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TOWN OF NEWTOWN
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission
Special Meeting, Tuesday, March 21, 2022 @ 6:00 P.M.
Newtown Teen Center, 53 Church Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470

MINUTES ARE NOT FINALIZED UNTIL APPROVED BY THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Present: Clinton De Paolo, Aaron Britton, Rance Thompson, Warren Spencer

Absent: David Payne, Jim Parker, Vincent Yanni, Jr.

Also Present: Amy Mangold, Director, Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director/Parks, RoseAnn Reggiano, Assistant Director/Recreation, Charles Zukowski, Resident

Chairman De Paolo called the meeting to order at 6:26 p.m.

Public Participation:

Charles Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge Road – Mr. Zukowski stated he is attending the meeting as a representative of the Newtown Bike and Trails Committee, of which he is a member. He had two questions he was hoping the Commission could answer; 1. Will the trails on the backside of Treadwell Park be cleaned and restored? Carl Samuelson started by saying that at one point the Newtown Police Department and others affected by Sandy Hook School asked that they not be maintained due to individuals trying to get closer to the school. But with that being said he also mentioned that recently Sandy Hook School has been in contact with the department to try and re-establish them to be used for student activities. Amy Mangold stated that it would be advantageous to have all parties involved get together to discuss further. Amy Mangold also mentioned that the proposed disc golf course would be in that general area, but would not eliminate the trails, rather use in conjunction with. Mrs. Mangold indicated that at this time a request for proposals and bids (RFP) would need to be completed before any work could begin. 2. Is the pond at Dickinson Park part of the park and Newtown property? And are the trail markers adjacent to it also part of the park? Carl Samuelson stated that the pond is part of the park and town property, but the property adjacent to it is open space. Mr. Zukowski mentioned that there are trail markers on one side of the pond, and he also wondered why they don't go all the way to the Dickinson Park parking lot? Mr. Samuelson answered that those trail markers might have been from another proposed project. Mrs. Mangold summed up the conversation by stating to Mr. Zukowski that this is all worth discussing again and potentially proposing to other groups for approval.

Consideration and action on the minutes: Commissioner Britton moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of November 8, 2022. Commissioner Thompson seconded. All in favor. Commissioner Britton moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of December 13, 2022. Commissioner Thompson seconded. All in favor.

Old Business:

a. Dickinson Pavilion Repairs – Carl Samuelson reported that they are starting work next week and it will take approximately four to five weeks for completion. His staff will be installing fencing around the area this week as final preparation for work.

b. Teen Center Repairs/Wi-Fi Installation – Mr. Samuelson reported that the Newtown IT department will not be able to support the Wi-Fi equipment at the Teen Center, because it cannot be on the town servers for security reasons. The Parks and Recreation Department will need to obtain a separate account through Spectrum. Commissioner Thompson moved to approve a total of up to \$3,000 from the special revenue account to pay for the Teen Center Wi-Fi. Commissioner Britton seconded. All in favor.

c. 2023 Meeting Schedule – Commissioner Spencer moved to accept the Remaining 2023 Meeting Schedule, with Tuesday, April 11th being changed to Tuesday, April 18th. Commissioner Thompson seconded. All in favor.

d. Bicycle Playground – Amy Mangold reported that work will be starting on Monday, March 27th. It will take approximately four weeks to complete, depending on the weather. Progressive Bike Company subcontracted Creative Native Concepts to build the playground and she is very glad that the New England Mountain Bike Association, along with the Newtown Bike and Trails Committee assisted with the project. All agreed that everything looked great and were excited to see work begin.

e. 2023-2024 Budget – Amy Mangold reported that no major changes have occurred to the proposed budget, but that only two additions happened to the funding for the Memorial expenses and the funds to landscape around the Senior Center/Community Center were added for a shared expense with the Community Center and Parks and Recreation Department.

New Business: None

Correspondence: Mrs. Mangold stated that she received a letter and photo to say thank you for the Senior Center St. Patrick's Day Party.

Chairman's Report: Chairman De Paolo stated that he has received some misc. verbal complaints from sports groups. He stated that he has invited them to attend a commission meeting to express their concerns.

