

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes – 7th February, 2011

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Monday 7th February, 2011 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Ralph Schipani presiding.

Present: Gary Gilbert, Robert Guadagno, Sue Robins, Ralph Schipani and Judy Sullivan. Also present Director Rick Maynard. Excused: Jenny Carrillo, Calvin Page and Barbara Pine.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07p.m.

Public Forum: Mr. Schipani stated that a copy of a letter had been presented to him just before the meeting began and that Mr. Maynard had received this letter earlier today. Mr. Schipani read the letter, dated 2/7/11, which was from members of the Guilford Parks & Recreation Adult Fitness Program. It stated in part that the letter was to formally request that the Guilford Parks & Recreation Department permit Connie DeCicco's classes to be held on days when the Guilford Public Schools were closed due to inclement weather. The participants felt that they could make their own determination as to the severity of the weather and its impact on driving. Mr. Schipani noted that a petition containing 55-60 signatures had been submitted with the letter. Four of the class participants spoke in favor of this request saying when the building was open and the instructor could attend that they should be allowed to make their own decision to participate; that they were dependent on the fitness program and would really like to take the classes; that they would really appreciate being able to take classes when the schools were closed. Mr. Schipani stated that he personally felt it would be very difficult to leave decisions on whether or not classes took place to a variety of people. He felt the decision should be made by one person. He also suggested that allowing one instructor to hold classes on her own decision would set a very bad precedent. Mr. Schipani noted that decisions about inclement weather were made with input from the Board of Selectmen, Police Department, etc. He further pointed out that the reason the Community Center was open when the schools were closed was in order to support the Public Works Department during snow storms, and that it was open for this one reason only. Mr. Schipani said that he knew the staff had gone to extremes to reschedule classes which were cancelled due to the very inclement weather. Mr. Maynard added that class schedules would be made as full as possible, but he asked the residents to bear in mind that this had been an extreme winter. He said the department was trying to extend classes 2-3 weeks into April. Mr. Gilbert thanked the residents for attending the meeting which he said was a nice testament for Ms. DeCicco's classes. He added that to be fair to the Director and department staff if a policy change was made it would have to be for everyone and the Commission would have to weigh the impact of this. Mr. Gilbert then made a motion that the Commission Chairman and the Director would decide on the best policy with input from staff and other relevant parties. Ms. Robins seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. One resident stated that their approach was for an exception to be made to the policy, not a change. Mr. Schipani replied that what was done for one instructor would have to be done for all of them. He also felt that control of a program could not be placed in the hands of the instructor. Mr. Gilbert said any policy change would have to be something that the Director and staff could manage.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Checked Mill Pond skating – open 8 days, Lakes school ice rink open 6 days; wrote annual report; met with Parks Foreman and staff about reimbursable projects; attended Emergency Services meeting about snow storm preparation/possibility of opening Community Center for emergency shelter; met with maintenance crew re snow removal; presented budget with Commission Chairman and Parks Foreman to BOS; cancelled classes on snow days; attended Excellence in Customer Service training with office staff; completed report for FEMA for snow storm; submitted payroll and material info to Finance Office after each storm; held staff meetings; attended the following meetings: Field Committee, Safety Committee, Department Heads, BOS; water leak from AHU #4 by kitchen exit, contacted Commercial Air, Fire Department and electrician – a coil had burst, repair part ordered.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Recreation Supervisor (written): All new Parks & Recreation web site launched; provided statistics for Annual Report; attended Community Mobilization meeting; conducted several interviews for returning camp staff; attended CCM Training re 'Achieving Excellence in Customer Service'; 2nd Adult Dodgeball Tournament, 1/15/11 at Guilford High School – 11 teams registered; contacted Branford/Madison P&R departments re snow policies/cancellations and beach passes; Cancellations: Hamden: School Closed – all programs (day/evening) are cancelled, Branford: Schools closed, classes during day are generally cancelled, they evaluate evening programs, instructors do not get paid for no class dates, Madison: Generally if schools are closed they cancel morning classes and then re-evaluate afternoon time, instructors do not get paid for no class dates. Proposal: the policy we currently have is effective on program cancellations, no changes are recommended; Beach Passes: Branford: \$5 for residents to enter Branford Point/Foote Park – no non residents allowed sticker for car, Madison: \$40 for residents – sticker for car, \$20 for each additional car, non-residents cannot purchase season pass - \$25 per day. Proposal: Continue to have beach passes for both residents and non-residents, however change to window stickers and have an additional fee of \$20 for 2nd car, if possible it would be more efficient to have the same prices (either per person or per car) at both Jacobs Beach and Lake Quonnipaug for all 7 days of the week. Met with Director, Parks Foreman and Seniors Program Coordinator about reimbursable projects: 1. Preschool Playscape - \$10,000; 2. Jacobs Beach Design; 3. Sound system in exercise room; 4. Closet in Menunkatuck; 5. Carpeting – hallways, Menunkatuck, Alexander; 6. Office furniture; 7. Lake Quonnipaug boats – contacted Lake Compounce/Quassy to inquire where they purchased boats. They utilize Kay Park Recreation, pedal cruiser – 4 person paddle boat \$2,000; 8. Shed/storage for Lake Quonnipaug; 9. Wall mounted televisions for Quonnipaug, Menunkatuck, Faulkner; 10. Purchase several elliptical/treadmills for Alexander – remove a table and shelving across back wall; 11. Technology - \$7,100: a. switch – update to latest technology which will speed things up with client computers on the network; b. Web server – current computer is at least 9-10 years old with no hardware replacement support (out of warranty); c. Laptop – the latest laptop will be up to date and will handle the various website software, this laptop will be configured so the Recreation Supervisor can update the website from home if needed. Later in the meeting Mr. Gilbert suggested setting up a mid-month workshop to discuss some of the information provided in the Recreation Supervisor's report.

