little League are in tournament play.

The custodian has been hired and is getting familiar with his duties.

Pop Warner is scheduled to start on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Moran noted that due to the circumstances with downtown demolition, the capital plan is on hold for the moment. The Board of Alderman is holding an emergency meeting to move forward on this issue. Funds are available for the pool repairs and the bleachers.

Mr. O'Connell is getting bids for the bleachers. It was noted that the State goes out to bid annually on a variety of projects and they possibly may have blanket bids in place for this type of project. As they have already accepted contractors, this may expedite the process. Mr. O'Connell will investigate. Members expressed concern for the scope of the project. It was suggested that the City Engineer might be helpful in working out the details. As the design is unique, it is questioned whether the job will be the replacement of the seating or if current codes will require structural changes. Depending on the costs, it may be impossible to replace the entire area and if so, the work will start in the mid-section and work outwards.

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

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Finance Committee** – Printouts (attached) of the budget were distributed. Mr. O'Connell has until July 18<sup>th</sup> to submit bills incurred prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>. There are remaining bills yet to be submitted. Looking at the new budget, the capital projects are listed but previous year funding has yet to be rolled over by the Board of Apportionment and Taxation. Also, it was noted that the yearly allocation for Ryan Capital is blank. Martin Martino, Board of Apportionment and Taxation member, happened to be in the building and was asked to participate in the discussion. He indicated that a meeting is scheduled for the rollovers. He was uncertain why the line item for Ryan Capital was blank and he suggested that a letter be sent raising the question at the meeting.

Also, in the new budget is funding for the salaries, including proposed raises. It was noted that last year, the raises were included but never dispersed to the employees. It was understood that the Board of Alderman has to approve any raises and this has not been done. Mr. O'Connell noted that the hourly employees are now receiving their increased hourly wage as per the new budget but salaried employees apparently still has to be approved by the Board of Alderman. Chairman Walsh will contact the Board of Alderman president to have this matter added to the next Alderman agenda. Members felt that changes should be explored to provide a more fluid process to implement raises and this will be discussed with the Board of Alderman.

In looking at the new budget, funding was provided as requested with the exception of the Little League and Pop Warner allocations, which were reduced slightly. Members briefly discussed how Pop Warner struggles to satisfy the National requirements. It was noted that Ansonia is exploring their affiliation and possibly, Derby should do the same.

**Programs Committee** – The Committee did not meet. Mr. Mikos distributed a list of various adult programs in Shelton. In speaking with the Shelton instructors they indicated an interest in coordinating with Derby. Members noted the limited space for such activities. The Commission will explore alternate locations such as in the schools and the Senior Center. Chairman Walsh presented the YMCA's offerings and will also inquire what offerings are available through the Adult Education programs.

**Facilities Committee** – The grand opening of the Greenway was held on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Attendance was sparse due to the poor weather conditions. The fountain has been moved and the Committee is exploring restoring the lion's heads on the structure. Police are now patrolling the greenway. The parking lot has been marked. Signage is still being explored. Benches are being considered. The Committee will ask the Board of Alderman if the area around the fountain be made into a plaza with bricks that would be purchased by supporters with this fundraiser providing funding for future enhancements.

The Skate Park appears to be going well although members had no specifics to report.

At Witek Park, members are encouraged that the fall season will go forward after Labor Day.

**NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:**

A.) Discussion of 2006 – 2007 Parks & Recreation Capital Budget: This was discussed previously in the meeting.

B.) Discussion of Recreation programs: This was discussed under Programs.

Motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by David Mikos.. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,  
Karen Kemmesies, secretary