

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes – 1st April, 2019

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Monday 1st April, 2019 at 6:30p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Rose Dostert presiding.

Present: Rose Dostert, Claire Kinkade Dunn, John Jagielski, Tara Hunt-Melvin, Lawrence Rooney, Judy Sullivan and Diane Van Steenberg. Also present Seniors Program Coordinator Terry Buckley. Joining the meeting in progress were Mark Coppola (7:00p.m.) and Suzanne McDermott (7:10p.m.).

The meeting was called to order at 6:30p.m. Ms. Dunn made a motion to change the order of the agenda to take “New Business Item A – Proposed Eagle Scout Project” next. Mrs. Sullivan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Eagle Scout Project – Bridge at Bittner Park Trail: Mrs. Dostert said the Commission appreciated all the work that the Eagle Scout candidate had put into his original proposal and was very upset at what had happened. Eagle Scout candidate Michael Neiss, Troop 471, stated that the Eagle Project was an opportunity for a boy scout to demonstrate leadership of others while performing a project for the benefit of his community. He said he had wished to do a construction-based project which would allow him to work with and learn new skills to use in a future career. However, after spending over 40 hours on a proposal to build a gazebo at Chaffinch Island Park the project had become so contentious and polarizing because of opposition from the neighbors that Mr. Neiss said he had made the hard decision to withdraw his proposal. He thanked PRC for supporting him through this difficult period, the scouting community who had helped him and the other town agencies who had provided assistance to him.

Mr. Neiss circulated a rendering of his new proposal to build a bridge at Bittner Park to improve the trail system. This will be 30ft. with a center span of 15ft. and two 7½ ft. side ramps to level grade. A low gutter rail will be attached to the deck on each side of the bridge. The bridge will be supported by two abutment walls, made out of cement blocks, back-filled with crushed stone. It will accommodate both mountain bikers and hikers. Mr. Neiss said pressure-treated wood would be used in the hope that it would last a minimum of 20 years and be low-maintenance. Fund raising will be held in May-June and construction may begin in August. Mr. Neiss estimated costs at \$3,500 but warned that this was not a firm figure. The bridge will be located on a trail on the southwest side of the skate park. Mrs. Dostert asked if the side of the bridge would be low as shown in the rendering. Mr. Neiss replied yes. Mrs. Dostert asked how materials would be brought in. Mr. Neiss replied possibly using ATV's. Mr. Rooney asked how he had developed this idea. Mr. Neiss replied that he wanted to do a construction project because he was considering a career in engineering. Mr. Jagielski

A. Proposed Eagle Scout Project – Bridge at Bittner Park Trail (continued)

felt the bridge was definitely needed as there currently was no bridge on the trail crossing. He then made a motion that the Commission granted approval for Michael Neiss to start his project to build a bridge over the trail system at Bittner Park. Also that the Commission should have the opportunity to discuss contributing to the funding for this project. Mrs. Sullivan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Public Forum: **1) Faith Brzostoski, 80 Hilltop Road,** stated that she wished to ask the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) to honor the original intent and spirit of the grants used to purchase the land of Chaffinch Island Park (CIP) which was purchased as permanent open space. Ms. Brzostoski presented a petition signed by 129 residents opposing any structure in the park. She said contrary to the belief that it was primarily residents living near CIP who opposed any construction, the petition showed that people from 68 streets located throughout Guilford were opposed to the construction. Ms. Brzostoski asked that the petition be included in the permanent CIP file. **2) Neil Murdock, 80 Hilltop Road,** said the Town of Guilford had spent a tremendous amount of time, energy and money developing conservation/natural preservation plans which had resulted in Guilford being held up as an example of responsible natural stewardship by many outside authorities. Mr. Murdock felt this written position had resulted in a lot of outside grant money being made available to the Town for the acquisition/protection of its natural resources. When the Town purchased CIP it agreed to the open space restrictions included in the grants used for the purchase. At a later date the Town revised its own definition of open space to include auxiliary structures and improvements necessary for the use or maintenance of the open space. Mr. Murdock felt it was important to close this loophole for CIP and to respect the original intent of the agreements as they were made at the time (1969). He asked that the deed for the park be corrected to reflect the required protections of permanent open space as defined by the grantors at that time. **3) Barbara Syah, 245 Chaffinch Island Road,** stated that she had purchased her property 28 years ago and said she was requesting that CIP be preserved without any structures. She highlighted the Town's mission statement on its website, its Plan of Conservation & Development, all of which talked about preserving the cultural landscape resources and coastal views. She asked PRC to help the residents' goal of preserving the park, and to live up to the original intent of the open space in 1969. **4) Amy Johnson, 311 Chaffinch Island Road (Bayberry Marina),** said open space and not permanent structures should be promoted at CIP. She highlighted the Harbor Management Plan whose objectives included *eliminating the visual impacts caused by docks and other shoreline structures, and preserving, protecting and enhancing historic and scenic vistas and viewsheds.* Ms. Johnson said she was concerned if the gazebo was installed it would become a projectile. Another concern was the new water main at Mulberry Point which would come across sensitive Native American ground. Ms. Johnson believed this would be a concern for CIP also and said one could see Native American fishing grounds there. **5) Susan Shulman, 265 Chaffinch Island Road,** briefly reviewed findings from a variety of conservation/preservation studies conducted by the Town as follows: the Guilford Preservation Alliance's *The Master Plan for Preservation and Scenic Conservation* which listed CIP as #7 of 16 favorite views. It was also highlighted in the *Natural Resource Inventory and*

