

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Special Meeting of March 14, 2005

7:30 p.m.

North Branford Community Center

MINUTES

1) **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Ronald Bergmark at 7:30 p.m.

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

Also present was Pam Gery, Director; Joanne Wentworth, Council Liaison; Doug Fisher, Lou Paternoster and John Artaiz, Basketball League; Brian Just, North Branford Little League; Keith Manceri, North Branford Football; and residents Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Caruso

3) **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Brian Lynch made a Motion to approve the Minutes of the January 24, 2005 meeting. Victor Palma seconded the Motion. Ronald Bergmark and Randy Joiner abstained. The Motion passed.

4) **TOWN SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS:**

An invitation was previously extended to the basketball league to attend this meeting to discuss the rising costs of custodial fees for in-school basketball programs. In attendance representing the basketball league were Doug Fisher, Lou Paternoster and John Artaiz. Ms. Gery noted that the cost has continually to rise yearly, and was approximately between \$16,000 and \$18,000 last year. This comprises 10% of our operating budget. She reported that budget cuts are being made to the Recreation Department's entire budget, and asked the basketball

representatives to look at ways they can help with paying or cutting back the custodial costs. A discussion was held, and suggestions were made to the representatives to increase their program entry fees, or restrict programs by not filling in all available time with “plug in” games or practices when openings become available. There also needs to be more accountability for the custodial slips that are turned in, perhaps having a member of the league verify the janitorial slips to a schedule as a cross reference to the time spent with their programs before the slips are given to the Recreation Department or the Finance Department for payment. It was also suggested that the league approach the Board of Education to determine if they would aid the league in the payment of some of the custodial fees through the Board of Education budget. Brian Lynch asked the representatives to revisit their budget as quickly as possible and communicate back with Ms. Gery.

Brian Just of the North Branford Little League advised that they have put in concrete pads and a retaining wall at the Babe Ruth field, and they want to continue to upgrade and rebuild the dugouts at Northford Park and Wall Field. They have put a roof on the concession stand at Wall Field. Fence repairs need to be done at Northford Park, and additional repairs need to be done at Wall Field. They hope to have the dugouts completed in April, weather permitting. He showed the Committee members plans of Elm City Architects for dugouts on the lower field of Totoket Valley Park. The dugouts will be built on the existing concrete pads. Brian Lynch had concerns that children could jump from the proposed retaining wall to the roof of the dugout, which poses a safety hazard. He asked Mr. Just to address this issue with the Building Department, and to get their comments on that concern. Generally speaking, the Committee likes the proposed improvements, and they gave their approval of those improvements.

Keith Manceri of Youth Football asked if his league’s field usage would be “status quo” from last year, and Pam Gery reported that since all seemed to be going well, they can continue on as they were. Brian Lynch said the field was no worse for the wear, and for the league to continue to use it guardedly and to keep in communication with Public Works Director Fran Merola for field maintenance. Mr. Manceri stated that he will address having the gates opened up for parking, and will have signs put up to direct vehicles to that parking area.

Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter thanked this Committee for approving the naming at the Totoket Valley Park the “Kyle Carpenter Memorial Field”. Mr. Carpenter presented a draft proposal of the signs to be placed on the field, which are being donated by Advance Vinyl Graphics, with the following specifications: a 4x6 aluminum sign to be hung at the backstop, attached to the fence, and a 8.5x60 wooden sign to hang under the existing sign at Totoket Valley Park, both of which read “Kyle Carpenter Memorial Field”. Ms. Gery advised the Carpenters that there may be changes at that field, and to be sure the sign is movable.

5) **PARKS AND FIELDS:**

With regard to the Swajchuk and Hyland properties, Pam Gery advised the members that there have been three meetings with the architect. She is looking toward possible trails, multi-use fields, and/or a town green. The Swajchuk property consists 85.8 acres, and the Hyland property consists 15.2 acres. A public hearing will be held regarding these properties at Jerome Harrison Elementary School on March 21, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. The Committee members

encouraged the representatives of the sports organizations present to attend this hearing, as the notice of publication states “public input is sought”.

6) **PROGRAM REVIEW:**

Ms. Gery stated the Spring Brochure will be out this weekend as an insert in the Totoket Times and The Sound. It will not be mailed to individual residences due to the expense involved. She has put together a Community Center room rental policy which clarifies non-profit/profit rentals. There will be a charge of \$30 per hour for the room rental, which will cover the expense of supervision, and the possibility of damage (ie., wall murals, mirrors, game room equipment.) The fees for camp have not been increased; however, she expects that custodial fees for summer camp will increase. The Weight Loss Challenge program has been implemented, and 12 teams of three persons each have signed up. The teams are comprised of 90% North Branford residents. This is a creative 3 month program to promote health, fitness and weight loss. It has received media attention from News Channel 8 and The Sound. She is still looking for a major sponsor to provide a grand prize to the winning team.

7) **BUDGET REVIEW**

Pam Gery stated that the Fitness Center/Community Center is doing well. There was a 50% renewal of memberships in January and February, and new members are joining daily. The teens seem to have lost interest in the Game Room, and it is not producing a large amount of money. Somewhere down the road, a decision must be made as to whether to keep that room open. Instead, it could be used as a programming room which could generate revenue.

8) **ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

Victor Palma made a Motion to elect Brian Lynch as Chairman. Ronald Bergmark seconded the Motion. All were in favor, and the Motion passed. Randy Joiner made a Motion to elect Ronald Bergmark as Vice-Chairman. Victor Palma seconded the Motion. All were in favor, and the Motion passed.

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

A discussion was held under “Parks and Fields”.

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

The next regularly scheduled meeting of April 18, 2005 will be cancelled due to a lack of quorum. A meeting will be scheduled for April 25, 2005 in its place. “Elections of Officers and Directors” will be removed from the Agenda; and “Other Business” will be placed back on.

11) **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Victor Palma made a Motion that the meeting be adjourned at 8:50 p.m. This Motion was seconded by Randy Joiner. All were in favor, and the meeting adjourned.

Submitted By

Jeanette M. Marshall, Clerk