

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD
Parks and Recreation Commission
Minutes – 6th December, 2010

A regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission was held on Monday 6th December, 2010 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Ralph Schipani presiding.

Present: Gary Gilbert, Robert Guadagno, Barbara Pine, Sue Robins and Ralph Schipani. Also present Director Rick Maynard, Parks Foreman Phil DeMond, Seniors Program Coordinator Terry Buckley and prospective member Judy Sullivan. Jenny Carrillo joined the meeting in progress (7:13p.m.).
Excused: Alexandra Gross and Calvin Page.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05p.m.

Public Forum: There were no members of the public present.

CORRESPONDENCE

Received:

Carolyn Cooper, South Fair St.,
Guilford, CT 06437

re: Notes concerning proposed pier in harbor
east river waters in Guilford

Ms. Pine asked why this letter had been sent to the Commission. Mr. Schipani replied that there had been some discussion as to whether or not the Department should be involved in this project because the proposed pier would be between Jacobs Beach and the marina. He added that he had discussed the project with the Town Planner and had been advised that the Commission should “take a step back” for now. The adjacent neighborhood association has endorsed this project and it has been approved by DEP. Mr. Gilbert said at the November workshop the Commission had decided not to take a position on this matter and he asked Mr. Maynard if anything had changed since then. Mr. Maynard replied no.

Guilford Planning & Zoning
Commission

11/3/10

re: Approval of concrete walkway from building exit
to sidewalk on south side of Community Center parking
lot.

Mr. Schipani read a letter from Pamela Dziurgot, 150 Forest Road, North Branford, CT 06472, stating that a group of friends used to meet at Chaffinch Island Park. Now one of those friends was in Hospice and she was asking permission to put a memorial bench at Chaffinch Island Park to honor this friend. Although this request was from an out-of-town resident the Commission felt that it was appropriate. Ms. Pine made a motion that the Commission grant permission for a memorial bench, similar in style to existing benches, to be installed at Chaffinch Island Park under the supervision of the Director and Parks Foreman. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. Ms. Pine added the suggestion that the placement of the bench should enhance the enjoyment of the park.

Mr. Schipani stated that a Certificate of Appropriateness had been received from the Guilford Historic District Commission for the work to be carried out in the courtyard on the south side of the Community Center building. The COA had one stipulation that the concrete pavers were to be

CORRESPONDENCE (continued)

reviewed with and approved by the HDC's subcommittee. Mr. Maynard reported that the lights on the Community Center sign had been realigned. With regard to the courtyard work, the stone edging has been installed where the garden will be. The landscape designer will write specifications this week for the additional work. Mr. Maynard said that most of the original plan had now been done.

Forwarded:

Ms. Pine read a letter dated 12/6/10 from Chairman Schipani and herself as Vice-Chairman to the Recreation Supervisor commending her for her individual and team contributions to the overall Department's successes and thanking her for her professionalism and successes. Ms. Pine asked the Commission to support and approve this letter. Ms. Robins added that earlier she had emailed the Recreation Supervisor with concerns about the Camp's special needs program and had been pleased to receive a very timely and positive response. Ms. Carrillo queried the context of this letter saying if it was done for one staff member then it needed to be done for all of them. She said she was asking for clarification on the process and what would drive the Commission to send this letter. Ms. Carrillo stated that in her opinion the Commission should not be in the business of undermining the Director. She felt its role was to deal with higher level matters and not with day-to-day running of the Department. By way of background, Ms. Pine stated that prior to the September 13th Commission meeting an argument took place between the Director and the Recreation Supervisor. Although the Recreation Supervisor apologized and this was accepted, a week later the Director placed a letter of censure in her file. When the Chairman and Vice-Chairman found out about this matter they asked if they could help improve communications. They did not wish to bring this matter to the whole commission and had hoped it could be resolved. It was agreed to let the matter rest for a month but by the end of October there was no resolution. Three weeks later another letter was written for the Recreation Supervisor saying she showed improvement. Mr. Gilbert agreed with Ms. Carrillo that the Commission's role was oversight and not day-to-day operations. However, he said it was important for everyone to work together and that the Commission did have the ability to provide intervention. Mr. Gilbert then made a motion that the Commission endorsed and supported the above-mentioned letter regarding the Recreation Supervisor. Ms. Robins seconded the motion. During discussion Ms. Carrillo said again that the Commission should work with the Director only and when it started working with other staff it was overstepping its boundaries. The motion was then carried as follows:-

