

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, April 14, 2008 in the New City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, Nick Serednitsky, Andrew Cota and Red Clynch. James Benanto, Beverly Moran and David Mikos 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 Red Clynch and second by Andrew Cota. Move to accept the minutes of February 11, 2008, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public came forward at this time.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Mr. O'Connell received a request from the Cindy Bartone group to hold a fundraiser. He will review the schedule to verify that the facility is available. As the event is not a recreation program, the Board of Alderman will have to give approval.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell stated that the spring programs are starting. The numbers are down in all the programs. The Babe Ruth league has more than enough for one team but not enough for two. Little League opened their season on April 12th with an abbreviated program due to the weather.

The railings are going in at the football field bleachers. They should be completed in the next few weeks so the bleachers should be set in time for graduation.

Mr. O'Connell presented the budget to the Board of Apportionment and Taxation. They spoke of the tight general budget and the need to hold down spending. Mr. O'Connell indicated that there was nothing extra in the recreation budget; the water line item does fluctuate from year to year depending on the weather. If it is a wet year, the use is less but on dry years, the budgeted amount is needed to cover the expense. Every year he has been forced to make transfers into the maintenance accounts and the surplus in the water line item has been used. It was noted that a portion of the budget does go to the programs. If the programs funding were to be reduced there would be an impact on the families. While the registration may go up modestly, a family would feel the impact, especially if they participate in more than one program and if they have more than one child in the family. The Commission felt that the funding is modest compared to the greater benefit it provides to the residents and they were hopeful that the Board of Apportionment and Taxation could see that they work diligently to provide services to the community.

A sprinkler head was repaired on the baseball field by third base. It had to be excavated and repaired. This is an area where there is a bit of a gully and Mr. O'Connell will speak to the Public Works to see if the area needs some regrading.

Chairman Walsh noted that the Commission did meet with the Athletic Sub-Committee of the Board of Education last month. They discussed scheduling difficulties and stressed the need for mutual efforts to advocate the need for additional fields. Members noted that there has been reports in the news that a field may be created during the school building project. Apparently, there has been discussion on building an artificial turf field in the area of the lower parking lot but members had no personal knowledge of this discussion. Certainly, any additional field space would benefit the athletic and recreational programs in the city.

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

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

The Commission will be presenting the Recreational Capital Plan to the Capital Planning Commission at their next meeting. The Commission is seeking:

1.) Completion of the replacement of the bleachers at the Ryan Field Complex -	\$62,000.
2.) Repair and upgrade of the Ryan Field Football Complex Lighting -	\$25,000.
3.) Replace the Ryan Field Softball Backstop -	\$10,000.
4.) Inspect roofs at the Ryan Field Field House and Derby Veteran's Center -	\$ unknown.
5.) Replace fence at Minor League Field -	\$8,500.
6.) Amendola improvements to the tennis courts -	\$15,000.
7.) Replace health club exercise equipment at Derby Veteran's Community Center	\$15,000.
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$135,500.</u>

A special notation was made for consideration of artificial turf. It is well known that the wear and tear on the fields is causing stress to occur especially on the Ryan Field. It has been discussed that artificial turf could be a solution to this problem. If a condition exists that preserves the playing field by either making it an artificial turf or constructing a new practice field with artificial turf that could be used for multiple purposes then the conditions of the playing fields would allow for longer periods between repairs and replacement of grass. It was noted that Cheshire recently received grant funding in the amount of \$500,000 from the State. It was suggested that Derby look into alternative funding sources.

Chairman Walsh noted that the Onopiak Committee is exploring future uses for the parcel. Consideration is being given to create trails on the property with the possibilities of connecting with the open space from the Hidden Woods development and up to Witek Park.

Mr. Clynch noted that in conversations with the baseball coach, there may be interest in holding a summer baseball clinic. As discussed at previous meetings, baseball programs are generally finished by the end of June and this may be an opportunity to provide an activity over the summer. Mr. O'Connell noted that generally the families are taking vacations in the summer and holding programs have not been well attended but he will explore the suggestion.

Motion was made by Andrew Cota and second by Red Clynch. Move to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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