

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting of January 23, 2006
7:30 p.m.
North Branford Community Center

MINUTES

1) **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Brian Lynch at 7:36 p.m.

2) **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Victor Palma, Ronald Bergmark, and Randy Joiner

Also present was Pam Gery, Director

Member Mary Caruso recently resigned

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Lynch

3) **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Due to a lack of voting quorum, the approval of the Minutes is tabled to the next meeting.

4) **TOWN SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS:**

Pam Gery reported that with regard to the North Branford Soccer Club request of December 2, 2005, she spoke with Public Works Director Fran Merola regarding the clearing of brush at the field at North Farms Park. The brush and overhead limbs will be cleared from that location, as well as at Northford Park. Regarding the irrigation at the Route 17 fields, Deputy Mayor Joanne Wentworth had advised Ms. Gery that she will have information for the February meeting of her communications with the Regional Water Authority.

Ms. Gery stated that the basketball league will be giving back \$5,000 in this budget period towards the estimated cost of \$16,000-\$18,000 of custodial fees.

5) **PARKS AND FIELDS:**

Pam Gery reported that there is a little more work that needs to be done by the Public Works Department on the Playscape at North Farms Park. The Eagle Scout project regarding the trails at North Farms Park is completed. The trail sign was placed at the Park. She will include

trail details in the next program brochure. The South Central Regional Water Authority will provide trail maps for distribution.

Ms. Gery read from a letter she received from John's Refuse regarding recycling containers at the Town's parks and fields. The company will provide recycling receptacles at a cost of \$25.00 per month, per 96-gallon toter at Totoket Valley Field, North Farms Park, Northford Park, Wall Field, and Memorial Field. For special recreation events, additional receptacles would cost \$50.00 for a one-time delivery and pick up, regardless of the number of bins needed. The members questioned how many times the bins would be emptied, and Ms. Gery will re-contact John's Refuse to make that determination. The Commission members support this, and Ms. Gery will budget the cost. The members authorize John's Refuse containers instead of the containers on which information was previously provided by Clear Stream Recycling.

Ms. Gery has written back to citizen Shawn Redmond in response to his letter dated November 21, 2005 requesting that the Town provide a dog park (previously discussed at the December 19, 2005 meeting.) She will obtain more information from any other dog parks in this area regarding costs involved, how much area is needed to qualify as a dog park, fencing, "pooper scooper" laws and disposal, and liability issues. She foresees the expenses will be in fencing and signage. Rules and regulations would need to be established.

Ronald Bergmark inquired about her contacts with other towns regarding a portable ice skating rink. She stated that she received positive feedback from other towns, the biggest drawback being limited control over providing skating times, as it is weather-dependent. This year has been a warm season and therefore there has not been much rink time available. She will bring the responses that she has received to the February meeting.

Ms. Gery presented a letter dated November 22, 2005 received from citizen Christopher Sanzari suggesting the Town provide a dirt bike track. She has responded to Mr. Sanzari that she would discuss his letter with the Commission. The members feel that the most important issue regarding a track of this type is liability to the Town and the cost of insurance. There would also have to be noise monitoring. Ms. Gery will contact Milford and Rocky Hill, as they have these tracks. She does feel that they are privately (not municipally) owned, however.

A letter was received from citizen Erika Olivarez dated December 1, 2005 concerning the conditions of the fields being used by the soccer leagues. In summary, the letter states that the soccer fields should be seeded better, especially the one at Northford Park, as there is a need for more grass. The Commission members discussed the issue and feel that the fields need some rest to recuperate them. Ms. Gery will provide a copy of the letter to Public Works Director Fran Merola, and he could determine which field he feels should be shut down and taken off line for a season. The soccer league would need to know in advance, before their registration process begins, for their scheduling and planning purposes

Lastly, she stated that she has left a message for Town Attorney John Gesmonde for him to follow up with his legal opinion regarding vendor fees.

6) **PROGRAM REVIEW:**

Pam Gery stated that the Fitness Center currently has 660 members, comprised of Individual, Senior Citizen, and Family Memberships. This generates an income of \$68,000, which makes the building basically self-sustaining. Monies need to be planned in the upcoming budget discussions for new equipment.

She is currently working on the Spring and Summer 2006 Programs brochure. Because of the previous distribution to residents as inserts in the Totoket Times and The Sound with a low response to the program offerings, she will be mailing it out directly to the residents again, as it had been done in the past. It is expected to be mailed out in March. She would like to reach the Guilford and North Guilford residents to capture that market. She proposed that next year the Commission should consider whether it would like her to offer advertising in the brochure to generate income to offset the cost.

She would like to purchase logo sweatshirts for the staff working at the Fitness Center so that they are identifiable as employees.

The Summer Concert band line up currently includes The Taxmen, Flashback, and a fiesta band. The Baked Potato Festival (August 5th) will feature Souled Out. There will be another concert that weekend as well. She would like to approach the Town sports leagues for sponsorship of some of the concerts. Last year, the Chamber of Commerce made a monetary donation, and had “hands-on” volunteers who participated, which was quite helpful. She will see if the Chamber of Commerce will again provide sponsorship.

Lastly, she asked the Commission members if they felt “Big Screen Movie Night” should be offered again this year. Due to increased cost of the movie screen, it did not take place in 2005. The members felt that it should be a part of the programs again this summer.

7) **MONTHLY UPDATE OF NEW PROPERTY PROJECTS:**

Pam Gery stated there was nothing to report on.

8) **PROPOSED SLATE FOR ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS:**

Ronald Bergmark made a Motion, seconded by Randy Joiner, to approve the proposed slate of officers and directors as follows: Chairman: Victor Palma; Vice Chairman: Randy Joiner. All were in favor, none opposed, and the Motion passed.

9) **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Pam Gery stated that the Budget will need to be discussed at the next monthly meeting. This should include, but not be limited to, two new fields that may come on line, irrigation at the field on Mill Road, player benches and two bleachers with three-tiered handrails at the North Branford Intermediate School basketball courts, playground mats replaced under swing sets, additional mulching, basketball nets, tennis straps, new fitness center equipment, replacement of the Senior Center van via a new lease, and professional development monies to allow the Program Director and the Program Coordinator to attend seminars and classes.

10) **PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on February 27, 2006, late due to the Town holiday. "Proposed Slate for Elections of Officers and Directors" will be eliminated from the Agenda. The approval of both the December 19, 2005 and the January 23, 2006 Minutes will be on the Agenda. Lastly, "Budget Review and Discussion" will be added to the Agenda.

11) **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Randy Joiner made a Motion that the meeting be adjourned at 8:52 p.m. This Motion was seconded by Victor Palma. All were in favor, and the meeting adjourned.

Submitted By

Jeanette M. Marshall, Clerk