IN FAVOR: Gilbert, Pine, Robins, Schipani

OPPOSED: Carrillo, Guadagno

ABSTAINED: None

Mr. Maynard stated that he had had a *discussion* with the Recreation Supervisor not an argument and that in the past he had placed letters in the files of other staff members. Ms. Carrillo then made a motion that letters of commendation for the value they add to the Department be written for all full time staff members. Mr. Guadagno asked why. Ms. Carrillo replied that if a letter was written for one staff member then it should be done for all of them. Mr. Guadagno disagreed saying that everyone was different and their performances were different. No-one seconded the motion and, therefore, it failed. Ms. Robins asked if it was common practice for letters to be put in Department files. Mr. Schipani

CORRESPONDENCE (continued)

replied that from the Commission's perspective only one letter had been written. Ms. Robins asked Mr. Maynard if this was a tool he used to help employees. Mr. Maynard replied that there were letters for commendable conduct on file. Ms. Robins asked if this was the first letter that had been written after an argument. Mr. Maynard replied no but that he did not remember how many others may have been written. Ms. Carrillo stated that the exhibited behavior was not something she would tolerate from her staff so why was this behavior acceptable. Mr. Gilbert agreed that staff should maintain composure and not raise their voices. However, he said in his 26 years in business staff had been given the opportunity to come into an office and vent behind closed doors without any repercussions. Ms. Carrillo pointed out that different companies had different ways of doing business. Mr. Gilbert also said that in his 6 years serving on the Commission there were a number of egregious infractions that were overlooked. One instance involved the police but this was not documented and no letter was placed in anyone's file. Mr. Gilbert felt there was a large discrepancy on how behavior among employees was handled. Ms. Carrillo noted that the Commission had been asking for more accountability and so she saw this recent action as a shift towards what the Commission wanted. Mr. Gilbert agreed that the Commission had been asking for more accountability but that there appeared to be selective enforcement of the rules. He added that he would not wish to see employees chased out of the business because of what appeared to be minor infractions. Ms. Robins said she was bothered that, at the level that the Recreation Supervisor performed, the first step after a disagreement would be a letter of censure. She did not feel that such a letter should be the first step. Mr. Schipani thought that since the Recreation Supervisor's apology was accepted that the letter of censure should have been removed from her file.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Gilbert made a motion to accept the Minutes of 25th October, 2010 with the following corrections: on page 1, under "Budget Process", the eighth sentence should say "...recommended the Commission *should include a list of all the items that have been voted on and approved for action in order to keep track of their completion*". On page 3, under "D. Coastal Area Management Plan", the existing sentence should be deleted and replaced with "*No report*". Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried with three votes in favor. Ms. Carrillo and Mr. Guadagno abstained since they were not present at the October meeting. Ms. Pine then made a motion to approve the Minutes of 16th November, 2010 with the following corrections: on page 1, Ms. Carrillo should be listed as "excused". On page 2, under "Proposed Budget Discussion, #6", the fifth sentence should say "...Parks Foreman's *budget* had been reviewed". Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it was carried with three votes in favor. Ms. Carrillo and Mr. Guadagno abstained since they were not present at the November meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Capital Budget: Mr. DeMond said he had been asked to talk about the Department's trash removal system. He noted that he personally felt that trash removal should be kept under the Department. Mr. DeMond stated that he did not think this work would be contracted out, nor would Public Works take it on. He felt keeping it within the Department would save the town money, would provide control and minimize turf and field damage. Mr. DeMond said his personnel were another set of eyes for the Department and while they were working around town they could evaluate field conditions, check for vandalism and other damage. His personnel also knew where to drive on fields to avoid irrigation

Capital Budget (continued)

systems, etc. Mr. DeMond said he could not afford to keep repairing damage caused by others. Also keeping this work in-house provided flexibility during bad weather. Mr. Schipani noted that the trash collection vehicle (\$80,600) was still in the capital budget. Mr. DeMond stated that safety was of the first importance and was his personal goal. Under the current collection system there have been several workmen's compensation claims and Mr. DeMond said he would like to reduce these. He added that the insurance carrier (CIRMA) had recommended a trash collection vehicle, as had the Guilford Safety and Standing Fields Committees, and Public Works' mechanic foreman. Mr. Gilbert said the Commission was not opposed to a trash collection vehicle, he just had concerns regarding procedural issues. Earlier in the year Mr. DeMond had been asked to engage the Commission in discussions on these issues but this did not take place. Mr. Gilbert noted that the Commission was responsible for putting together a budget request so he had a problem with expenditures that the Commission knew relatively little about. This should have been brought to the Commission in September. He added that the Commission could not answer questions about costs of hiring a private contractor, performance bonds, costs for curb service versus driveway service because it had not done its due diligence. Mr. Gilbert said he was not opposed to a trash collection vehicle but would be uncomfortable being in front of the Boards of Selectmen and Finance without having done due diligence. Ms. Robins said she had thought Mr. Maynard was going to provide the Commission with specifics and that she did not feel qualified to have a discussion on this topic.