Public Forum: (continued)

Assessment. Ms. Shulman said CIP was a popular, valued and heavily utilized town resource that deserved to remain open space for people, flora and fauna to enjoy. **6) Susan Egan, 144 Chaffinch Island Road,** talked about parking problems at CIP, noting that parked cars could reduce the road to a single lane. She said during the summer the traffic increased excessively, at the weekends the parking lot overflowed and people parked on the vegetation. Increased parking would add to the wear and tear on the park. Ms. Egan said there used to be No Parking signs but these were removed and not replaced when the road was raised. She asked when a future plan might occur and when would the residents be able to participate in this. She also asked PRC to honor the original intent of the park and asked what the process would be moving forward. Mrs. Dostert replied that the process was undecided at this point. **7) Cynthia Magee, 46 Chaffinch Island Road,** asked audience members to raise their hands if they were opposed to the gazebo at CIP. Everyone raised their hands. **8) A resident** asked what the process was in terms of public involvement. Mrs. Dostert replied that an Eagle Scout candidate would propose a project and if approved by PRC it would go through other town agencies, if necessary.

CORRESPONDENCE**Received:**

Carol Szymanski, Environmental 2/14/19 re: CAM approval of gazebo project at Chaffinch
Analyst II, DEEP Island Park

Eagle Scout candidate Michael re: request to withdraw gazebo project at Chaffinch
Neiss Island Park

Emails and letters opposing the gazebo project at Chaffinch Island Park were received from the following:-

Phyllis Beno	Rick & Martha Haeseler	Sarah Shrewsbury
Jenny & John Della Ventura	David & Sally Howe	Debra Simon
Lisa Egan	Libby Kingsbury	Martin Smith
Elissa Green	Lorrie Shaw	Tim Sperry

Copy of a petition opposing gazebo at Chaffinch Island Park (3/18/19)

Forwarded:

Email (3/5/19) from Director Maynard to Town Planner requesting that PZC public hearing on gazebo project at Chaffinch Island Park be continued.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Dunn made a motion to accept the Minutes of 4th March, 2019. Mr. Rooney seconded the motion and it was carried with 8 votes in favor. Ms. McDermott abstained since she was not present at the March 4th meeting. Ms. Dunn made a motion to accept the Site Walk Minutes of 9th March, 2019. Ms. Hunt-Melvin seconded the motion and it was carried with 4 votes in favor. Coppola, Jagielski, McDermott, Sullivan and Van Steenbergen abstained since they were not present at the site walk. Ms. Dunn made a motion to accept the Special Meeting Minutes of 18th March, 2019. Mr. Rooney seconded the motion and it was carried with 6 votes in favor. Coppola, McDermott and Hunt-Melvin abstained as they were not present at the special meeting.

