



Minutes of the  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Meeting

September 25, 2018

In Attendance:

Phil Kearns, Chairman  
Evie Bottali  
Gina Carey  
Barbara Dobbin  
David Shofi  
Kim Hulber  
David Thaxter

Dennis DiPinto, Director  
Robert Schneider, Asst. Dir-Parks  
Eileen Cipolla, Acct.  
Jane Byrnes, Comm. Secty  
Kathy Fassman, Marketing & Programming

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

Meeting called to order by Chairman at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Carey motioned to accept the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by David Thaxter and passed unanimously.

Recognition of Guests:

No guests to recognize.

Mr. Kearns introduced staff member Kathy Fassman.

Minutes:

The minutes as presented were approved.

Financial Status – Eileen Cipolla:

Ms. Cipolla reported that overall revenue is down slightly to budget and expenses are on target. Ms. Cipolla also stated that we are hoping for strong membership numbers for September. Mr. Kearns mentioned that memberships maybe soft due to the building renovation. There was a brief discussion regarding revenue numbers on the Barlow Mountain pool. Ms. Cipolla also stated that the Budget Sub-Committee would begin work shortly on the 2020 capital and operating budgets.

Chairperson's Report – Phil Kearns:

Mr. Kearns reported that he and Mr. DiPinto met with the First Selectman regarding funding for Phase III of the locker room renovation. It was suggested that the request be added to the Department's capital requests for next year.

Mr. Kearns mentioned that he had met with the Charter Group regarding the Recreation Center's trail. This will be covered under New Business.

Director's Report- Dennis DiPinto

Mr. DiPinto reported on the following:

Building/Grounds

- Working with the Building Committee on the locker room renovation. The latest completion date is October 16. The contractor has seen some challenges with





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the trades sharing the small working space. Mr. DiPinto has sent out a notice via Facebook, e-mail blast, and letter to the editor of the Ridgefield Press thanking the members for their patience and support during this renovation.

- Mr. DiPinto reiterated the meeting with the First Selectman regarding funding for Phase III. The Director mentioned that the Department is planning its locker room grand opening event for October 23 and October 24. Notice will be publicized to the members.
- The Recreation Center pool renovation went well. Mr. DiPinto praised Mr. Schneider for his innovative ideas, which helped the Center open the pool on time.

The non-slip floor seems to be a great asset to the pool area.

- The Wellness room will have new equipment installed shortly. The Department decided not to do the floor because of the inconvenience to the membership. The new flooring will be postponed to a later date. The Department will do a complete thorough cleaning before the new locker room opens. The Commission asked if the beams and ceiling would also be cleaned, Mr. DiPinto answered yes.
- Mr. DiPinto is working with Mr. Kearns on the request from the Charter Group.

## Financial

- The Director had met twice with the Town regarding Department revenue.
- Mr. DiPinto reported that he has been working with the staff on several potential new programs including working with the Scotts Ridge Middle School on an after school winter program.
- Mr. DiPinto is working with the Accountant and the staff on the next capital budget.

## Community

- Mr. DiPinto reported that the summer CHIRP concerts went well. They held 27 concerts this year. The Director stated that he and the staff had attended the concerts and checked the sound to be sure it was within the decimal levels that we required.
- The Department hosted the recent SPIF (Senior Positive Initiative Forum) event, which had over 100 seniors attend.
- Working with Town Hall's new Purchasing Director for a smooth transition.
- The Governor Park-Friends press box project is almost completed. Waiting for Certificate of Occupancy.
- The 911 Ceremony was held on the lower field near the monument with approximately 100 people attending. The Department did the set-up and breakdown for the event.
- Working with representatives from pickleball to look at different membership opportunities. There was a discussion regarding tighten up the monitoring of drop-in pickleball players at the Yanity Gym.
- The Director is working on developing a drone presentation of the various Parks and Recreation facilities. They will focused on the Recreation Center site and buildings to begin and then reach out to our other facilities next spring/summer. The Director is hoping to have this play on various social medias.

## Staffing

- Working on staff customer service training. Our first session is scheduled in November and the FISH training will be cover by Ms. Jamie Telegas. We are trying to set a time where the entire staff will be able to attend. The Chair asked if Kim Hulber would like to join the session. Ms. Hulber said yes.
- The staff submitted their goals this past summer, however due to new job responsibilities; they will have to be fine-tuned.
- The Halloween Howl, one of the new upcoming events will be held at the Recreation Center in late October. The event will have a fall hayride, outdoor movie, pumpkin decorating, food trucks, etc.
- Working with staff on the upcoming Halloween window-painting event in Town. The Director personally went to businesses on Main Street to get them to donate





their windows for the event. The event has seen a decrease in participation with both the merchants and the middle schoolers.