Mr. Maynard circulated information for discussion purposes only. Ms. Pine stated that she did not dispute the safety issue but if the trash collection vehicle was turned down there was no Plan B. She also said she was not clear on why a trailer was not a good option. Mr. Gilbert asked if the trash vehicle was rejected by the Board of Finance would the trailer be better than nothing. Mr. Guadagno mentioned that Public Works did a lot of research before purchasing a new vehicle and the Commission needed to do the same thing. He felt one truck could not be purchased just to do one task but that it needed to be versatile. Mr. DeMond said he had initially proposed a multi-use, 5-day-a-week truck but was told that was too expensive so he had returned to the trash vehicle. Ms. Pine said if the Commission had a plan to purchase a basic truck it needed to know the cost of this and could items be added in future years. Mr. DeMond replied yes. Ms. Pine asked the cost of a first investment and Mr. DeMond replied approximately \$95,000. Mr. Gilbert felt if the Commission supported this proposal it could be sold to the Town. Ms. Pine also said the cost of Workmen's Compensation claims was needed. Mr. Maynard replied approximately \$18,000. Mr. DeMond noted that when a worker was unable to work he could not hire a replacement worker. Mr. Maynard said last year a truck for \$125,000 had been considered but the Commission said it was too expensive so other options were reviewed. He felt the staff had done its homework and provided options. Mr. Guadagno asked how bad the current trucks were and Mr. DeMond replied very bad. Mr. Gilbert noted that he had not heard Mr. DeMond say that the trash vehicle would replace an old truck. Mrs. Sullivan asked if the trash vehicle could be used for other tasks and Mr. DeMond said no. Ms. Pine asked if a multi-body truck could be used for other things and Mr. DeMond replied yes. Ms. Pine felt this was the stronger argument. She suggested that a written proposal was needed for a truck including information on safety and cost effectiveness, multi-uses, etc. Ms. Carrillo thought the Commission could build a more robust business proposal.

Mr. DeMond said there were three concepts: a multi-use truck, a trash collection vehicle and a trash trailer. He did not feel the trash trailer concept was feasible because it was too long, too heavy and too

Capital Budget (continued)

cumbersome. When reversing the trailer it was a 2-man operation and it tended to jackknife. Should the trailer become stuck it could not get out by itself whereas a truck could. The trash truck would be 23' 6" long; a regular dump truck with trash trailer would be a total of 41' long. An empty trash truck would be 20,000lbs; a regular dump truck with trailer = 24,000lbs. Mr. DeMond said under normal circumstances it was hard to empty the trash cans around the Green and it would be even harder to gain access with a 41' long train. Mr. Schipani requested information on the trash vehicle and a multi-use truck for the Commission's next budget workshop. Another consideration was that a trash vehicle would only provide 40% usage whereas a multi-use truck would provide 100% usage. Mr. Gilbert said Mr. DeMond had made a compelling argument for not using a trash trailer. He agreed with Ms. Carrillo that the Commission could provide a more complete robust plan. He noted that Mr. DeMond had an opportunity to pitch for a replacement vehicle. Mr. DeMond mentioned that he would not have room to store the trash vehicle and so it would have to sit outside. He added that his trucks needed to be replaced so if the trash vehicle was purchased he would still need to ask for two new trucks next year.

Mr. DeMond left the meeting at 8:50p.m.

Mr. Schipani made a motion to change the order of the agenda and take the Reimbursable Report next. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

E. Reimbursable Report: Mrs. Buckley briefly reviewed the Reimbursable Report. She noted that the Trips/Events section had lost money but that this was expected. The credit card fees figure was provided by the Finance Department and could vary from quarter to quarter.

BILLS

Mr. Gilbert made a motion to approve the bills presented for payment. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. MTD Actual was \$86,118.56.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Contacted Beebe Marina to remove dock from Lake Quonnipaug; attended following meetings: Field Committee, Field Walk, Field Users meeting, Wellness Committee, CIRMA seminar on Risk Transfer, CRPA State Conference, BOS meeting re Handcraft Fair; contacted CL&P and CT Water Company to disconnect meters for winter (saves hundreds of dollars); worked on budget; Met with SARAH reps about recycling; met with Tree Lighting Committee; submitted grant for small engine replacement; reviewed and signed invoices; met with Commission subcommittee about restructuring options.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Seniors Program Coordinator (written): **Meetings:** attended Liaison Network System meeting; met with VNA representative to review programs/services; met with Tours of Distinction/Landmark Tours and Friendship Tours representatives to discuss possible trips/activities; attended 2 SILL meetings; attended 2 Staying Put meetings; met with YMCA director to discuss possible senior swim

A. Seniors Program Coordinator: (continued)

program; met with Jackie Simonetti re establishing Senior Chorus; met with representative from Home Instead re Be a Santa to a Senior Program; met with Woody Wilkins regarding possible woodworking program; met with Seniors' budget committee. **Programs:** Fall Risk Assessment Program; Flu Clinic; develop senior program and services display board to provide info at holiday fair; Democrats/Republicans served lunch to seniors and discussed issues; bocce banquet; arranged for Water Strides water aerobic program at YMCA (20 participants enrolled); publicized and held organizational meeting for Senior Chorus with 10 in attendance; Wonders of Wood Working Program established; monthly newsletters composed/distributed; arranged for Todd Hart to speak to seniors re Be A Booster program; developed and distributed October/November senior newsletter; developed 55+ section of Winter Brochure. **Trips/Events:** LaBocca Restaurant with Spanish instructor, Lexington & Concord, Christmas Tree Shop, Elizabeth von Trapp at The Kate, Seniors Halloween party, Seniors Thanksgiving luncheon, Senior Citizen scene at Haunted House event, Annual Holiday Fair, Mini Fair, delivered Thanksgiving baskets, set date and began publicity for 55+ Focus Group. **Statistics: Meals Program:** Meals served at Community Center October 2010 – 555 (October 2009 – 563), November 2010 – 522 (November 2009 – 502). Meals on Wheels for October 2010 – 1,943 (October 2009 – 1,902), November 2010 – 1,949 (November 2009 – 1,628). **Bus Program:** Total including medical, personal care, shopping, trips: Total trips October 2010 – 171, November 2010- 138; Total passengers October 2010 – 575, November 2010 – unavailable.

Mrs. Buckley said she was enjoying her new job. Ms. Pine recommended publicizing the Senior Chorus program among the younger seniors. Mrs. Buckley mentioned that she hoped to start a Pickle Ball Program. A demonstration may be set up at the Christmas lunch.

B. Recreation Supervisor (written): Continued to work with Computer Company on department website; attended Wellness meeting; completed winter brochure – registration begins 12/8/10; returning staff letter send 12/2/10; Community Needs Survey – a blast email was sent to Department's current users and an article was published in Guilford Courier, 280 households responded. **Items of Interest or Areas to Address or Discuss:** improvements to Jacobs Beach; 35% of people utilize the website, word of mouth and newspaper to find out about programs – 65% of those responding find out about events/programs via seasonal brochure; maintenance of restrooms – could be cleaner; Skate Park – is it needed; blowing leaves off tennis courts during fall/spring; offer more afternoon programs; offer more variety with summer concerts – utilize local groups or high school groups; signage for parks; more boats and adding boats at Jacobs Beach.

C. Parks Foreman (written): Fall infield work completed on 22 infields; removed leaves from the Green, Community Center, Library, Lathrop House and tennis courts; irrigation systems/bathrooms winterized; all field equipment brought in and inspected, grills cleaned and covered; worked on budget request; Adams A & B Infields – put new sod on parts of the infields by Little League; Bittner C Infield – renovated by Little League and maintenance personnel, would like to do the same work on Bittner Softball next spring; Ice Rink – installed/filled at Guilford Lakes School; all items ready at Mill Pond; evaluations for spring renovations being done.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Standing Fields Committee: No report.

B. Land Acquisition Commission: Ms. Carrillo reported that the December meeting had been cancelled.

C. Policy on Community Center Use: Ms. Pine stated that some of the Community Center's guests were being less than careful of the building. She asked that the Commission send a letter requesting better behavior. Mr. Maynard said he had sent an email to one group requesting a meeting. Mr. Gilbert stated that he liked the idea of sending a letter from the Commission. Mr. Schipani and Mr. Maynard will resolve this matter and, if necessary, send a formal letter.