BILLS

Ms. Dunn made a motion to approve the bills presented for payment. Mr. Coppola seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. MTD Actual is: \$138,387.60.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Checked on trash truck for options and operation; Chaffinch Island Gazebo – spent many hours researching deed/requirements of original grant, phone conversations with people from state offices, meetings with Chairman/First Selectman and Eagle Scout candidate, walked site with commissioners, met with Boy Scout Master of Troop 471, filed site plan application with PZC; attended following meetings: Board of Finance (2), Safety Committee, special PRC meeting for gazebo location; revised 3 job descriptions, met with First Selectman, Rose Dostert, Claire Kinkade Dunn, Human Resources director to review; met with representatives of Guilford Performing Arts Festival re use of rooms on 9/26 – 29; met with Recreation Supervisor and Seniors Program Coordinator to discuss tasks for Connor following Max's last day and until we have new program coordinator; checked Shell Beach with Parks Foreman due to report of debris on beach which was cleaned up; arranged for power and water to be turned on at parks/beaches; met with Parks Foreman and Recreation Supervisor re field conditions and status, some fields will be open before April 1st; met with Michael and Marc Neiss re withdrawal from gazebo project, he will propose constructing a bridge over a stream in Bittner Park; worked with 8 volunteers (mostly from Scout Troop 471) to clear fairways #11/#12 at disc golf course; Disc Golf Course – all fairways substantially complete, course designer will run a tournament on May 18th using portable baskets; spoke at Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Kent Mackowiak (stairs to announcers' platform at Page Soccer field); ordered portolets for all facilities; GHS Turf Field – contractor to begin removing turf carpet 4/1/19

Mrs. Dostert said the disc golf course was progressing and the baskets had been received. A tournament will be held in May which will provide input on the best locations for the baskets.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Recreation Supervisor (written): Met with Program Coordinator Max to discuss open tasks prior to his resignation; met with Program Coordinator Connor and transitioned several tasks for him

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A. Recreation Supervisor: (continued)

to take on; hired a second instructor for Two's Without You program; met with Camp Director and Assistant Director re Summer 2019 plan, held interviews for potential counselor positions; met with Connor/Aquatics Director re summer, continuing to accept applications and interviews will be set up, starting to organize and order necessary equipment; continuing to process room reservations, have begun to enter all organizations' field requests; half-day basketball program for grades 5-8 held on 3/27/19; Eggstravaganza – April 6 (rain date April 13), Earthfest/Touch-a-Truck – Saturday April 27.

Mr. Jagielski said he would like to commend Guilford Crew who retrieved two buoys which had broken loose at Lake Quonnipaug.

B. Seniors Program Coordinator (verbal & written): Program Highlights: St. Patrick's Day lunch with Keeley Braidsen entertainment, two members of BOS helped serve; PRC Game Show Afternoon "Wheel of Fortune" played at lunch; Sliders and A Movie "Green Book"; Guilford Police Department informative session on Scams/Frauds aimed at seniors; SSILL Reception & Coast Guard Band concert; Learn Before Lunch – Physical Therapy of Guilford on insomnia; trip presentation on Iceland trip (October 2019); AARP tax assistance; monthly hearing clinic; AARP Safe Driving Course; Legal Assistance Program; Birthday Lunch; Seniors responded to inquiry to begin Chess group. **Trips:** Lunch Bunch to Puerto Vallarta; UCONN Women's Quarterfinals basketball game; The Kate for "Long Day's Journey into Night" movie with lunch at Haywire Burger; Death in the Ice – Mystery of Franklin Expedition, Mystic Seaport with lunch at The Steak Loft; GHS performance of "Anything Goes". **Meals Program:** Meals at Community Center: February 2019 – 675 (February 2018 – 938), Meals on Wheels: February 2019 – 1,883 (February 2018 – 1,983). **Bus Program:** February 2019: Total Trips – 603, Total Passengers – 914, Miles – 4,060, Passenger Miles – 10,159, Odometer Miles – 4,545.

