

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting of Monday, March 24, 2008
7:30 p.m.
North Branford Community Center

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

1) **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brian Lynch at 7:37 p.m.

2) **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ronald Bergmark, Randy Joiner, and Brian Lynch
Also present was Recreation Director Pamela Gery

Marie Diamond arrived at 7:40 p.m.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Victor Palma

3) **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Taken up later in the meeting.

4) **TOWN SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS:**

Recreation Director Pam Gery reported on issues related to the use of soccer fields by the Women's Soccer League, Men's Soccer League and Rick Geremia's soccer camp. She indicated that in the past the Women's Soccer League and the soccer camp run by Rick Geremia have both been scheduled under Youth Soccer's field use permit. She stated that these groups should be taking out their own field use permits. She confirmed that the Men's Soccer League takes out their own field use permit and provides their own insurance. Don Winnicki, of the Men's Soccer League, has also sent documents confirming that the Men's Soccer League is a non-profit group. Pam Gery pointed out that Rick Geremia's soccer camp is a profitable program that is being run on Town fields under the Youth Soccer field use permit. She is working on obtaining the proper permits and insurance for the Women's Soccer League.

There was discussion on the need for programs like the soccer camp to run through the Recreation Department.

5) **PARKS AND FIELDS:**

Pam Gery reported on the need for repairs to the NBIS basketball and tennis courts. She has received an estimate of \$3,995 to make these repairs but they cannot be done until the weather gets warmer. Funds for these repairs are available in the current fiscal year's funding. She advised the Commission that Mr. Davis, Principal at NBIS, has indicated that they have had two accident reports at the basketball courts.

With respect to the Northford Park tennis courts, Pam Gery reported that the funding for these repairs is in the capital budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

There was discussion between Commission members and Pam Gery on the condition of the tennis courts in Town. The Commission felt that the courts need to be resurfaced and not just patched and repaired.

Pam Gery reported on the tennis courts at Stanley T. Williams School where the rocks are coming back up. There was discussion by the Commission on the need to shut down these courts until repairs can be done as once the problem has been identified the Commission must take action. The Commission requested that Pam Gery contact Public Works Director Fran Merola and request that he lock the tennis courts at the Stanley T. Williams School and that a sign be posted indicating that the tennis courts are closed until repairs can be made.

Pam Gery advised the Commission that the Pirates issue has been resolved. She indicated that Little League had not secured a permit for the high school field and that the Pirates will apply for a permit for the use of that field.

With respect to the Mill Road field, Chairman Brian Lynch requested a status report on the field as it looks to be useable and playable. Pam Gery will forward Commission members former Town Manager Karl Kilduff's packet of information of ongoing projects related to parks and fields in Town.

The Commission also requested that a letter be sent to the Interim Town Manager questioning what the status of the Mill Road field is. There was discussion on the possibility of having Youth Football practice on this field but moving the equipment could be an issue. It was also suggested that flag football could possibly use this field.

3) **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS of February 25, 2008**

Ronald Bergmark moved, seconded by Marie Diamond, to approve the Minutes of the February 25, 2008 meeting. Ronald Bergmark, Marie Diamond and Brian Lynch were in favor, Randy Joiner abstained, and the Motion passed.

6) **PROGRAM REVIEW:**

There was nothing new to report at this time.

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

Chairman Brian Lynch suggested that the Community Center be a separate Agenda item.

Pam Gery discussed the status of the Community Center. She questioned the timeline for the potential sale and relocation due to fitness members renewing their memberships for one year. The Commission noted that it would take approximately two years for the relocation of Wall Field to be completed so it was felt that the Community Center would stay until at least that point in time. With respect to fitness members, the Commission felt that these should remain yearly memberships and that in the event the Community Center is closed members would receive a prorated refund.

Pam Gery and Chairman Lynch updated the other Commission members on the status of the relocation of Wall Field.

The Commission felt that the design process for a new Community Center should begin now and that the Town should start looking for grants for this from the State. Commission members also suggested that a public survey be done with respect to a new Community Center and what the residents would like to see in it. A survey could be placed in the Totoket Times as well as on a survey website.

There was also discussion on swimming pools in the area and the use of Cedar Lake for swim lessons run by the Recreation Department.

Pam Gery updated the Commission on the new Town Manager. The Commission requested that the new Town Manager be invited to an upcoming meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

8) **BUDGET REVIEW AND DISCUSSION:**

Pam Gery reported on the budget public hearing held last week by the Town Council. She spoke on the deficit for the Community Center and the 2008/09 budget request in the amount of \$52,000 to cover this. She indicated that in 2006/07 the deficit for the Community Center was approximately \$14,000. This was, in part, due to the loss of such programs as the Weight Loss Challenge which brought in approximately \$6,000. The subsidy request for that fiscal year had been \$20,000 and the Council only approved \$5,000, so the Community Center started 2007/08 with a \$14,000 deficit. In the 2007/08 budget, the Community Center was given a \$12,500 subsidy which again did not cover the deficits. Pam Gery reported that over this past summer two air conditioning compressors needed to be replaced at a cost of \$8,000. She also noted that Youth and Family Services was relocated from the rear building and placed in two rooms in the Community Center with no revenue from the Town being given for this to the Community Center. The \$52,000 request is to catch up for deficits over the past two years as well as subsidize the Community Center for 2008/09. She noted that the Community Center is a Town facility.

Chairman Brian Lynch spoke on the comments that he made at the budget public hearing. He addressed the service which is provided to the community by the Recreation Department and noted that the fitness center helps to generate funds to help offset this service. He did not feel

that the fitness center should be the sole support of the Recreation Department and Community Center.

Pam Gery was concerned with the possible need to close the free day care or at least cut back and eliminate the evening hours. She spoke on the need for a long term plan.

There was further discussion on the 2008/09 budget between Commission members and Pam Gery. She spoke on the possible deficits in the budget.

There was discussion on the need for proactive marketing for the services of the fitness room and Community Center. Pam Gery suggested a banner outside of the Community Center as well as a possible postcard mailer. Chairman Brian Lynch also suggested that the Recreation Director go out to different service groups in Town to promote the fitness room and Recreation Department programs.

9) **OTHER BUSINESS:**

The Baked Potato Festival is scheduled for Saturday, August 2, with a rain date of Sunday, August 3. There will be a Thursday night concert that week as well as a Talent Show on Friday night.

Pam Gery spoke on the idea of having a plaque made in Jeanette Marshall's memory that would be presented at the Potato Festival and later hung in the Community Center. A donation in the Parks and Recreation Commission's name will be sent to Animal Haven in Jeanette's memory.

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

A new Agenda item will be added for the Community Center.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is April 21, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

11) **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Randy Joiner moved, seconded by Marie Diamond, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:40 p.m. All were in favor, none opposed, and the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:

Rosanne Krajewski, Clerk