



UNAPPROVED  
Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting

May 19, 2020  
Meeting Held Virtually

In Attendance:

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

Dennis DiPinto, Director  
Kathy Fassman, Marketing  
Eileen Cipolla, Accountant  
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 Chair at 6:32 p.m.

Recognition of Guests:

The Commission welcomed Mr. Pete Nichols, Ms. Andrea Beebe and Dr. Allan Rosenthal.

Mr. Kearns asked if Mr. Nichols had received any word from the First Selectman's office regarding an interview for appointment to the Commission. Mr. Kearns will follow up with a note to his assistant.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Kearns made a motion to amend the agenda as presented. Mr. Kearns asked that the Assistant Director/Parks report be moved up, as well as New Business, item two; Reopening Plans and Protocols. The agenda as amended was approved.

Approval of Minutes

On the minutes of last month, a correction on page one, under Recognition of Guests, correction to the spelling of Pete Nichols' name. The minutes as amended were approved.

Financial Status – Eileen Cipolla

Ms. Cipolla reported April revenue came in well below budget due to the current crisis. Ms. Cipolla stated that the department is diligently monitoring expenses to help cover projected losses. Mr. Kearns asked if there were any savings on seasonal salaries. Ms. Cipolla mentioned that due to the reopening of Martin Park Beach possibly on June 13, some of the savings would be expended. We are waiting for final opening dates from the State.

Assistant Director/Parks- Bob Schneider

Mr. Schneider reported:

- Crews are busy completing spring clean up and keeping up the mowing.
- Most events planned for Ballard Park have been cancelled.
- Working with a committee on a grant proposal for Ballard Park for the installation of Wi-Fi, lighting and stage renovations. The idea is to be able to stream concerts through the Wi-Fi.
- Crews working at Martin Park Beach and working on parking area for reopening plans.
- Working at school grounds and flowerbeds.
- Crews did some renovation at the dog park.
- Ordered some equipment needed for repairs at the Fitness Garden.
- The Spray Bay is 95% completed and the new flooring is terrific.

New Business (2) – Reopening plans and protocols: current status



Mr. Kearns stated that this is a preliminary discussion regarding the reopening of Parks and Recreation. Mr. DiPinto will lead the discussion, which will be separated, into two parts; one part will focus on how camp might hypothetically be structured and be run. The second will be on when things are going to be opened. No final protocols have been decided or developed.

Mr. DiPinto reported on the following:

**I. Announcing Outdoor June 1 Openings**

Tennis/Pickleball courts, the Dog Park, and the Skate Park will be opening on June 1 with social distancing and CDC guidelines.

All sports fields, basketball courts, and playgrounds remain closed.

Ballard Park, the Recreation Center trails, the Rail Trail, and other trails remain open.

Martin Park Beach Opening June 13, 2020

Martin Park Beach will be open from 10:00am-6:45pm.

The health, safety, and well-being of our community is our top priority. We are working closely with local and state public health officials.

In an effort to maintain social distancing rules, we will limit the parking and the number of people at the beach. We will not be offering free admission opening weekend. Guest passes and drop-ins will not be available all summer.

Mr. Kearns asked for any questions regarding the opening of facilities stated above.

Mr. Kearns mentioned that the Director and the staff are busy working on safety concerns and protocols.

**II. Summer Camp – Beginning June 29, 2020**

The Director gave a lengthy report on the proposed structure including; hours of operation, length of sessions, total number of registrations, age requirements, fee structure, camp registration options, number of counselors, dismissal and drop-off plans, and total number of campers per day. The Director also mentioned that some activities would be removed from the camp experience, such as; no extended day, no field trips, no swim and lessons while strict check in procedures will be implemented.

He also covered some of the CDC current guidelines as well as those from the Office of Early Childhood. The Director also spoke about our speciality camps.

Much discussion ensued regarding length of camp sessions, parents' concerns, number of registrations, and the Rec Center campus. The Director wanted to be sure that we are providing our citizens with the best possible service, safety, and to ensure a great summer experience for our campers.

Mr. DiPinto will be working with the Commission's sub-committee and staff on final details and protocols that should be completed by the end of next week.

Business Items

Chairperson – Phil Kearns

Mr. Kearns reported he has been working with the sub-committees and the department on developing reopening protocols.

Director's Report – Dennis DiPinto

Mr. DiPinto reported that he is continuing to work with the staff on recovery and remobilization plans for the department with eventual guidance from the Public Health Department, (local and state government) to establish protocols to be put in place for our reopening. The current focus is on reopening our summer camps and outdoor recreation.

Building/Grounds

- Looking at building and campus for camp extended space.
- The family changing room renovation is almost complete.
- The Spray Bay flooring looks terrific and is complete.

Financial





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- Attended BOS meeting regarding 2020-2021 department budgets requests.
- Working with staff on revenue and expenses-discussion regarding closure effects.

**Community:**

- Met with Superintendent of schools regarding use of schools for summer camp
- Worked with Town on the first outdoor COVID 19 testing at Rec Center parking area
- Met with Health Director regarding reopening.

**Staffing-Programs**

Meeting staff to discuss Phase 1&2 reopening  
Camp start up.  
Pool & Beach opening.  
Staff returning to work – protocols.  
Maintenance staff on stock piling supplies.  
Outdoor staff on protocols – training.  
Meeting weekly with Supervisors.  
Attended a few zoom joint meeting with other Towns.  
Spoke with Wilton on their plans for camp and reopening.

**Marketing and Programs – Kathy Fassman**

- We are continuing with our community outreach efforts. We created a *We Miss You* contest where families send an email with what they miss most about us for a chance to win a One Year Family Membership. A winner will be selected randomly on June 1. So far, we have 135 entries and it is so great to hear how much they miss our staff, offerings, and facility.
- In regards to fitness/memberships, we are working on proposals and guidelines for our yoga, Zumba, and other fitness classes to be ready to return when we receive State approval.
- We are discussing plans for opening Martin Park Beach from June 13 to September 7 with limited parking and social distancing rules and CDC guidelines.
- In regards to Adventure Day Camp, we have applied with the State to have 120 campers every week. We are working on plans that will follow the appropriate safety guidelines.

**Sub-Committee Reports**

Buildings & Grounds – Phil Kearns

Mr. Kearns stated that he will be in touch to set-up a meeting with the sub-committee regarding the Athletic Fields Agreement.

Aquatics & Programs – Phil Kearns

Nothing to report at this time.

Annual Goals & Marketing – Evie Bottali

Nothing to report at this time.

Budget & Policy – Phil Kearns

Mr. Kearns gave a summary from the recent Board of Selectmen's meeting regarding the 2020-2021 budget requests. The budget now moves on to the Board of Finance, which is meeting this evening. Mr. Kearns mentioned that there were no reductions in our capital budget and that our operating budget was one the department could work this.

Special Services & Community Outreach - Barbara Dobbin

Ms. Dobbin thanked Ms. Fassman for her work on the current Community Outreach activities.

Strategic Plan – Gina Carey

Nothing to report at this time.

Old Business: None

New Business – Committee Realignment – Phil Kearns



# RIDGEFIELD PARKS & RECREATION

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Mr. Kearns discussed with the Commission his proposal for re-shifting the Commission's sub-committee's responsibilities within the committees themselves. He mentioned that he would be in touch with each Commissioners to discuss reassignments.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn at 8:01 pm was made by Barbara Dobbin, seconded by Gina Cary and unanimously passed.

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Evie Bottali, Secretary