- Met with a vendor on a registration software and possible future opportunities.
- Working with the Highway Department on winter plowing. A brief discussion took place regarding the efficiency of our Department.

Kathy Fassman gave a summary on the after school program and our recent brainstorming session for new program ideas and community outreach events.

Assistant Director-Recreation

Covered under Director's report.

Assistant Director-Parks – Mr. Schneider:

Mr. Schneider reported on the following:

- Crews are busy prepping for the fall/winter high school athletic season.
- The crews are also doing fall renovation on Diniz and Onalfo infields.
- The crews are also working on snow removal equipment for the upcoming winter.
- The CHIRP trailer has been removed and winterized from Ballard Park.
- The school grounds have been cleaned, woodchips added and renovated for the school year.
- The elementary school playgrounds have had their safety checks and wood fiber installed.
- Working on the completion of the Recreation Center renovation pool project. A new non-skid surface has been installed.
- HVAC seasonal maintenance is now completed, and winterizing of the Spray Bay has begun.
- The fall carnival was held on the front Rec Center field.
- The Ballard Park pumpkin weigh-in event is this Sunday in Ballard Park.
- The Asst. Director is currently working with the Accountant on the upcoming capital budget.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds – David Thaxter:

- Mr. Thaxter is a bit disappointed with the delay with the locker room renovation. He asked if there was any recourse. Mr. Kearns felt that the contractor is on top of this October date.
- Mr. Thaxter asked if the Department had gotten any further comments regarding the Governor Park property concerning keeping the grounds around the Town's buildings clean. Mr. Schneider stated that his staff has spent additional time keeping the property clean.
- Mr. DiPinto mentioned that he had received some correspondence from a resident regarding installing permanent bathrooms in Ballard Park. The sub-committee will follow up with a meeting with the resident.

Aquatics & Programs –David Thaxter:

- Mr. Thaxter reported that swim lesson revenue is up slightly, due to the restructuring of our swim lesson.
- There has been some vandalism at Martin Park Beach and Ms. Dynia is looking at installing a security camera.
- We have not heard any word back from Ridgefield Aquatics Club regarding the developing a competitive aquatic facility.
- Working with some private schools on utilizing the pool during off peak times.



Annual Goals & Marketing Plans- Evie Bottali:

- The marketing promotions for the fiscal year are being developed. Ms. Bottali reported that the New Year – 3 For Free promotion will be offered again this year.
- Ms. Bottali reported that a shift to the monthly memberships in August resulted in a slight decrease in revenue.

Budget & Policy-Phil Kearns:  
Covered above.

Special Services Issues & Community Out Reach – Barbara Dobbin:

Ms. Dobbin reported that she has contacted SilverSneakers and they cannot tell Parks and Recreation at this time when and if, Parks and Recreation will be approved for the Silver Sneakers program. Ms. Dobbin also mentioned that eight years ago the Department contacted SilverSneakers with an interest in implementing the program. The Department was declined because they felt our geography was adequately covered.

Ms. Dobbin mentioned that the committee looked at the costs and revenue outlook of implementing SilverSneakers. Our conclusion is that the balance between the revenue opportunity and the administrative costs of implementation was not positive.

Mr. Kearns stated that he had corresponded with Mr. Burke regarding the SilverSneakers outcome.

Strategic Plan – Gina Carey  
No report at this time.

Old Business:  
Cover above.

New Business-Charter Group Partners – Phil Kearns

Mr. Kearns reported that he, Dennis DiPinto and Bobby Schneider had met with the representatives from the Charter Group regarding their request to connect to the Recreation Center Trail. Mr. Kearns presented a proposed site drawing and summarized for the Commission the Charter Group's plan for the proposed connection. The Charter Group will be attending the October Commission meeting with a full presentation on this project. The Commission had a few questions regarding the effect on our proposed parking expansion, accessibility, additional memberships, signage and maintenance for this connection. Mr. Kearns stated that the Charter Group is asking for the Commission's support with this project, and have asked that the Commission Chairman attend the next Town public meeting to verbalize this support. Mr. Kearns asked for the Commission's general sentiment of this proposal, prior to the formal vote. The Commission felt this was a positive asset to the Parks & Rec trail. They will be working through the details once a formal proposal has been presented.





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With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made at 9:45pm, by Gina Carey and seconded by Barbara Dobbin.

Motion to go into Executive Session was made by Gina Carey and seconded by Kim Hulber.  
Motion to adjourn Executive Session made at 10:08pm.

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

Evie Bottali, Secretary