

These minutes are subject to approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission held an in-person meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 with an opportunity for public participation, at the Newtown Teen Center, 53 Church Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clinton DePaolo at 6:00pm.

**Present:** Clinton DePaolo, Warren Spencer, Aaron Britton, Adam Angerami, Tony Filiato, Vincent Yanni, David Payne

**Staff Present:** Amy Mangold, Carl Samuelson

**Public:** Jeff Rubino

**Public Participation:**

Jeff Rubino, of 77 Head of Meadow, and the VP for Travel for the Newtown Soccer Club stated that they had a great opening weekend. He inquired about the allotment of field time and whether this can be looked at as some time had been taken away for the spring. Mr. Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director, Parks responded that the Newtown Soccer Club scheduler had willingly given up some of the time and traded a little between Tilson & Treadwell Turf. Mr. Samuelson suggested that Mr. Rubino contact Lauren Ravo through the club's scheduler to follow up.

Mr. Rubino offered to provide club nets if needed.

Ms. Mangold relayed that Newtown Baseball had contacted her about fields they noticed were empty - they didn't understand why, as they had been told the fields were completely booked. Discussion entailed regarding the fact that some clubs have cancelled games, this will be looked into further.

**Acceptance of Minutes:**

December 12, 2023 Minutes were accepted.

March 12, 2024 Minutes were accepted.

**Old Business:**

**Discussion and Possible Action**

- **Capital Improvement Plan Update & Parks and Recreation Annual Budget**

Chairman DePaolo stated that voting will take place on April 23. He asked that the commissioners vote and encourage everyone to vote as historically voting turn-out is low.

Contractual services for mowing have been decided upon. As anticipated, the cost has doubled since the last bid five years ago. There are many reasons for this, including that the current contractor has been working for the last 10 years and did not raise rates. Also, Parks and Recreation absorbed additional parcels to maintain over the years, including the new Police Department, Newtown Animal Control, the Sandy Hook Memorial, the Village Cemetery and the Newtown Community Center. The cemetery parcel might eventually be taken over by the cemetery association. The new contract is for one year, renewable for four additional years, with no cost increase for three years.

Ms. Mangold added that up until now there have been three contractors involved, including contractors hired by Parks and Recreation, the Community Center and Economic Development. The new contract will all be handled by one company and includes all of the work previously handled by three contractors.

- **Pickleball Update**

Ms. Mangold reported that the historic designation for the Fairfield Hills Campus passed through the state. The next step for federal approval can take a few months. We do need to have this happen by December in order to keep the ARPA funds designated.

- **50<sup>th</sup> Annual Rooster Run**

Commissioner Aaron Britton, a member of the Rooster Run Planning Committee, reported that we are working on securing event sponsors, getting volunteers and runner participation. He has secured an in-kind donation from Dodgingtown Market & Deli for food for the runners, along with a tent for the public to purchase food. An event photographer has been secured. Reverie Brewery has been secured as the bib sponsor. Mr. Britton has also asked the Rotary Club if they would help at the event.

## **New Business**

### **Discussion and Possible Action**

- **Youth Basketball/indoor sport surcharge fees**

Ms. Mangold relayed that she caught up with Top Martinez of Newtown Youth Basketball Association regarding AAU gym usage. He provided a thorough response. With the information provided, Ms. Mangold suggested keeping the surcharge fees as they are. There is a 95-99% Newtown resident participation. All were in agreement. Ms. Mangold will follow up and check the rosters for residency numbers when they are available.

- **Volleyball net pole purchase**

Mr. Samuelson, Assistant Director, Parks relayed that they have researched and found a two-court solution with a sand island between the courts for Dickinson Memorial Park. The quote is for \$5,503 plus shipping. This will enable us to double our capacity for volleyball and to enable more participation, particularly when camp is in session and when we have large groups at the Pavilion. This will also provide a venue for tournaments and league play – surcharge revenue will help to cover the costs of the equipment. It was decided that the funds for the purchase will be allocated.

### **Correspondence:**

Ms. Mangold reported that there was a very complimentary exchange on the Newtown Neighbors Unite Facebook page regarding Newtown Parks and Recreation exemplary customer service. Kate Geerer, our Front Desk Clerk, was complimented on her helpful attitude by a number of subscribers.

### **Chairman's Report:**

Chairman DePaolo reviewed the progress on hiring an Assistant Director, Recreation. The first candidate offered the position did not work out, however, the second candidate who was interviewed later on has accepted. Mr. DePaolo relayed that they are extraordinarily qualified with an impressive resume, has fresh ideas and will be a great addition to the staff.

### **Director's Report:**

- Ms. Mangold shared that she has been working on a lot of events while the Assistant Director's position has been vacant. She has enjoyed filling in
- We had 100 Grade 5 & 6 students at the St. Patrick's Day Party at the Teen Center. The event was a lot of fun and a great success.
- We had 98 attendees at a high school band night, with 3 bands, also at the Teen Center. Ms. Mangold trained a new Teen Center supervisor at this event. A second band night also took place, attendance was a bit less, but both events were well-organized and enjoyed by all. It was good to see the young adults enjoying the space.
- The Spring Egg Hunt took place on the rain date on March 30 and had 175 children. Everyone had a wonderful time, the volunteers excelled and the spring bunny did an awesome job. It was a wonderful Saturday morning.

- Last Friday was the Spring Fling (for ages 55 & over), co-hosted with the Senior Center. We had 68 attendees in the High School Cafetorium. The food was catered by the high school culinary program and was delicious. The DJ got everyone up and dancing. It was an evening enjoyed by all.

The Bicycle Playground is a bit pulled up due to the water line project taking place on the Fairfield Hills Campus. The contractors were able to avoid the playground features and have assured Ms. Mangold that they will put everything back together. This has been delayed due to the rainy weather and mud.

Ms. Mangold shared that she has been reviewing waterfront and day camp counselor applications, connecting with waterfront management and camp site supervisors and getting ready to set up interviews. We have two new co-directors for Teen Adventure Travel Camp. She has also renewed the contract for security at Eichler's Cove as they have been doing a fine job.

A meeting with Kim Chiapetta and John Voket took place regarding parking on the Fairfield Hills Campus. All were asked to communicate ahead of time with regard to any special events. Additional signage will identify parking – there is ample space but participants simply need to be made aware of alternative parking locations when there is heavy demand.

Two new maintainers have been hired which makes it the first time in 2 years that we have had a full staff.

#### **Assistant Director, Recreation Report**

See Director's Report above.

#### **Assistant Director, Parks Report**

Please see attached.

Mr. Samuelson also relayed that there was some damage done to a field by Aspetuck Rugby. They have been informed that damage costs would need to be covered if they rent a field in the future.

#### **Commissioners Out & About:**

Nothing to report.

#### **Motions:**

- Commissioner Warren Spencer made a motion to accept the December 12, 2023 Minutes. Commissioner Vinny Yanni seconded the motion. All voted in favor, the motion passed.
- Commissioner Tony Filiato made a motion to accept the March 12, 2024 Minutes. Commissioner Aaron Britton seconded the motion. All voted in favor, the motion passed.
- Commissioner Aaron Britton made a motion to allocate up to \$6,000 from surcharge funds to cover a new volleyball net/court at Dickinson Memorial Park. Commissioner Adam Angerami seconded the motion. All voted in favor, the motion passed.

#### **Adjournment of Meeting:**

Commissioner Vinny Yanni made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner David Payne seconded the motion.

Chairman DePaolo declared the meeting was adjourned at 7:02pm.

The next regular meeting is scheduled is Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Respectfully submitted by,  
*Jennifer Balbes, Clerk*

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CARL SAMUELSON  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PARKS

## TOWN OF NEWTOWN

### PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

#### PARKS AND FIELDS REPORT

**TO:** Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission,  
Amy Mangold, Director

**FROM:** Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director – Parks

**DATE** April 9, 2024

**RE:** Monthly park update and field report

The weather is feeling more spring like and our seasonal tasks are in full swing. Athletic fields opened for the season yesterday. We are getting all of the nets up, fields lined and facilities cleaned up for the season.

We are looking for some part time staff for mowing as well as summer rangers.

The Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial is up and running for the season and mulching around Town has begun.

**Dickinson Park:** Some mulching has been completed here as well as pruning of the hedges. The ice rink was stored for the season. The bathrooms are put back together we are just waiting for some State required testing to be completed before we open them. The tennis nets are up for the season.

**Newtown Middle School:** The fields have been cleaned up and groomed for the season. Fertility has been applied for the spring.

**Orchard Hill:** A few fallen trees have been cleaned up in recent weeks and the front gate was adjusted to close properly. The meadows here have been cut for the season.

**Lake Lillinonah:** The dock is in for the season and the launch lock was also changed for the boating season.

**Oakview:** Fertility has been applied for the spring and the bank has been cut.

**Tilson Field:** The bank was cut and vines were pruned out of the fencing. Nets were installed and the surface has been de-compacted and vacuumed.

**Treadwell Soccer/Softball:** Nets were installed and the surface has been de-compacted and vacuumed.

**Glander Fields:** The forms have been set for a concrete surround on Glander 1, concrete will be poured next Tuesday. The fields have all been cleaned and groomed for opening.

**Liberty Fields:** The fields have all been cleaned and groomed for opening. Fencing was repaired and rehung in many areas.

**Walnut Tree:** The field have all been cleaned and groomed for opening.

**Fairfield Hills:** Regular campus maintenance continues including the pumping of the tunnels following heavy rains. The front entrance sign was reinstalled. The fields have all been cleaned and groomed for opening. Many trees, branches and sticks have been picked up following the past two windy storms. The pickle ball nets have been installed, although two courts are closed currently for crack repairs.

**NHS Fields:** The fields have all been cleaned and groomed for opening. Both artificial fields have been de-compacted and vacuumed. Fields, including the discus cage, and track and Field events have been lined. The shot put area was dug out and new material placed. All of the nets have been installed as well.

**Sandy Hook School:** The fields have all been cleaned and groomed for opening.

**Hawley School Fields:** The fields have all been cleaned and groomed for opening.

**Eichlers Cove Marina:** No news here as of yet.

**Dog Park:** No new news here as of yet.

**Treadwell Park:** We currently are waiting for some replacement components for the water pump that feeds Treadwell Park. We are placing some extra porta potties for now. The entire park has been cleaned up for the spring.

**Pole Bridge Preserve:** No new news.

**Watertown Field:** The fields have all been cleaned and groomed for opening. All of the benches have been bolted in place. The bleachers have been redistributed between Watertown and Glander at the request of Newtown Baseball.

- 112 hours of vacation/sick/personal/injury/discipline hours were used out of 1672 potential work hours in the past month. This represents a 6.8 % loss in workforce.