

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD Recreation and Park Commission Minutes – 3rd May, 2010

A regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission was held on Monday 3rd May, 2010 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Ralph Schipani presiding.

Present: Gary Gilbert, Alexandra Gross, Robert Guadagno, Jeff Hedberg, Barbara Pine, Sue Robins and Ralph Schipani. Also present Director Rick Maynard and Parks Foreman Phil DeMond. Joining the meeting in progress were Jenny Carrillo (7:35p.m.), Administrative Assistant Terry Buckley (8:00p.m.), and Senior Program Coordinator Virginia Czaplicki (8:00p.m.). Absent: Calvin Page.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06p.m. Alexandra Gross introduced herself saying she was acting general counsel for the State Board of Labor Relations.

Public Forum: Wayne Sala, 1470 Durham Road, introduced himself and stated that he had moved to Guilford in the winter of 2007. The following spring Mr. Sala said he had begun hearing a really loud noise which he thought was caused by a construction project. He then discovered that it was coming from the skate park. Mr. Sala said there never was any end to the noise and that it sounded like banging two trash cans together. He added that while he knew he had moved next to a park the skate park was not like a baseball game which ended after a specific time period. Mr. Sala said the windows of his house vibrated and the noise was making him a nervous wreck. He felt it was the older youths that were heavy on their skateboards. Mr. Sala asked if it would be possible to close the skate park at an earlier time as he went to bed at 8:00p.m., and to install a sound barrier on one side. He stated that the noise was very intrusive and that no-one had told him about the noise when he bought his house. Mr. Sala said he hoped the Commission could help him with some kind of solution to his problem. Mr. Schipani stated that Mr. Maynard had brought this issue to the Commission's attention at its April meeting. He said the Commission would need to take some time to think about what would be the best thing to do and that the solution would probably have to be a compromise. Mr. Maynard added that he had mentioned some kind of material which could be installed under the ramps to deaden the noise. He said he would see if he could purchase a small amount of this material so it could be installed on a trial basis to see if it worked before installing it on all the ramps. Mr. Gilbert stated that for a while there had been very little activity at the skate park and so the Commission had made a decision not to charge a fee and to have no supervision at the park. He added that the skate park had cost approximately \$200,000 and the Commission was glad to see it being used. Mr. Gilbert did not feel the skate park could be closed at 8:00p.m. when other games were still going on and Bittner Park was still open. There would also be the additional expense of paying someone to come twice to close up different sections of the park. Mr. Schipani said again the Commission would try and address the situation and Mr. Sala left the meeting. During discussion Mr. Schipani said perhaps a multi-level approach was needed. He thought Mr. Sala could be invited back to discuss any proposed solutions.

CORRESPONDENCE

Received:

Mr. Schipani read a letter which he had received from the East River Preserve Planning Committee, dated 4/27/10. The letter was soliciting input to help develop a management plan for the preserve and

CORRESPONDENCE (continued)

to this end a meeting had been scheduled for 5/27/10 at 7:30p.m. at the Dudley Farm in North Guilford. Ms. Pine felt it was important that the Commission be represented at this meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Pine made a motion to accept the Minutes of 12th April, 2010. Mr. Hedberg seconded the motion and it was carried with 5 votes in favor. Ms. Gross abstained since she was not present at the April meeting.

Follow-Up to Commission Questions: Mr. Schipani asked that in future this be renamed as “Open Issues” and listed under Old Business. Ms. Pine suggested that an action plan was needed for some of the follow-up items which would be listed in the minutes and would thus serve as a reminder. Mr. Schipani said that the Commission needed to be proactive rather than reactive.

BILLS

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the bills presented for payment. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. MTD Actual was \$105,613.72. Ms. Pine asked what General Repairs @ \$1,222.56 was. Mr. Maynard replied that this would be services other than contracted services such as floor repairs, broken windows, etc. Ms. Pine asked if the maintenance staff carried out these repairs. Mr. Maynard replied sometimes but that occasionally a professional was needed. Ms. Pine noted that almost half the entire budget had been spent in April and so she wondered what had caused such a large expense. Mr. Maynard replied that there had been an emergency call to repair the septic system which had been approximately \$800.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Parks Foreman (written and verbal): Community Center – hauled up mulch, met with DPW sign person to fix signs, brought planter up, fertilized, will topdress/seed areas week of 5/10; Soccer/Lacrosse – all set up; ballfields all set and bases all set; irrigation systems all set, minor repairs performed; met with Efficiency Task Force; bocce courts completely refurbished surface; Jacobs – center post removed, installed handicap sign; readied fields for Little League Opening Day; hauled two loads of topsoil to golf course; fertilizing 75% done – finish week of 5/3; removed Christmas lights from tree on the Green; lacrosse goals moved to fields; overseeding areas week of 5/10 or 5/17.

