



UNAPPROVED  
Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting

April 16, 2019

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman, Via phone  
Evie Bottali, Secretary  
David Thaxter  
Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair  
David Shofi  
Kim Hulber  
Gina Carey

Dennis DiPinto, Director  
Kathy Fassman, Marketing  
Bobby Schneider, Asst. Dir.-Parks  
Jane Byrnes, Secty.

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

Meeting called to order by Vice Chair at 7:31 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda as presented was approved.

Minutes:

Mr. Shofi made an amendment to the March minutes.

On page 3, under Marketing & Programs, second paragraph, last sentence, should read:

The Commission also recommended that the Department extend rolling/ continuous surveys, not only to those surveyed prior, but to new members as well. The Commission would like the Department to follow with these members as they proceed through their infancy to their next stages.

Also, on page 1 under Recognition of Guests; should read:

“No guests to recognize.”

The minutes as amended were approved.

Recognition of Guests:

No guests to recognize.

Financial Status – Dennis DiPinto:

Mr. DiPinto reported in Ms. Cipolla's absence, that membership numbers continued to be strong in March. Camp revenue looks favorable, with expected additional revenue to follow over the next few weeks.



Chairperson's Report – Phil Kearns:

Report to be covered under Budget & Policy.

Director's Report- Dennis DiPinto

Building/Grounds Updates

- Mr. DiPinto reported that the Friends had received monies from Thrift Shop to complete the Governor Park announcer's booth. Mr. DiPinto thanked Bobby for his efforts in getting this project completed. Mr. DiPinto also gave a brief summary regarding the recent incident at the baseball field at Governor Park. Mr. Schneider mentioned that the field was playable last Thursday.
- The Skate Park recently opened and Ron LoValvo, Supervisor reported that it is going very well and attendance is good. Mr. Kearns asked if the attendance at the park was higher than last year. Mr. DiPinto mentioned that we do not have any records to do a comparison, but will in the future.
- Reviewing ADA accessibility Town Plan with staff.
- Working with Safety Director on workman's comp issues.

Financial

- Received grant from Woman's Club in the amount of \$1,000.
- Memberships continue to rise – camp numbers looking good.
- Waiting on final budget meetings.
- Working with Accountant on revenue and expenses going forward, met with indoor and outdoor maintenance.

Community

- Had successful free Egg Scramble in Ballard Park.
- Met with public and sub-committee on pickleball issues.
- Working with Goldstone Foundation on the Family Dinner program for the fall.

Staffing-Programs

- Working with staff on E Trek software training – end of May going live.
- Worked to solve some front desk challenges – coverage - staffing, etc.
- Met with staff to discuss the possibilities of a Special Needs program and looking to increase programs on Saturday mornings.
- From our recent survey, we have increased the child-sitting times on Saturday to meet the members needs.
- Working with marketing team on additional programs on Saturdays.

Mr. DiPinto mentioned that Ms. Fassman and the team are doing a great job on the fall programming.

Marketing & Programs- Kathy Fassman

Ms. Fassman reported that she is working on several new programs, including a track and field partnering program with Nutmeg Strides. Ms. Fassman mentioned that the fencing program was cancelled as it has not been successful for the past two years. The team is focusing on building our karate program and offering classes three days a week to give members a little more flexibility with scheduling. The team is also working on adding





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Saturday classes in the fall such as tumbling and hip-hop dance. Camp registrations continue to rise and our science camp is very popular. Working with an instructor on a Babies in Motion program to begin in the fall which should be very popular. Ms. Fassman mentioned that the new spin bikes are due in soon which we are hoping will attract additional memberships. Mr. Thaxter mentioned that the instructor for the science camp is a great teacher and well liked by many of his peers and students.

Assistant Director-Parks – Mr. Schneider:

Mr. Schneider reported that the spring weather has been very good and the outdoor crews are on scheduled for the spring clean-up and opening of spring sports. Mr. Schneider is working on completing the inventory of spring products and working with the indoor maintenance Supervisor on several building projects. Mr. Schneider stated that the new maintenance Supervisor is a great fit and he is a great asset to the department. Mr. Schneider did a brief follow-up on the Governor Park field incident.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds – Aquatics & Programs - David Thaxter:

Nothing to report at this time on buildings and grounds.

The Commission mentioned that they have noticed more and more people parking in the lot near Route 35 which should be helping to help with some of the parking challenges in the main lot at the Recreation Center.

Aquatics & Programs

Mr. Thaxter reported that Ms. Dynia and her staff have begun work on the opening of Martin Park Beach and we will be offering new yoga paddle board and yoga on the beach classes this summer. Mr. Thaxter reported that the food truck will be back again this season and it will be at the beach on a daily basis. He also mentioned that this season looks good in regards to having sufficient lifeguard staff to cover all shifts. The accessible mats are being installed as well.

Annual Goals & Marketing Plans- Evie Bottali:

Ms. Bottali reported that membership sales far exceeded last year's March revenue (over 50%). Many of the new memberships were from summer camp family sign ups.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns stated that the only open question left regarding the budget request was whether the family changing room request was going to a Referendum vote or to the Town Meeting. Mr. DiPinto will touch base with Town Hall and report back to the Commission. Mr. Kearns reported that the sub-committee had recently met with a group of representatives from the Pickleball group. Mr. Kearns mentioned that there was a great deal of comments and discussion and the sub-committee will meet again to further discuss the fees. The sub-committee will bring back to the full Commission at the May meeting any other recommended changes and a possible revised vote. Ms. Carey mentioned that during the discussions, there was a significant push for a punch card program as an alternative solution. Ms. Dobbin mentioned that there was quite a bit of push back of the \$240 fee and that the Pickleball group had found other facilities that were accommodating them and they can pay a





much lower fee. The staff mentioned to keep in mind that the total number of hours of Pickleball play in Ridgefield is much higher than the number of hours in other surrounding Towns.

Special Services & Community Outreach – Barbara Dobbin:

Ms. Dobbin reported that the Town has completed the ADA transition study plan on the Town facilities and they have submitted to Parks & Recreation the elements that are required at our facilities. The sub-committee will be meeting to discuss how we will respond. Ms. Dobbin mentioned that she felt that the estimates presented in the plan are shown to be under what are the actual costs. The sub-committee will take their priorities into consideration when they evaluate the Parks & Recreation's ADA budget. The Commission asked if the Town was supporting any funding of the Parks & Recreation's requirements. Ms. Dobbin mentioned that some of the requirements are easily attainable in house; however some are not. After the sub-committee has met, they will respond to the Social Services Director with their recommendations.

Strategic Plan – Gina Carey

Ms. Carey gave the Commission a draft on how the sub-committee is going to implement an assessment of the Strategic Plan. Ms. Carey mentioned that it has been a year since the initial Strategic Plan was rolled out by the Commission to the Department. Ms. Carey summarized the details and stated that by the July meeting, the sub-committee would like to present the first annual assessment to see if the Department met the goals and where they will be in the future.

Old Business

Nothing to report at this time.

New Business

No new business at this time.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made at 8:40 pm by David Thaxter and seconded by Dave Shofi.

Minutes Approved:

  
Evie Bottali, Secretary