

# *Park and Recreation Commission*

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## **Minutes**

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, January 14, 2013 in the City Hall.

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

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, Red Clynych, Beverly Moran, James Benanto, Ronald Sill and John Monahan. Nick Serednitsky was excused.

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

### **ELECTION OF A CHAIR:**

Motion was made by Ronald Sill and second by Beverly Moran. Move to nominate Andrew Cota as Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Commission. Motion carried with Mr. Cota abstaining.

No other nominations were received. The floor was closed. Members congratulated Mr. Cota and looked forward to his continuing efforts for recreation in the City.

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

Motion made by Beverly Moran and second by Ronald Sill. Move to accept the agenda, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Clynych stated that his comments last month were specific to approaching Representative Rosa DeLauro for help in seeking funding for needed recreational improvements whereas the minutes reflect a more general statement of state and local representatives. Mr. Cota and Mr. O'Connell replied that they have been working with Economic Director Sheila O'Malley to explore alternative funding sources and they have considered what could be received through our state and local representatives. Mr. Sill noted that the City is contemplating a referendum for other city departments with financial needs. As the recreational needs have also been a long standing pursuit he suggested exploring a referendum question for the recreational needs.

Mr. O'Connell noted that he recently received grant funding from Home Depot in the amount of \$5,000. This initially started as a community project to repair the football press box but due to time restraints Home Depot has shifted to a donation. The press box is in very poor condition and this funding is welcomed and will start the process of repairs. He noted that he has been approached by citizens suggesting that the funding should be used for other needs but his feeling is that the press box demands attention. The Cirrillo family maintained the press box for years until recently. He would like to continue their spirit and support by doing work on the press box. The family has indicated that they would like to help with some of the work. He will continue to search for funds to move forward on the many other projects that are needed such as the football lights and the field house.

Ms. Moran noted that the motion to accept the calendar included her but she was excused. This error will be researched and corrected within the minutes transcription.

A motion was made Ronald Sill and second by Nick Serednitsky. Move to accept the minutes of December 10, 2012, with the corrections that the motion made for accepting the calendar was made by

Ron Sill and second by Nick Serednitsky and that Mr. Clynch would like to see Representative Rosa DeLauro contacted. Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC PORTION:**

No one from the public was present.

**CORRESPONDENCES:**

Nothing was presented.

**DIRECTOR REPORTS:**

**Parks & Recreation Director's Report:** Continuing the discussion on recreational needs Mr. O'Connell reported it would likely cost approximately \$200,000 to replace the football field lighting fixtures (softball field lighting is not included). To build a combination football/baseball field with artificial turf would likely cost close to \$1 million. He could not offer a quote for replacing the field house but noted that the past plans did suggest that if the field was to be changed then it was likely that the building would have to move. As the field house is in need of repairs and as the function of the building is awkward, this is something that should be explored with the field discussions.

A broad discussion continued. Members weighed the needs and the financial restraints. They pondered the most effective use of funding. They looked at the football lighting wondering if it was necessary or if changes in schedules could be accommodated. They asked whether pushing the football games to Saturday mornings would draw more residents to the games. It was noted that the lights are used by the football programs and also Pop Warner and the soccer program has requested use at times. Eliminating the lights would further constrict the usability of the field. Speaking on changing to artificial turf, members pointed to the fact that the city is field poor. The turf could open up the field for additional use and the expense of maintenance of the field would be reduced. The field house is ancient and maintenance issues are becoming more expensive and expansive. A portion of the building is used for fertilizer and maintenance equipment storage. The design does not serve the current needs. The public bathrooms were made more handicapped accessible but they continue to be an ongoing issue on the size of the stalls and the layout of the room. Members noted that maybe they should be reaching out to the citizens to hear what they feel is an appropriate use of tax payer dollars being that every month there is no public participation in the meeting. It was decided that the Commission would explore whether a referendum was viable. They would continue to review and fine tune the list of capital needs so as to prioritize them and stage them in a fashion that would best move forward the projects.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he received a water pollution sewer bill for 35 Fifth Street in the amount of \$27,400. They have never received a bill previously. He will contact Mr. Saccu to explore the bill further.

Little League registration is underway.

Mr. O'Connell has started preparing the 2013-2014 budget proposal. He noted that he is also reviewing the current budget to identify any possible transfers he will have to be making within budget.

The capital projects were reviewed. The basketball courts at Coon Hollow picnic grove have to be finished in the spring. Plans are to remove the tennis courts at Bradley School as they are in disrepair and there has been no expressed interest in tennis. The field house roof needs to be replaced but now there are discussions on whether to replace the building.

As Witek Park is closed for the winter, neither Mr. Sill or Mr. O'Connell have approached Ken Hughes regarding the field maintenance that was mandated by the Derby Inland Wetlands Agency during the approval process. It was suggested that Mr. Hughes be invited to a meeting to discuss this matter.

Regarding maintenance issues, Mr. O'Connell noted that recently there was a pump gasket failure on the pump for the pool. It resulted in a major water flow into the pump room but the problem was discovered quickly before any extensive damage was done. Members suggested exploring some type of notification system to monitor the room.

Mr. O'Connell reviewed the facilities and their uses. The Derby Veteran's Community Center gym is utilized to the fullest during the basketball season. Bradley School gymnasium is used and there is a basketball court and playground area, both utilized. There was some discussion by the school to remove the basketball court but that discussion has died down. The tennis courts as noted before are slated to be removed. Irving School is a well utilized facility. As it is in a neighborhood area it is very convenient for the children to walk to the facility. Their gymnasium is well used. Having the Middle School as an option is very reassuring although it has not been scheduled for use as of yet.

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

**NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:**

Members were encouraged by the discussions on moving forward with long needed improvements. They felt it vital that all avenues of funding should be explored.

Motion made by Beverly Moran and second by Ronald Sill. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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