D. Coastal Management Plan: No report.

E. Community Center Sign: See above under "Correspondence" on page 1.

F. Bittner Park Sign: Mr. Maynard reminded the Commission that materials had been reviewed at the September meeting. He said he and Mr. Page had met with the one contractor who had responded to the RFP. Estimated cost will be \$5,772. For comparison Mr. Maynard said the Community Center sign had cost approximately \$5,405 for a smaller sign. He noted that the Bittner Park sign was being replaced so it would be the same size, etc. Ms. Pine noted that the wording on the sign should be consistent with other signage. Mr. Gilbert then made a motion to approve up to \$5,772 to replace the Bittner Park sign. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

G. Plan of Conservation and Development: Ms. Pine reported that this committee had sent out a survey. It is online so she asked Commission members to respond.

H Community Center Landscaping: See above under "Correspondence" on page 1.

I. Community Center Roof Repair: This project has been completed.

J. Sarah Recycling: Mr. Maynard stated that costs for one year would be \$6,500. Ms. Millman will be writing a contract.

K. Website: Mr. Schipani said he thought the new web site looked great.

L. Jacobs Beach Boat Rack: This project has been completed. Ms. Pine asked if the Eagle Scout had been thanked for his work. Mr. Maynard said he had sent an email. Ms. Pine asked that a letter be sent on the Department's letterhead.

M. Administrative Assistant: Mr. Schipani reported that Bonnie Francis had been hired and had started work.

N. Parks and Recreation Survey: Mr. Schipani said the comments were interesting. Ms. Pine mentioned that it had been agreed that Mr. Maynard would survey Commission members for items to be placed on the agenda. Mr. Schipani replied that he would prefer the members to take the lead on this.

O. Budget: After brief discussion it was agreed to hold a second budget workshop on Monday 13th December, 2010 at 5:30p.m. in the Guilford Community Center. Referring to the proposed budget

O. Budget: (continued)

information, Mr. Schipani said it appeared one maintenance worker was receiving a large pay rise. Mr. Maynard replied that this was the result of an earlier agreement between the union and the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Pine noted that the actual savings from department changes in staff was approximately \$61,000 which represented a reduction of 9% in salaries. She suggested an explanation of this should be added to the bottom of the page. Mr. Gilbert said seasonal maintenance issues could be discussed at the upcoming workshop. Ms. Pine asked if funds were given back on utilities why was this year's budget request not reduced by that amount. Mr. Maynard replied that the figures were supplied by the Finance Department which was more aware of upcoming trends.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Re-structure Option: The Commission briefly reviewed three options provided by the Human Resources director following discussions with the Director and the Commission's subcommittee. Option A moved the receptionists under the Recreation Supervisor. Option B incorporated Option A and moved the part-time custodians under the full time custodian. Option C incorporated Options A and B to create an assistant director position. Mr. Gilbert felt consolidating the custodians was the opposite of what the task force report had recommended. He also felt that the new seniors program coordinator seemed very busy and might need some assistance. Mr. Gilbert said he was looking at this from an efficiency standpoint. He also suggested having an assistant director who had nothing to do with parks. Ms. Carrillo pointed out that the subcommittee had drawn up options for the Commission to discuss and nothing was set in stone. Mr. Maynard stated that when a seniors staff member had been out on extended medical leave some reassignment of tasks was done so that all the necessary work was completed. He noted that Tracy did special events for the whole department and that someone was helping the seniors program co-ordinator. Mr. Gilbert said that a lot of money was being spent on part-time wages (\$273,000) and that if some restructuring was done he believed things could be more efficient. Ms. Carrillo pointed out that a lot of the part-time work was seasonal and that this needed to be understood. Mr. Schipani said the Commission should be looking for other opportunities to improve efficiency. Ms. Carrillo noted that in this instance it was less useful to have a subcommittee working on restructuring issues as discussion among Commission members generated a lot of ideas. It was suggested holding meetings in January/February 2011 to discuss specific topics.

B. DEP Equipment Grant (LEEF): Mr. Maynard stated that this grant was for small items such as weed whackers and that it was 80% reimbursable.

C. Fees for Spring Programs: It was agreed this item would be discussed at the next budget workshop.

D. McManus Pier: See above under "Correspondence" on page 1.

F. Chairman Nomination: Following brief discussion a motion was made to nominate the following officers for 2011-2012:-

Chairman:	Ralph Schipani
Vice-Chairman:	Barbara Pine

Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00p.m.

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission will be held on Monday 3rd January, 2011 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary