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TOWN OF NEWTOWN
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, May 9, 2023 @ 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, Rance Thompson, Warren Spencer, Jim Parker, Vincent Yanni, Jr.

Absent: Aaron Britton, Jim Parker, Dave Payne, RoseAnn Reggiano, Assistant Director/Recreation

Also Present: Amy Mangold, Director, Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director/Parks

Chairman De Paolo called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Public Participation:

Michael Coleman, 42 Currituck Road – Mr. Coleman came to the meeting to request that the Parks & Recreation Commission support him in obtaining gym time for his new AAU Basketball program, Young Life Academy. He also requested that his program be included in the Parks & Recreation flyers that get distributed. He stated that he has complied with all the rules and regulations necessary on the application for gym time, even getting a 501(3)(c) to prove his program is not-for-profit. He also discussed that he does not want to displace any of the other programs that are already run in town, but rather be able to add his program to the mix, as he believes it is something completely different than what is currently being offered. The commission did ask a few questions about the program that Mr. Coleman answered: His program is for 7th grade through 12th grade, it is currently comprised of Newtown residents and out of town residents and doesn't believe it meets the 80% minimum Newtown resident requirement at this time. Mr. Coleman thanked the commission for their time.

Amy Mangold and Carl Samuelson explained the differences in fees to use the gym space and what criteria he would have to meet to be eligible for the lower cost gym fees, citing as an example the minimum of 80% of a team to be Newtown residents.

Rick McLeod, 1 Saw Mill Ridge Road – Mr. McLeod came to the meeting as a representative of Newtown Youth Basketball Association (NYBA). He wanted to ensure that the Commission was aware of how hard it is to currently share gym time with the current programming that is available and feels it would be detrimental to the NYBA program if they had to share more gym time. He expressed that NYBA is already using the Newtown Youth Academy (NYA) more and more, which costs extra money that is passed along to the parents through higher program fees.

Renee Merrell, Great Hill Road – Ms. Merrell also attended the meeting to advocate for NYBA. She distributed a copy of the gym time schedule from this past winter season to the Commission. She wanted to convey to the Commission that the gym space is already full and because of school or other misc. town events a lot of the times NYBA has to give up their gym time.

Top Martinez, 4 Valley View Road – Mr. Martinez stated that he is the President of NYBA and runs a 100% Newtown resident AAU team. Mr. Martinez shared the same concerns as Mr. McLeod and Ms. Merrell. Mr. Martinez believes that Mr. Coleman’s program will conflict with both the NYBA and AAU programming that is currently running.

Charles Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge Road – Mr. Zukowski shared that he recently visited Snake Rock Farm located at 109 Berkshire Road in Newtown and that it has great trails for biking and hiking.

Consideration and action on the minutes: Chairman De Paolo tabled the motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 18, 2023, till a quorum was present that attended the meeting.

Old Business:

a. Dickinson Pavilion Repairs – Carl Samuelson stated that the pavilion roof and gutters are complete. He also updated the Commission on the bathroom at the pavilion and how deteriorated it is then originally realized. They are waiting for estimates to proceed with planning. Mr. Samuelson also updated the Commission on possible change orders for this project; citing they are looking into changing the fastening of the roof snow guards from adhesive to a metal screw and also adding block to the columns to secure the metal roof better and eliminate the roof from bending and curving. All and all the pavilion project is looking great.

New Business:

a. Capital Improvement Projects – Ms. Mangold asked that everyone start thinking about capital improvement projects to deliberate and potentially bring to the Finance Director for discussion.

Correspondence: Amy Mangold shared a note from Paula Dayton, who is the daughter of recently deceased Pete Samoskevich. In lieu of flowers, money was collected from family and friends to donate to the Newtown Parks & Recreation Department to put towards Treadwell Park.

Chairman’s Report: Mr. De Paolo reminded everyone about the bicycle park grand opening is on June 7th at 5pm. He also stated that he has heard a lot of feedback from residents about recent field closures and that currently the Oakview and Newtown Middle School fields are still closed.

Director’s Report: Pickleball nets at FFH have been taken down for parking for an upcoming event. Mr. Samuelson added that he has picture proof of at least 10 occurrences of the nets being taken down for parking, but no one used these parking spaces. He estimated that it costs \$4000 in overtime for his staff to accomplish this task and would ask if taking them down is necessary with such little usage.

Ms. Mangold is still working on gathering information for new pickleball courts. She and Mr. Samuelson visited a few locations at the FFH campus that might be possible to examine for further consideration. Ms. Mangold has been in touch with resident Tom Long, who has board and commission experience and feels that himself and Bill Manfredonia would be the liaisons between the department and pickleball supporters.

Amy Mangold was excited to announce a couple of new and unique ideas that have been recently discussed. Officer Matt Hayes will be focusing on parks and connecting with residents this summer. He even reached out for a copy of park rules and regulations. Officer Hayes might also plan an outdoor summer hockey event. Commissioner Yanni recommended reaching out the local professional hockey team to possibly partake in a event in some compacity.

Newtown Middle School has created a restorative project program to replace detention for disorderly students. A project identified is picking up trash at Treadwell Park.

Barbara McWilliams, Chairman of the Lake Zoar Authority wants to promote boat safety and start a life vest loaner program at Eichler's Cove. Ms. Mangold needs to meet with her to discuss more of the specifics on how the program will operate but believes it is an idea worth discussing further.

Assistant Director's Report:

Assistant Director/Recreation – RoseAnn Reggiano was absent from tonight's meeting but in her absence, Ms. Mangold mentioned that she is very busy with summer camps and events. They are still looking for lifeguards, camp counselors, and a warden at Eichler's Cove. Ms. Mangold reminded everyone of the following events: Strut Your Mut on May 20th and the Senior Spring Fling on May 19th from 4 to 7pm at Newtown High School.

Assistant Director/Parks – Mr. Samuelson stated that the Wi-Fi at the Teen Center is coming along. His crews are about two to three weeks behind because of all the recent rain, but they are trying to catch up on all the mowing. The docks are in at Eichler's Cove. Mr. Samuelson is working with the Newtown Babe Ruth President to get fields ready. The transition of the routine maintenance of the Sandy Hook Memorial will take place in June. Mr. Samuelson is working on adding this to his department's schedule.

Chairman DePaolo inquired about the Eichler's Cove bathrooms. Currently the town does not allow composting toilets. Mr. Samuelson felt this could possibly be changed within the town regulations and would investigate it.

Commissioner's Out and About: Commissioner Yanni shared that there is possibly an unauthorized kayak rental company running a business on Lake Zoar. He also shared that a large pig was seen at Dickenson Park, where patrons had concerns for their safety. Ms. Mangold stated she would look further into the kayak rental company and if they were operating out of Newtown property and inquire with the Newtown Animal Control Officer about the pig.

Adjournment: Having no further business, Commissioner Yanni moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the Newtown Parks and Recreation Commission at 7:21 p.m. Commissioner Thompson seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Kullgren, Clerk Pro Tem