B. Seniors Program Coordinator (written): Trip to Backstage Players concert in Clinton; meeting with Housing Authority representative about programs; budget committee meeting; focus group to

B. Seniors Program Coordinator (continued)

discuss 55+ younger senior programs, trips, ideas; special dessert provided by Apple Rehab; banking seminar on on-line banking; attended CCM training at Fire Department; pizza and a movie; met with tour companies re 2011 trip options; met with Friendly Visitor representative about expanding program awareness; numerous programs and events cancelled and/or rescheduled due to weather. Statistics: meals served at Community Center for December 2010 – 460 (December 2009 – 438), January 2011 – 248 (January 2010 - 387; Meals on Wheels for December 2010 – 2,135 (December 2009 – 1,798), January 2011 – 1,636 (January 2010 – 1,784); Bus Program: total including medical, personal care, shopping, trips – November: total trips – 138, total passengers – 459, December: total trips – 244, total passengers – 371, January: total trips – 150, total passengers – 227.

C. Parks Foreman (written): Snow tasks: parking lots, sidewalks, roads with DPW, rechecking everything as needed, maintenance of equipment between storms, assisted DPW cleaning up snow in front of stores in center of town; personnel fatigued, taking a beating with snow storms; minimal work done on Mill Pond and Lakes ice rink, snow/ice storms limiting what can be done; started painting barrels/picnic tables; plowed/sanded route for Rotary Road Race; behind schedule on winter tasks because of snow storms.

CORRESPONDENCE**Forwarded:**

Memo to Maintenance staff from 1/28/11 re: thank you for excellent job done during storm on
Director Maynard 1/27/11

Greg Heudorfer, 19 Ironwood 2/3/11 re: thank you for volunteering to clear ice rink at
Road, Guilford, CT 06437 Guilford Lakes School

Received:

Memo from First Selectman 2/3/11 re: thank you for hard work and dedication in
Joseph Mazza maintaining roads, town sidewalks and parking lots

Mr. Schipani announced that he had received a letter of resignation from Alexandra Gross. However, a replacement candidate may be available and Mr. Schipani said he would pursue this.

Freedom of Information Issues: Mr. Schipani reminded Mr. Maynard that meeting dates for each calendar year should be filed in the Town Clerk's Office. Also, meeting agendas are required to be posted on the Town's web site.

Approval of Bills: The Minutes of 3rd January, 2011 were accepted as presented with the following addition: on page 4, in the second paragraph, it should be noted that Board of Selectmen representatives Cynthia Cartier and Charles Havrda attended the meeting with First Selectman Joseph Mazza.

BILLS

Mr. Gilbert made a motion to approve the bills presented for payment. Ms. Robins seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. MTD Actual is: \$82,106.65.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Standing Fields Committee: Mr. Schipani announced that SFC had not yet reached a decision regarding fees. On the “Field Use Fee Proposal” Mr. Maynard stated that the last line under #3 had been added. Mr. Gilbert said he thought the overall plan was good. However, he wished to be sure that whatever the fees were they could be easily implemented. Mr. Gilbert said he would not want staff to have to go out and calculate fees, thus creating additional work for the staff. Mr. Schipani agreed with this.

B. Bittner Park Sign: Mr. Maynard stated that the changes discussed at last month’s meeting had been made. Ms. Robins made a motion to approve the Bittner Park sign as shown at tonight’s meeting. Mrs. Sullivan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

C. Community Center Landscaping: Mr. Maynard said there was nothing new to report.

D. Budget 2011-2012: Mr. Maynard circulated information on budget reductions (draft). The Board of Selectmen cut a truck (\$40,000) and Senior meals subsidy (\$5,000). For further cuts Mr. Maynard said in the Capital Budget the request for two compressors could be reduced to one (\$30,000), and the number of recycling bins could be reduced from 30 to 20 (\$4,000). Under the Operating Budget maintenance of the Green could be reduced (\$3,920), and the fireworks could be eliminated (\$7,200). Mr. Schipani stated that following an earlier budget meeting the Department was given 24 hours in which to decide on further cuts. Since there was not time to contact the entire Commission, Mr. Schipani said he had made the arbitrary decision to eliminate the July fireworks display. However, since then there have been inquiries about funding this event using private funds.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55p.m. so Commission members could attend the Board of Selectmen’s meeting. The Park & Recreation Commission meeting was reconvened at 8:35p.m. and discussion of the budget was continued.

Mr. Gilbert stated that he did not think the Department would get a F150 truck next year and so he felt it made sense to install a plow on an existing truck. To be proactive a mount for a plow should be installed. Mr. Schipani said some people appeared to query what the Department used its trucks for. He said in the future vehicles should be purchased which were adaptable. Mr. Guadagno asked how many plow trucks the Department had. Mr. Maynard replied 3. Mr. Guadagno assumed these were used under extreme conditions when PWD asked for extra help. However, Mr. Maynard replied that the Department worked on almost every snow storm. Mr. Schipani said he was bothered by the fact that a Department worker could assist PWD during a winter snow storm but a PWD worker could not assist the Department with mowing in the summer. As long as the PWD worker was receiving his regular compensation Mr. Schipani said he did not see what was wrong with this scenario. Mr. Maynard stated that the Department needed to make the argument that it was no less important than other town departments. He had high praise for those departments but said residents came to the Recreation Department because of the positive benefits they received. The Department had tremendous face to

D. Budget 2011-2012 (continued)

face contact with residents which was exponentially more than any other department. Mr. Gilbert noted that the Department's programs were more essential when people did not have funds for vacations. He expressed another concern that there could be a suggestion to save funds by shutting down a field. Mr. Gilbert felt this would not necessarily be cost effective since it could cause higher wear and tear on other fields and thus higher costs to repair this. He added that if the townspeople rejected the budget then the Department would have to take a hard look at what it did with grounds and fields. Mr. Guadagno said we were gradually losing the quality of life.

Later in the meeting the Commission discussed capital improvements at the tennis courts which were supposed to come from town funds. At tonight's BOS meeting, it was switched to the Department's Reimbursable Account. Mr. Gilbert noted that since the Commission voted on these funds, this project could be deferred. However, it was agreed that the cost of this project should be shared with BOE.

E. Restructure Options: Tabled.

F. Room Use Fees: Mr. Maynard briefly reviewed "Room Reservation Fees". Mr. Gilbert said the fee could be waived for a non-profit holding one meeting. However, a group meeting on multiple weekdays should be reviewed. Mr. Maynard noted that a non-profit using multiple rooms would receive a discount. Mr. Gilbert said to not differentiate between weekdays and weekends but to list a weekday/single use fee. The Commission reviewed fees to be charged to specific groups. Referring to the Jazz Collective, Mr. Maynard said he had asked this group for a budget. The program does pay to bring in professional musicians but the organizer works on a volunteer basis. The Department co-sponsors a summer concert. Mr. Gilbert asked if raising the fee would be a problem. He added that this could be offset by paying more towards the summer concert. Mr. Gilbert then made a motion that under "Fees for Groups Co-sponsored by P&R Department" there would be a 50% discount, and under "Fees for Multiple Week Reservations", 'no fee' should be changed to 'weekday/single use'. Fee changes will be implemented this year for Starship Dance Theater and Neighborhood Music School, and will be brought in for the Jazz Collective over the next two years. Mrs. Sullivan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

G. Beach Pass Fees: Mr. Maynard stated that Guilford was different to Madison because state and federal money had been involved in the purchase of the beaches. This meant that fees for non-residents could not be more than double the resident fee. By way of background, Mr. Maynard said there used to be a sticker system but residents parked on Route 77 and entered Lake Quonnipaug beach for free. The Police Department was concerned about the safety of people walking along Route 77 and so a beach pass system was initiated. At present two beach passes can be purchased for \$40 but Mr. Maynard recommended charging \$20 for the second pass. Perhaps non-residents could also be charged \$20 for a second pass. Mr. Maynard queried allowing Seniors to have a free pass. Mr. Gilbert suggested raising the senior fee from \$5 to \$10 but if a senior could not pay to allow a free pass. Mr. Schipani agreed since the Department subsidized Seniors in many other areas. Mr. Gilbert suggested limiting the number of children which were included on a pass. He also recommended removing the Saturday/Sunday fees and just having a daily fee for everything. Mr. Guadagno expressed concern that the Department was starting to become expensive. Mr. Maynard felt the increase in fees could be justified by increased services such as boats at Lake Quonnipaug. Mr. Gilbert mentioned that improvements at Jacobs Beach had also been discussed. However, Mr. Guadagno felt fees at Lake Quonnipaug should not be increased because of the poor economy. Mr. Maynard pointed out that the

G. Beach Pass Fees (continued)

biggest use was weekends at Lake Quonnipaug and that fee was not being increased, just the daily use fee. Mr. Gilbert mentioned that the Department had been told by the BOS to review its fees. Also the Department wished to promote seasonal passes. He then made a motion to raise seasonal pass fees as follows: Resident Household - \$50, Senior Resident - \$10, Individual Adult - \$25; Non-Resident Household - \$100, Senior Non-Resident - \$20, Individual Non-Resident Adult - \$50. Daily Fees: Resident - \$7 (Quonnipaug), \$7 (Jacobs Beach per car), Non-Resident - \$10 (Quonnipaug), \$10 (Jacobs per car). Different fees for Saturday/Sunday would be eliminated. Ms. Robins seconded the motion and it was carried as follows:-

IN FAVOR: Gilbert, Robins, Schipani, Sullivan
 OPPOSED: Guadagno
 ABSTAINED: None

Mr. Maynard asked if children under 5 should be free. Following brief discussion Mr. Schipani made an addendum to the above motion that there would be no charge for children under 5. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Fireworks: Mr. Schipani made a motion authorizing Mr. Maynard to pursue private funding for this event. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

B. Spring/Summer Brochure: Mr. Maynard pointed out that the winter programs were running late because of the extreme winter weather. He suggested combining the spring/summer brochure noting that it would be divided into separate sections. Mr. Gilbert made a motion to approve this suggestion. Mr. Guadagno seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

C. Summer Camp Rain Location: Mr. Schipani stated that the plan was to ask the Board of Education to sanction an approved indoor location for summer camp. Mr. Gilbert recommended Mr. Maynard meet with the Superintendent of Schools on this matter.

D. Annual Report July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010: Copies of the annual report were provided to the Commission members.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Guadagno made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:10p.m. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
 Recording Secretary