Director's Report: Amy Mangold reported that as of the other day only three boat slips remained, but that they would be filled by the waiting lists, so essentially all slips were spoken for. Mrs. Mangold also informed the Commission that she and Mr. Robert Sibley, Town of Newtown Land Use Director completed and submitted a CT Recreation Trails Program Grant through DEEP. If received, the funds would go towards the design of the trails from the Fairfield Hills campus to the end of the Mile Hill Road. If they make the second round, they will hear in April. Mrs. Mangold also reported that the Newtown Bike and Trails Committee applied for the same funding for another section of trails from the Al's Trail to the Sandy Hook Center. The Newtown Bike and Trails Committee completed the grant work on its own but needed the Parks and Recreation Department to submit it for them, Mrs. Mangold was happy to help since they have been such great partners in the past. Mrs. Mangold was happy to announce that Mr. Howard Lasher, a longtime donor to the summer camp scholarship fund, generously left \$50,000 to continue his philanthropy and assist families in need of summer camp tuition. Mrs. Mangold also applied for the Summer Enrichment Grant, which gives \$50,000 per camp per year for two years. She will apply individually for all three camps: the Teen Adventure Camp, Dickinson Park Camp, and Treadwell Park Camp. If received, as in past years, there would be a significant number of residents and non-residents that could benefit from these funds to help attend camp. Amy Mangold also reported that the new Friday Walking Program averaged about 20 students - Newtown Middle School Students are invited to walk to the Teen Center and socialize with friends from 3pm to 5pm. Pizza is available at no charge to students every Friday because the department was able to sponsor it, but Women Involved in Newtown will be

sponsoring pizza for the next month, and she hopes to obtain other sponsors going forward to keep costs down for students participating.

Assistant Director's Report:

Assistant Director/Recreation – Ms. Reggiano distributed the Spring and Summer Programs & Events booklets, along with many other flyers of upcoming events planned. She stated that registrations have been very busy ever since the newspaper insert was distributed via the Newtown Bee last Friday. Girls' Volleyball in particular has been very popular, and they are hoping to hire an additional coach to allow all registered individuals to participate. RoseAnn Reggiano stated she is planning a dine-to-donate fundraiser with Newtown Pizza Palace, where Newtown Pizza Palace will donate 20% of all the proceeds. Ms. Reggiano requested that the Commission think about items the money could be used towards. Ms. Reggiano reported that many recent 5th/6th grade events have been extremely successful (i.e., Flannel party with 98 attendees and the St. Patrick's Day Party with 106 attendees). She also reported that the PTA Boards have been very supportive with events and therefore they will partner to put together a student/family basketball event. Ms. Reggiano stated that the pickleball season is quickly approaching, and the staff is already seeing individuals using the outdoor courts when the weather permits. Pickleball lessons are already full at Edmond Town Hall gym. All proceeds from these lessons will go towards new pickleball courts. The Parks and Recreation Department has also been working with the Senior Center to hold some great events for the senior residents. These have included a New Years Party, Valentine's Day Party, and St. Patrick's Day Party. The Senior Spring Fling is also making a comeback. Ms. Reggiano was happy to announce that Britney Accettella has been hired as the new Teen Adventure Camp Director. There are still some openings for summer positions, and she is also still looking for volunteers for the 49th Annual Rooster Run on Saturday, June 17th. Ms. Reggiano reported that she is trying to bring back singing lessons coming, Lacrosse squirts, and a floor hockey clinic.

Assistant Director/Parks – Carl Samuelson stated that the department has been focusing on getting the athletic fields ready for opening day on April 15th, if not sooner, weather dependent. The new hoop at Fairfield Hills was donated by Nike about ten years ago, but because of the glass backboard they could not be used at Treadwell Park. When the original hoop was taken down during sewer work, an employee saw this as an opportunity to utilize the hoops sitting in storage. Mr. Samuelson reported that the meadows that are cut annually have been completed. He also reminded the Commission that new goal posts will be installed at the Hawley School field. Mr. Samuelson informed the Commission that Newtown sports groups have asked if they can pay the Parks and Recreation Department Staff to groom and line the fields on the weekend, instead of them having to find volunteers, specifically the baseball and softball programs. Mr. Samuelson has received all proper approval from the Finance Director and First Selectman to approve this request but was asked to make sure a Memorandum of Understanding was completed between the groups and the town.

Commissioner's Out and About: None

Adjournment: Having no further business Commissioner Thompson moved to adjourn the special meeting of the Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission at 7:32 p.m. Commissioner Britton seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Kullgren, Clerk Pro Tem

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Remaining 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

**All meetings will be held in person at the Newtown Teen Center
53 Church Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470 at 6:00 p.m.**

~~Tuesday, April 11, 2023~~ (Changed to Tuesday, April 18, 2023 per meeting minutes)

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Tuesday, August 8, 2023

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Tuesday, January 9, 2024