



Town of Ridgefield Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 6:30 pm
Meeting held via Zoom
APPROVED

PRESENT: P. Kearns, D. Shofi, P. Nichols, K. Hulber, D. DiPinto, M. Knox, E. Cipolla, A. Platt

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription. A recording of the meeting will be available for 45 days after said meeting.:

<https://www.ridgefieldparksandrec.org/about-parks-recreation/commission>

Meeting called to order by Chair at 6:32 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Pete Nichols made a motion to approve the agenda with one modification to move the first item of New Business after Recognition of Guests. Seconded by David Shofi with the modification. Motion carried 4-0.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Cheryl Cook

NEW BUSINESS

1. Establishing Friends of the Walking Trail

- Ms. Cook addressed the Commission regarding the establishment of a Friends of the Walking Trail volunteer group that would raise funds to help control/slow down deterioration of trees along the Rec Center walking trails caused by vines and non-native species.
- Mr. Kearns recommended Ms. Cook meet with the P&R Facilities & Grounds committee to discuss further and schedule walk-thrus of the trails with Mr. Shofi to understand the extent of the work. Funding through Friends of Ridgefield Parks and Recreation 501c3 warrants further discussion with Mr. DiPinto.
- Mr. Kearns asked Mr. Schneider to advise on any potential union issues where outdoor Parks labor is concerned (i.e. cutting vines and removing poison ivy) vs. hiring an outside landscape contractor to complete the removal.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Pete Nichols to approve the December and January minutes. Seconded by David Shofi. Motion carried 4-0.



BUSINESS UPDATES

Chairperson's Report – Phil Kearns

Report covered under the Budget & Policy Committee report.

Director's Report – Dennis DiPinto

Project Updates:

1. Prospect Ridge Pickleball Courts: Had separate meetings with realtor/property developer Steve Zemo & Selectman Chris Murray regarding feedback on the project's location
2. Rec Center Rooftop Units: Replacement of two RTU's at the Rec Center is expected to start later this summer.

Meetings Attended:

- Attended Dept Head Meeting, Monthly Revenue and Monthly Budget & Policy Committee meetings
- Spoke with Aimee Berger-Girvalo on Zoom re: potential funding sources for Prospect Ridge Courts project
- Met with Jake Muller re: Completion of handicapped parking spaces at the Rec Center & LED lighting upgrades in and around the Rec Center
- Participated in discussions with Rudy/Jake/RAC Steering Committee re: the next phase of the Barlow Mountain Pool improvement project

Staff Updates

- Working on some resources for staff trainings around inclusion and customer experience
- As mentioned in January, our Wellness Operations Supervisor retired, and with that announcement, I decided to split the Aquatics and Wellness Center responsibilities into two separate positions. Leah Dillman was promoted to Sr. Wellness Coordinator and we are currently interviewing candidates for the Aquatics Supervisor role.

Financial Update – Eileen Cipolla

Ms. Cipolla provided the monthly financial report. Revenue to budget numbers are favorable. Expenses are running slightly high, but still relative to the increase in revenue (new memberships & upgrades).

Assistant Director of Parks' Report – Bob Schneider

- Removed some old fencing in Ballard Park at the request of the Ridgefield Garden Club
- Work has begun to replace the stage surface in Ballard Park with a new composite material
- Installed new AED cabinets at some of the outdoor athletic fields
- Some of the kiosk roofs will receive new metal roofing this spring



- Dog park fence replacement is underway
- Annual Fields Assignment meeting will be held on February 28
- Security camera replacement is planned for Ballard Park, Sturges Cabin & outside the Rec Center
- Rec Center interior is receiving a fresh coat of this winter
- Working on placement of donated metal sculptures for decoration around the Rec Center campus

Assistant Director of Program Operations' Report – Mary Knox

- March 1: Adventure Day Camp registration begins (online and in-person); Adding before and after care options this summer that will extend care until 5:30pm.
- Summer program guide will be mailed to residents in mid-March
- Martin Park Beach – Plans in-place to update the fee structure this summer
- During the Rotary Club's Taste of Ridgefield (@Rec Center) we were able to market our memberships to patrons.
- Flashlight Egg Hunt event is planned for March 22 at the Rec Center
- Rotary Club's annual Egg Hunt in Ballard Park on March 23
- Ms. Hulber shared some concerns with P&R website navigation being difficult

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Marketing & Promotions – Phil Kearns

Nothing new to report.

Membership – Kim Hulber

Nothing new to report.

Aquatic & Programs – Barbara Dobbin (absent)

Nothing new to report.

Budget & Policy – Phil Kearns

Committee had a good presentation to the BOS in January; Expecting a vote later this week before the budget moves on to the BOF.

Buildings & Grounds – David Shofi

- Committee shared preliminary plans for the Prospect Ridge Pickleball Courts during the February Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Noise, drainage and parking were discussed.
- Mr. DiPinto shared that he has engaged an acoustic engineer to assess the noise factor.



- Mr. Schneider will advise on an estimated number of parking spaces.
- Mr. DiPinto will engage CCA on less invasive storm water management.
- Mr. Kearns reiterated that this project is included in the FY2024 Capital budget which has not yet been approved at the town level.

Special Services & Community Outreach – Pete Nichols

Nothing new to report.

NEW BUSINESS - CONTINUED

2. Discussion of Commission Committees

- Mr. Kearns recommended fewer committees and working with Director DiPinto to outline when and where the committees can be even more helpful. Mr. Kearns requested input from the Commissioners during the meeting. The overall consensus was that we should keep P&R's strategic goals and objectives top of mind, and the staff does a good job of engage the Commission for input whenever they feel it's appropriate, and vice versa. Discussions will continue at the March meeting.

With no further business, Phil Kearns moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm.

REMINDER: Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.