Mrs. Buckley said the First Selectman had been asked to approve a grant application to purchase another bus. She circulated information on transportation needs to justify this bus, noting that an increase in the senior population was expected. Mrs. Buckley added that participation in the meals program was also increasing. Mrs. Dostert queried the number of existing buses. Mrs. Buckley replied there were 5 buses and one car. Mrs. Dostert asked how many bus drivers there were. Mrs. Buckley replied 6. Mr. Jagielski asked if programs were cancelled if a bus was not available. Mrs. Buckley replied that this situation had not arisen so far. Ms. McDermott said she would like to commend Mrs. Buckley for all her work.

C. Parks Foreman (written): Brought in and painted all 26 lacrosse goals, re-tied/replaced nets, some goals brought to Jaypro for repair; soccer goals completed and distributed (14 sets); finalize/submit fertilizer & seed order for spring; snow removal 3/1-3/5; 3 employees attended Turf Conference & Expo in RI; tennis nets up; spring clean-up at all 30 facilities; County Road parking taped off, field setup, goals dropped; measure and paint 47 fields/areas for sports; fence repair list submitted for quotes to contractor; clean debris at Shell Beach; irrigation issues observed at Cox South, dug 8-10 pits to determine depth of main line, topsoil all areas dug up and all heads that sunk;

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C. Parks Foreman (written): (continued)

process spread at a few spots around town from winter damage; snow blower emptied/stored for season, plows/sanders off but not washed yet; rolled ruts left at few areas in town; removed weeds on shotput area for GHS; measured areas for possible synthetic turf needs; opened bathrooms at Bittner and Lake Quonnipaug, put all fitting together, chlorinated wells with Public Health Director, ran water, testing 4/1/19; started grooming and rolling ballfields for practices; put out bases at all 17 ballfields; started early aeration of 40 fields, 6 fields done as of 3/28.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Standing Fields Committee: Mr. Jagielski said work had begun removing the damaged artificial turf at GHS which may take up to 6 weeks. The field may be ready for fall play.

B. Green Committee: No report.

C. Land Acquisition Commission: No report.

D. Technology: No report.

E. Community Center Betterments & Improvements: Mrs. Dostert reported that new chairs and pillows had been ordered.

F. Splash Pad: Ms. Dunn said she was still waiting for the consultant's proposal. Mrs. Dostert asked how long it would take to have this project up and running once it was approved. Ms. Dunn replied approximately one month.

G. Disc Golf Course: See above under "Director's Report".

H. Community Center Roof Replacement: Updated as-built drawings are still needed from the contractor before this project can be considered completed.

I. GHS Synthetic Turf Damage: See above under "Standing Fields Committee".

J. Eagle Scout Project – Gazebo at Chaffinch Island Park: Proposal was withdrawn.

NEW BUSINESS (continued)

B. Parks Master Plan: Mrs. Dostert said she and the Director had met with First Selectman Hoey. Mr. Hoey had suggested looking at all of the parks and forming a master plan for each park. This would not be specific projects but research could be done to see what could be located at each park with a wish list of what PRC would like to see there. Mrs. Dostert added that a subcommittee would be needed to create this document. Dunn, Hunt-Melvin, Sullivan and Van Steenbergen volunteered.

B. Parks Master Plan: (continued)

Mr. Jagielski asked if this would be limited to the parks or would athletic fields be included. Mrs. Dostert replied that PRC was not looking for maintenance items but uses could be listed for the fields. Ms. Dunn asked if there was any timeline on this project. Mrs. Dostert replied no.

C. Chaffinch Island Park – Handicap Accessibility Issues: Mrs. Dostert stated that the parking lot would be lined. She mentioned that in conversations with DEEP regarding the gazebo project the State had said CIP was a public park and, therefore, handicap accessibility should be considered. Mrs. Dostert said this would have to be reviewed with perhaps access to the picnic table being provided. Mr. Jagielski said he would like consideration to be given to removing the plastic garbage cans which he felt were an eyesore. Perhaps the park should operate on the Carry In/Carry Out philosophy. Mrs. Dostert replied that she would be concerned that people would bring trash in and just leave it at the park. She agreed to discuss this matter with the Director.

D. Parking Lots: Mr. Jagielski said the parking lots at Jacobs Beach, Chittenden and Nut Plains Parks needed to be leveled.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Dunn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45p.m. Mr. Jagielski seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission will be held on Monday 6th May, 2019 at 6:30p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary