

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
Special Meeting
Monday, November 29, 2010
6:30pm
Stanley T. Williams School

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:47pm

Members present/Members absent: **Present:** Frank Mentone, Victor Palma, Brian Lynch, Pamela Gery, Director Parks and Recreation; Lauren Munro, Recreation Supervisor; Richard Branigan, Town Manager; JoAnn Wentworth, Town Council Liaison; Brendan Cox, reporter from northbranford.patch.com. Absent: Anthony Fiorillo and Anthony Perrelli

Minutes of Previous Meeting October 18, 2010. Approval of minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

Town Sports Organizations: Youth Lacrosse submitted their field use permit. They applied to state for non-stock corporation. Youth Lacrosse is currently in the process of obtaining a 501(c) 3. Organization set up as a youth sports program, similar to others in town-a step program for the high school. There are no paid staff-all volunteers, the players pay a fee to participate and believed to be all residents of North Branford. The league is looking at 80 to 100 players sign-up. The coordinator of the league, Bill Lovelace, is concerned about time frame for approval. The club needs to begin advertising for sign up times. Last year the league used the field at Jerome Harrison. Last year Bill got their permit from the school directly. This year they are looking at the field on Mill Road. Brian thought that would make a good fit for Lacrosse. Field is somewhat ready. A drainage issue needs to be addressed. Fence is up. What if youth soccer wants to use the field, as they are having problems with the Northford field? Soccer currently has North Farms Park and Northford Park front and back. There is the possibility that the Mill Road field may be used for both soccer and lacrosse. Given the criteria for field use, it appears that the lacrosse club may be able to use the field at Mill Road. Concern was expressed with the Lacrosse program not having a non-profit status and the issue with the North Branford Baseball Club. Need to address criteria residency of members, fee schedule and company status.

Motion by Frank Mentone to permit the Lacrosse organization to use the field on Mill Road. The motion was seconded by Brian Lynch. Motion was passed. Lacrosse organization can use field.

The Little League organization would like to put up a temporary fence for the girls softball All-Star game. Softball fence should be 200 feet. The current fence is too far out for play for home runs. Need to address who would install the fence. Needs to be coordinated with Public Works department and when it would be installed.

Parks and Fields. A letter was sent to Jason Conforte to say that Eagle Scout project was approved. The Little League organization prepared a spread sheet of donations given by the organization for the upkeep of the baseball fields in town. This spreadsheet was distributed. Pam and Lauren went to a break out session at CRPA convention as to use of fields under town ownership. A variety of team clubs and organizations have sprouted up in the past few years and town property use has been an issue. Discussion centered on town policies-which organization gets to use the fields. North

Branford's current field usage policy addresses board of education activity, league activity or non-profit use. Commission wants to develop a non-profit use policy without disrupting current field uses. Richard indicated that North Branford is following the guidelines for a non-profit. The difference would be residency status and cost of joining the organization. Present users are volunteers who do so without compensation. The North Branford Baseball Club would be paying coaches. Brian asked how North Haven regulates field use. Victor indicated that in North Haven, the first choice is given to existing programs. Staff indicate to parents there is not much room for other groups on the fields. North Haven also books all the school fields for use. The Youth Basketball program is the only program in North Branford that must pay a fee for court use. Frank indicated that AAU basketball uses the high school during the spring. Not sure if AAU is they pay a fee.