Mr. Schipani said the consensus was that the fields were in outstanding shape and well-maintained. However, he said he knew there were going to be challenges in the new few years. Mr. DeMond said that work had to be prioritized depending on the time of year and the personnel available and that there were 5 major tasks which had to be accomplished. For example fertilizing was a major task which was done four times a year. Facilities were evaluated on an ongoing basis and some fields were pulled out of service. Mr. DeMond said he planned from season to season and one thing that would help him would be access to a laptop computer. Also weather was always a factor. Regarding upcoming tasks, Mr. DeMond said he did not have a big project at present. Mr. DeMond noted that he could always say that he did not have enough staff. For example there was insufficient staffing in the spring to accomplish certain tasks at that time. Mr. DeMond mentioned that the Standing Field Committee was conducting field walks and agreed with the Commission that the fields were in good shape. Regarding the monthly report on the Community Center, Mr. DeMond stated that a planter had been installed and there were two more receptacles which could be installed and used. Referring to keeping records on a

A. Parks Foreman (continued)

laptop computer, Mr. Schipani felt this would require a lot of software. He added that one issue which he was anticipating in the next few years was compiling the man-hours which the department put into projects in order to justify where it was now and where it was going. He asked Mr. DeMond to think about this. Mr. DeMond mentioned that he had done man-hour reports in the past. He added that safety was the first issue, then essential items, followed by seasonal items. Mr. Schipani felt the Commission needed to consider where and when it might start charging out-of-town people for use of the facilities. Ms. Carrillo mentioned that the Commission had considered outsourcing trash collection but Mr. Schipani replied that that was a dead issue. Mr. Gilbert said he hoped Mr. DeMond would consider the Commission as his friend. He noted that the Town was sensitive to some safety issues and the way that trash was being handled. Mr. Gilbert said if there was a problem and there was something which required a capital expenditure he would like to see this brought to the Commission in September so it had several months to discuss the matter. He felt a subcommittee should meet with staff to discuss trash problems, adding that he hoped this wasn't a dead issue. Mr. DeMond mentioned that a multi-task truck had been considered for trash pickup but it was found to be very expensive. Mr. Gilbert said when challenges were encountered and there was not enough staff to accomplish things the Commission did not hear about this. He added that some things could be subcontracted and suggested hiring a landscape architect to set up the Community Center. Once the area had been landscaped it would then be easier for the staff to maintain it. Ms. Pine said she liked the idea of a professional because they would know the correct things to do. Ms. Robins recommended holding off on reseeded the lawn at the front of the Community Center until a professional landscaper had reviewed the area.

Mr. DeMond left the meeting at 8:15p.m.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Met with contractor at Leete and Bittner for sod installation; met with Facilities Director and contractor re Community Center septic pump issues – discussed installing a new pump and making repair (approximate cost \$4,500); reviewed tasks for Community Center grounds with Phil and Curt; met with contractor at Lake Quonnipaug – installing dock; met with Town Engineer at Lake Quonnipaug for specification to pave apron – received 4 quotes ranging from \$2,400 - \$4,175; made list of possible efficiency improvements for Efficiency Task Force; attended following meetings: Green Committee, Fields Committee, Plan of Conservation & Development; sent specs to Purchasing Agent for trash barrels on the Green and for fireworks bid; checked vandalism at Jacobs restrooms – met with police officer; met with contractor about sign repairs and making new signs for parks.

Mr. Maynard said there had been an emergency call on the septic system because the alarm kept going off because the pumps were not working. It was possible to get one pump working again but both pumps are needed. Mr. Maynard said the mechanism inside the tank will be rebuilt and set up so the pumps can be brought up to the surface. At present the tank has to be drained and someone has to climb down inside to access the pumps. Ms. Pine asked who would pay for the repairs and Mr. Maynard replied that he was unsure. Mr. Maynard said the contract for paving the apron at Lake Quonnipaug was awarded to Atwater Paving at \$2,400. He said the Green Committee wished to purchase 9 trash barrels for the Green. These will be over \$1,000 including shipping. Specifications will be going out to bid for the trash barrels and the fireworks. Mr. Hedberg asked who would pay for

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (continued)

the trash barrels and Mr. Maynard replied the Green Committee. The Green Committee also repaired several benches.

STAFF REPORTS (continued)

B. Recreation Supervisor (written): Attended following meetings: camp specialist and supervisor meetings, wellness committee, men's softball league; continued with interviews for Aquatics and Camp staff; met with Camp Program Director and Aquatics regarding summer planning – made final decisions and hire letters were sent out; boat rack assignments were processed and mailed; summer registration will begin 5/10/10 at 6:00a.m.; finalized kickball league schedule; launched redesigned website.

