

UNAPPROVED

**Minutes of the
Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting**

September 20, 2016

In Attendance:

Barbara Dobbin, Vice Chair
David Shofi
Gina Carey
Kim Hulber
David Thaxter
Evie Bottali

Paul J. Roche, Director
Robin Matthews, Asst. Dir.
Robert Schneider, Asst. Dir.
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 Chairman at 7:40p.m.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda as presented was approved.

Recognition of Guests:

No guests to recognize.

Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes of the July meeting were approved as presented.

Financial Status:

In Ms. Cipolla's absence, Ms. Dobbin reported that both the karate and fencing programs are a little soft, but both programs are new to the Department. Ms. Dobbin also reported that the numbers for September seem to be at this point, on target.

Chairman:

In Mr. Kearns' absence, Ms. Dobbin reported that the Chairman has attended several meetings of the Main Street Committee. The Committee is working with the State on how to improve the traffic flow and keep the Main Street trees and parking spaces. These meetings are on-going and the Chairman will keep the Commission up-dated as needed.

Director's Report:

The Director reported that the building has been very busy and he is working on the following:

Mr. Roche reported he is working with the Special Olympic committee to help with fund raising. Over the past several years the program has grown and they are in need of some items. Mr. Roche has spoken with a donor and they have agreed to a challenge grant.

The Director is also working with the Coalition Against Substance Abuse committee on a new program; Family Facetime. The Department will help facilitate the program and help with some advertising. The Department agreed this was an important program to support.

Mr. Roche also mentioned that he is working with the staff on the upcoming capital budget requests.

The Director reported that the CHIRP summer concerts were very popular again this summer and that he had some discussions with the neighbors regarding the noise levels. Mr. Roche mentioned that after moving the direction of the speakers, the noise levels from some concerts were less than the automobiles driving past. Ms. Carey also mentioned that she noticed that the noise levels were less during July and August. Mr. Roche stated that he will continue to monitor this next season.

Assistant Director-Recreation:

Ms. Matthews reported that the recreation section has been very busy with events and getting ready for the fall activities to begin. Ms. Matthews reported that the Department still has an open position in our Aquatic section and a front desk position. Ms. Matthews mentioned to the Commission that the Department promoted Jim Rafferty to the Front Desk Supervisors' position and that Carol O'Meara will be moving up to Jim's position. The Commission was pleased with these candidates.

- Fall fitness classes are doing very well and space is tight. Fall swim lessons are down slightly from last year.
- Ms. Hulber asked if the department had only one room for the dance program, as she mentioned that the hallways are very crowded during the changing of classes. Ms. Matthews mentioned that the dance room has special flooring and that we currently only have one room.

Ms. Carey mentioned that she had noticed that we had outside vendors using Martin Park Beach for programs. The Commission was excited to see that the Department was using the space to help increase revenue.

Assistant Director-Parks:

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- Mr. Schneider is working on the getting bids for the upcoming capital budget requests.
- Work will begin soon on the resurfacing of the high school tennis and basketball courts.
- The safety fencing work will begin next week at Veterans Park School.
- Mr. Schneider will begin the draw down of water at Martin Park Beach next week.
- The National Charity League has planted over 3,000 daffodils at Richardson Park as one of its service projects.
- Field renovations have begun at Diniz and Onolfo fields.
- Several Eagle Scout projects have been completed, these included a bridge at Shadow Lake for the walking trails and the Ballard Park gazebo has been restored and painted.
- The footings for the Sturges Park cabin have been dug and poured and installation of the cabin should begin soon. The Commission had a question on the completion date and funding status.
- The polls for the new netting and lighting for the Governors Park field have been installed.

Ms. Hulber asked if there were any future possibilities of installing an outdoor ice skating rink. Mr. Roche mentioned that the staff has discussed this in the past and we have also done some investigation into whether or not it is feasible. Mr. Roche mentioned that due to weather conditions, the season for an outdoor portable rink is short. The Department did discuss allowing skating on the front pond of the Recreation Center. Further discussion will continue this fall.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds – David Thaxter

Mr. Thaxter stated that we are still waiting for the Sturges Park cabin to be installed and feels this is a timing issue, but Mr. Schneider mentioned that it should be completed before the winter season begins. Mr. Thaxter mentioned that fund raising will continue.

Aquatics & Programs –David Thaxter:

Mr. Thaxter reported that the Spray Bay had a very successful year and due to great weather conditions it remained open for two additional weekends. Spray Bay birthday parties were also very popular this year.

The Recreation Center pool was also busy this summer with swim lessons and Adventure Camp utilization. There were approximately 75 campers who took swim lessons.

Martin Park Beach had a successful year; boat rental revenue was up from last year.

Mr. Thaxter thanked Ms. Matthews and her staff for doing an excellent job this summer with successful programs; summer camp, swim lessons, etc,

Annual Goals & Marketing Plans – Evie Bottali

Ms. Bottali reported that over the summer months the membership numbers were soft; however, the Accountant reported that September numbers looked on target. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the RecTrac software system and the development of our membership reports. Ms. Bottali mentioned that the information provided by RecTrac is now on tract to develop her membership comparison reports. The Commission suggested that the Department keep a close eye on the current membership trends. Ms. Hulber asked if the Department did any exit interviews with members who did not renew their memberships. Mr. Roche mentioned that we spot check the monthly pay members regularly and it seems that they did not renew due to non- use of the facility and members were looking for a six month membership plan.

Ms. Bottali also reported that the sub-committee and the Department will be working on a New Year membership promotion within the next few weeks.

Budget & Policy – Phil Kearns

No report at this time.

Special Services – Barbara Dobbin

Ms. Dobbin reported that the Town's Social Services Director has mentioned that every new project have a 20% contingency to go into accessibility features. It was suggested that there be a Town wide review on ADA accessibility issues including Parks and Recreation responsibilities.

Ms. Dobbin is also working with the Social Services Director to continue the Department's five year plan for the accessibility of Park and Recreation facilities.

Ms. Dobbin also reported that she is setting up a meeting with Mr. Marconi, Mr. Philips, and Mr. Roche to discuss the funding for making our facilities accessible.

Strategic Plan – Gina Carey

Ms. Carey thanked the Commissioners for all the work they have done with the interviews for the development of the Department's Strategic Plan. Ms. Carey said that good progress is being made with the planning and things are moving along nicely.

Old Business:
Sturges Park Deer Hunt

Ms. Dobbin reviewed for discussion, a survey done of several Town Parks and Recreation Departments regarding regulating hunting on Town Park properties. Ms. Dobbin reported that the Towns surveyed all had the same response; no, they do not allow hunting in Town Parks. A brief discussion ensued regarding State legislation, neighboring States regulations and other options.

Ms. Carey made the following motion:

“The Commission hereby declines the request to approve hunting in Sturges Park.”

The motion was seconded by David Thaxter and passed unanimously.

The Commission talked briefly about the Shadow Lake property jurisdiction, open space and the State Forestry responsibilities.

The Commission will forward its decision to the Deer Commission.

New Business:
No new business to report at this time.

A motion to adjourn was made by Gina Carey and seconded by David Thaxter at 8:45pm.

*Minutes Approved: _____
Evie Bottali, Secretary