Do we use residency percentages to determine who uses the field? Do we use percentage to determine the fee structure? If the children who use the North Branford Baseball Club for league purposes are town residents, what do we charge? The charter for Little League states children must be town residents. Residency may be a way of determining field use. If an organization is not affiliated with a town organization, the percentage would change. There was a group a few years ago, the Pirates were a break out group with 100% town residents. They were selective in their recruitment. That is the common differentiation. Pam will draft up a tentative policy and present it to the committee at a future meeting for the Commission to review. The town may need to incorporate a sliding fee schedule into this policy. We need to get the Board of Education involved with the policy for continuity. Richard indicated that the Superintendent currently has a policy. A draft will need to be developed incorporating a blended policy. Pam will need to meet with Scott and Don to review their policy. The question was posed: Why are the North Haven Fields scheduled through the Recreation Department? There was one master schedule. Do you think that there should be one central department responsible for scheduling field use? There must be shared information. At NBHS field use is scheduled through the Athletic Director, if someone wants the field they check and if no one is using it, it is given. There are some fields that should not be used- they should be kept for Varsity games. There are costs associated with maintenance and a need for preservation of the fields. We need to address who is a resident and who is not a resident. We need to figure out who is using the field to make a profit and who is using the field not to make the profit. We should not be in the business of competing with businesses set up in town that are designed for the purpose of making a profit. Need to be careful with residency as some leagues have grandfather clauses that allow children who move out to continue to play in town leagues. The current policy is outdated. The policy must be done in time to go through the town council, in order to have it in effect in time for leagues to get approval. Joanne indicated that any changes must go through the Town Council. Commission will review ordinance and policy. Both policy and ordinance must go through the Town Council, according to Joanne Wentworth. *Policy will be presented to Recreation Commission meeting scheduled for January 10, 2011 for review and approval. The town council will meet on January 18, 2010 and hopefully the Recreation Policy will be presented for approval at that time.* The Recreation Department will want to address a central booking process for field use with Scott-school sports programs. There have been issues where North Branford coaches are running clinics on one of the fields with the coach receiving payment for the clinic-profit. The concern was that there was no insurance which was a liability for the town. There have also been occasions when the Recreation Department has declined an application only to have it approved by the school system. In addition, there are fields that should not be used certain times of the year and fields that she only be used for high school varsity sports.

Program Review

Pam talked about the Holiday Fair. Numbers were down splitting the two locations. In the past, the fair combined the Community Center and the Senior Center into one location. The Ski program has a waiting list. Classes are also doing well. Bus programs are going well. Currently have programs at STW such as table tennis, and just finished-children's karate.

Budget Review and Discussion

Need to review the 802 account. The Recreation Department's 802 account cannot sustain a salary. The 226 account has 12,000 taken from it each year. The department is concerned about the ongoing ability to raise the \$12,000. The 802 salary for Program Supervisor was originally funded at \$15,000. and then reduced to \$10,000. The 802 is currently subsidizing the meal program. We do not want to increase fees towards the seniors who use the services to help make up the difference.

Monthly Update of New Property Projects

Recreation Center- A walk through the building was given by Pam for the committee members. A map of the tentative senior and recreation program was handed out. Pam gave a quick overview of the plan before members took the tour. Reviewed location of activity, classes and offices. Discussed program spaces for Senior programs and Recreation programs. Bathrooms would need to be installed as there are no bathrooms at the end of building where the senior activities would occur. There is the ability to reintroduce locker room space. Currently we have two programming rooms. We would have more options with rooms after hours. There is a gymnasium and kitchen. Pam believes that the program for seniors would triple in enrollment. This space would be more welcoming and inviting for active and more active members. There is concern about the drive to the perspective senior center distance from the old center. We currently have resources to provide residents a ride once a day for each end of town.

Senior Center- The town council would like to hear from the Commission whether this program meets the needs of the population the department currently serves. Joann said that there needs to be a public hearing with regards to the department moving to the new location. The hearing will need to be scheduled through the council. *The town council is looking for the Commission's opinion on what they toured tonight. The Town Council meeting is December 7th. With the commission's permission, Bryan and Pam can meet to plan the information for the Council Meeting. Commission members were advised to call in their input.*

Planning for Next Meetings' Agenda There should be some way to recognize folks in town. Hall of Fame idea was presented. Criteria for recognition would need to be developed. Do we want to recognize an individual's involvement with the Recreation Department solely or include individuals who give back to the Community- people who make a difference? Each department could suggest someone for the Hall of Fame. The Board of Education has their "Shining Star." Brian talked about it being a perpetual plaque. 144 names would cost about \$750.- a 22 x 30 inch size which includes an inscription, etc. How do we want to present this to the town council? Need to develop criteria on qualifications. Joanne indicated that usually 8-10 folks are nominated each year whose names would then be added to the Hall of Fame. The Commission could address the cost of the plaque with each of the leagues in town.

Adjournment. Regular meeting adjourned at 8:45pm, with a tour of the facility from 8pm to 8:35 pm. Next meeting is January 10, 2010 at 7:30 pm at the Community Center. Victor made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Frank Mentone. Vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:42pm.