Mr. Maynard reported that the boat rack assignments had been sent out and numbers were ordered from Page Hardware. He added that 15-19 spaces were still available whereas last year all the spaces had been sold out. Mr. Maynard said he would put publicity about the boat racks in the newspaper. The summer brochure was mailed this week. The redesigned web site was still being worked on.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Standing Fields Committee: Mr. Maynard said SFC had conducted three field walks and found very minor issues.

B. Land Acquisition Commission: The May meeting was cancelled.

C. Policy on Community Center Use: Mr. Maynard said he had still not heard back from the Town's in-house counsel Pam Millman about the hold harmless policy. For the benefit of new members, Ms. Pine said the Commission had done a study and found out that the schools required a very large insurance policy for room use. The Commission was attempting to resolve this issue by having a hold harmless policy. Ms. Pine agreed to contact Ms. Millman about this matter.

D. Coastal Area Management Plan: Ms. Pine asked that this item be tabled to the June meeting. By way of background for the new members, she said when the plan was written various tasks were assigned to the Recreation and Park Department one of which was public access. A subcommittee reviewed the items assigned to R&P and will report on them next month. Mr. Maynard said he would follow up with Environmental Planner Kevin Magee about maps for the department's web site.

E. Community Center Sign: Mr. Maynard reported that a mock up of the sign had been installed. He said the main issue was size. Two pieces of plywood have been installed to illustrate size – 4' 6" x 2' and 5'10" x 2' 1". The smaller size was approved by PZC and HDC. Architect William Thompson felt the smaller sign would be hard to see. The Zoning Enforcement Officer also thought the larger size would be better. Mr. Gilbert felt the letters on the mock up were too small. Ms. Carrillo made a motion that the Commission preferred the larger sign. Mr. Hedberg seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. Mr. Hedberg then said he would prefer stone material. Mr. Maynard was asked to obtain estimates for various materials. Ms. Pine said she would like a landscape architect to look at the sign plan. Ms. Carrillo made a motion that the Commission approved up to \$7,500 for the sign and landscaping. Mr. Hedberg seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

F. Dock at Lake Quonnipaug: Mr. Maynard stated that the dock would be dedicated to Kellie Duggan on opening day of the beaches – 5/29/10. He asked if this should be a formal or informal ceremony. The Commission agreed that First Selectman Mazza should be asked to speak at the dedication. Ms. Carrillo recommended finding out if this would be acceptable to the Duggans.

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

G. Park Signs: Mr. Maynard said he was waiting for price quotes. The large interior sign at Bittner Park will have to be replaced and another sign will be repaired.

H. Senior Newsletter Printing: Mr. Maynard said he had received one proposal and had sent the contract to in-house counsel Pam Millman. Ms. Millman had the same concerns as the Commission over the three-year contract requirement. The company also wished to have office space so sponsors could be solicited. Since these items were deal breakers the proposal will no longer be pursued.

I. Recycling: Ms. Buckley reported that the funds which the Town received for each percentage of material recycled was not guaranteed by the Connecticut Resource and Recovery Authority (CRRA). This meant that funds could not be guaranteed to pay for the SARAH recycling program. Mrs. Buckley suggested waiting until the funds were actually received from CRRA. It was agreed this proposal would be discussed again at the August meeting.

J. Plan of Conservation and Development: Ms. Pine said this committee had held three workshops on different topics to solicit input on the update of this plan. Her concern was how this would fit in with other reports and studies which had been done.

K. Rules for Lake Quonnipaug Dock: Mr. Maynard circulated copies of proposed rules. He suggested purchasing three paddle boats at an approximate cost of \$3,000, and three kayaks. A tandem kayak was \$1,000 and a single \$750, including paddles and lifejackets. Mr. Gilbert asked if it was possible to obtain three different designs for the paddle boats from the same vendor in order to see which one worked best. Ms. Pine felt the boats should be doubles rather than singles. Mr. Hedberg asked about storage. Mr. Gilbert said a driver's license should be obtained from anyone using the boats, for identification purposes. Mr. Maynard suggested an additional kayak might be needed by the lifeguards for rescue purposes. Ms. Pine replied that she might be able to donate an Old Town canoe for this purpose. Referring to the dock rules which stated that a personal boat will be allowed to tie up at the dock, Mr. Gilbert thought this should not be allowed. Mr. Guadagno said there needed to be more thought given as to how the dock would be operated. Mr. Maynard asked if a fee for use should be charged with perhaps this year being free. Ms. Pine replied that residents had already paid for a beach pass and as part of this could be allowed to use the paddle boats/kayaks. Ms. Carrillo felt it should be stated that the Department planned to charge a fee next year but that this year could be free courtesy of the Department. Mr. Gilbert then made a motion to purchase two paddle boats, with staff deciding which styles to purchase. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. Mr. Hedberg then made a motion to purchase two 2-people kayaks. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. Referring to the dock rules, the Commission discussed the following:-

- The Department needed to hold some form of picture identification from anyone using the boats/kayaks.
- Specify no swimming or fishing from the boats/kayaks

K. Rules for Lake Quonnipaug Dock (continued)

- The paddleboats will have to be washed after use.
- Aquatics staff should be asked for input regarding the dock rules, etc.
- A hold harmless waiver will be needed.
- Dock cannot be used when the beach is closed.

Mr. Guadagno suggested that a special meeting be held just on the topic of the dock rules and Mr. Hedberg agreed. Mr. Guadagno and Mr. Hedberg agreed to serve on a subcommittee for this purpose.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Community Center Maintenance: See above under “Parks Foreman” report. Mr. Maynard circulated estimates from M. DeAngelis, Inc. for sump pump installation to resolve a drainage problem (\$1,130); new paver walk (\$3,159.19); and a new concrete walk (\$1,919.54). Mr. Hedberg recommended this work be tabled until the Commission had consulted with a landscape architect.

B. Office Organization: Mr. Schipani stated that in the future when dealing with employee issues that he would allow opportunities for other Commission members to be involved rather than having them dealt with by a small subcommittee. Issues would be dealt with as they evolved. Mr. Schipani said he and Mr. Gilbert had met with Mr. Maynard last week about office organization. He said job descriptions and salaries would not be changed but instead he would be revisiting the synergies in the department across 10-11 people, moving people around so they could be more efficient. If an employee manages and supervises staff then they need to be in the area where the staff is. Re-structuring would be done to change the dynamics of how the office worked. This would be done by the administrative group and the Commission. Mr. Schipani said the Commission would need to discuss this as he did not yet have a plan. Ms. Carrillo said she was concerned because she felt the role of the Commission was not to micromanage. Perhaps the Commission could provide advice on evaluating efficiencies, etc. Mr. Schipani replied that he would be doing this based on reinforcement of what the Commission’s role was. However, he added that he had no intention of telling the director how to manage his staff. Mr. Schipani thought the Commission needed to revisit and relook at the way the Department operated. Mr. Gilbert said ideally once a direction was provided that was the way it should operate. How do we get away from the status quo unless the Commission tightens the reins and provides some direction? Mr. Gilbert read the Commission’s charge from the Town Charter which tasked it with managing the Department. He said he did not think there was anything wrong with realigning things. Mr. Gilbert added that the revenue generating section needed to be reinforced. Ms. Carrillo felt the Commission should be careful not to undermine the sitting director and maybe undermine itself also. Mr. Guadagno said it sounded like a major overhaul. Mr. Schipani pointed out that he wanted each department manager involved in saying what should be done. Mr. Hedberg said he had not even seen the Town Charter and that it should be provided to Commission members. The Commission’s role should be clarified and while it may be talking major overhaul an analysis would be needed first. Mr. Hedberg felt a separate meeting might be required for this proposal. Mr. Gilbert said what the Commission wanted to accomplish should be first and foremost. Ms. Pine stated that the proposal should proceed in partnership and fairly. Ms. Robins said she was hearing that we all worked together in partnership to make the Department the best that it could be, but that it could always be better. Maybe geographic changes would create a more efficient office, etc. She felt if there were not collaborative discussions then the Commission would not get to where it wanted to be with regard to

B. Office Organization (continued)

relooking and making things better. Mr. Gilbert said people could be brought up to speed so their job opportunities were empowered. Mr. Schipani suggested conducting interviews with department heads to see what their input was. Mr. Gilbert felt this should be consistent with a model that the Commission established. Mr. Schipani added that he would want the supervisors in the department to revisit issues and make suggestions – an organizational review. Ms. Carrillo said she did not feel it was the role of the Commission to hold interviews with staff in order to determine how the Department should be reorganized and that she was very uncomfortable with that idea. She pointed out that there were multiple managerial styles, one of which was to oversee staff so tightly that their every step was monitored. Instead Ms. Carrillo said she favored tasking staff with key work when a need had been identified. The Commission could then monitor the work and provide guidance where needed. Ms. Robins asked about receiving input from the staff. Ms. Carrillo said that could be a second phase of the project. Ms. Pine made a motion to plan the June meeting to discuss the issue of efficiency changes and restructuring in order to get the job done better. Mr. Hedberg seconded the motion and it was carried with 6 votes in favor. Mr. Guadagno opposed the motion.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Mr. Schipani made a motion to adjourn at 10:20p.m. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission will be held on Monday 7th June, 2010 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary