

Town of Newtown, CT

3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION.

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 in the multi-purpose room, The Senior Center, 8 Simpson Street in Newtown, CT.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Marks at 6:03 pm.

Present: Edward Marks, Clinton DePaulo, David Payne, Warren Spencer, Rance Thompson and Vincent Yanni.

Staff Present: RoseAnn Reggiano and Carl Samuelson

Absent: Amy Mangold and Patrick Barczak

Public: Linda Zukauskas, Voices Publication

Glenn Boyle, Newtown Tennis Association, 2 Marlin Road, Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Ehab Farah, 34 West Street, Newtown, CT 06470

James Twitchell, 4 Rooster Ridge Road, Newtown, CT 06470

Kristen and Michael Bonacci, 12 Meridian Ridge, Newtown, CT 06470

Shari and Dan Wright, 10 Boulder Creek Road, Newtown, CT 06470

Laura and Tim Adam, 5 Patricia Lane, Newtown, CT 06470

Jennifer Padilla, 32 Glen Road, Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Mark Skura, 6 Williams Lane, Newtown, CT 06470

Bryan Atherton, 7 Black Walnut Drive, Newtown, CT 06470

Claudia Beard, 27 Meadow Brook Road, Newtown, CT 06470

Public Participation:

Mr. James Twitchell representing Newtown Thunder addressed the commission regarding ongoing problems with Newtown Babe Ruth softball, namely, Pat McCleary, that association's president. Although Newtown Thunder is a legitimate town organization that complies 100% to maintain its 401c3 status, they are repeatedly treated by surrounding town's programs as an illegitimate group due to false information that is continuously purported by Newtown Babe Ruth softball. According to Mr. Twitchell, other towns have repeatedly cancelled games (or would not schedule them in the first place) due to this misinformation. Mr. Mike Bonacci reiterated what Mr. Twitchell said, adding that Mr. McCleary even goes to Newtown Thunder practices and intimidates some of the female coaches. Newtown Thunder maintains that boundaries are being overstepped by someone who no longer even has a family member involved in softball. All parents, including Ms. Jennifer Padilla (a Newtown Thunder coach) agreed. She stated that from day one Newtown Thunder has taken the high road while Newtown Babe Ruth softball overbooks fields that they aren't using just to make sure there is nothing available for Newtown Thunder. Mr. Tim Adam, also a Newtown Thunder coach and parent, stated that he was run out of Newtown Babe Ruth softball, so he went over to Newtown Thunder because his daughter just wanted to play softball. All parents expressed an

interest to be part of the solution to clear up this matter. Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman, Ed Marks stated: "I hear you loud and clear". Mr. Marks then offered as a short term solution, to provide Newtown Thunder with an emphatic letter stating that Newtown Thunder is a legitimate Newtown organization that should be treated as such. Long-term wise, Mr. Marks suggested they discuss this problem at the next meeting, perhaps meeting with both parties with third party attendance to shed some light on the problem to remedy it. Newtown Thunder was thanked by the commission, and promised that they would work together toward a permanent resolution.

Mr. Glenn Boyle and Mr. Ehab Farah, from Newtown Tennis Association, asked the commission if the tennis court nets were being put up soon due to the unseasonably beautiful weather to which Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson replied; "not yet". Mr. Samuelson then explained to the gentlemen that they like to put the nets up as early as possible, but they must look to weather patterns to make sure the evenings do not dip below freezing temperatures. As of now, they are shooting for the first day of spring, but will only do so if the weather cooperates.

Mr. Farah then addressed Parks and Recreation Assistant Director of Recreation, RoseAnn Reggiano asking her which dates would be available in July to host a tennis tournament at Dickinson Park. Ms. Reggiano said she would let him know the available dates by the end of the week. He also asked the commission if Newtown Tennis could offer free clinics as no one has applied for their tennis scholarship as yet. Chairman Marks said that they would have to run that by Parks and Recreation Director, Amy Mangold upon her return. Mr. Boyle thanked Newtown Parks and Recreation for their dedication particularly in the tough economic situation that the department has been put in of late.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion:

Commissioner Vincent Yanni made a motion to accept the Minutes from the February 11, 2020 Commission Meeting. Commissioner Clinton DePaulo seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- *Budget:*

Commission Chairman, Ed Marks stated that Parks and Recreation's biggest problem currently is the continuous downward spiral of its "Capital Spending" budget. With capital spending down to \$75k from about \$400k in 2007-8, it's clear that P & R needs to try to capture revenue wherever possible. The Commission discussed self-sustaining programs such as day camp, noting that in general, revenue from most programs are received into the Town's General Fund. Concerning budget reductions, Chairman Marks noted that while collaborative discussions with the First Selectman continue to occur, unfortunately cuts to line items are ultimately decided after these discussions, so P & R no longer has the ability to determine what specific areas should be sacrificed to meet the budget requirements of the First Selectman.

- *Field Use Agreement: (see attachment #1)*
Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson, distributed a copy of the changes made to the Field Use Agreement, namely, page 12. The main changes were proof of 501c3 status requirements and more important: Field usage fees being due 7 business days prior to scheduled use. The caveat here being that Parks & Recreation will not put on lights if they have not been paid. Parks & Recreation paid for the lights at Newtown High School entirely out of surcharge with the agreement that they would keep lights on for youth football after the high school use. This is what Parks & Recreation does with surcharge monies, Mr. Samuelson explained. It is used for the betterment of the facilities. Due to the decrease in funding, Mr. Samuelson is concerned that the surcharge will start being used for maintenance, and they need to stay true to the purpose of surcharges for the organizations that pay it. Newly appointed commissioner, David Payne, asked Mr. Samuelson how the various sports organizations know about updates to the Field Use Agreement to which he replied; "There are two field use meetings per year, and each organization's president needs to sign the agreement each year."

New Business:

- *Eichler's Cove Beach hours and operation:*
Assistant Director of Recreation, RoseAnn Reggiano explained that she, Aquatics Director, Kristin Rebelo and Carl Samuelson attended the CRPA meeting where much debate took place about handling minimum wage increases for Parks & Recreation communities. One solution that is being considered for Newtown, is to limit lifeguard presence at Eichler's Cove. Since weekly attendance is sporadic, having lifeguards on duty only on weekends and holidays was suggested. Park Wardens would still be there, and signs would be posted for midweek stating: "SWIM AT OWN RISK – NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY". Commissioner DePaolo suggested that they wait until Summer 2021 for said change, as the budget has already been approved and salaries allotted for this summer. The commissioners agreed to this, and Ms. Reggiano also remarked that it would give Parks & Recreation ample time to declare that in its literature prior to the beginning of the 2021 Summer season.

Chairman's Report:

Edward Marks, Chairman Newtown Parks and Recreation:

- Chairman Marks welcomed new commission member, David Payne to Parks and Recreation. Sergeant Payne is a police officer in New Canaan and lives in Newtown where he is raising two sons, ages 10 and 12 years old. He has coached in the past and is a long time resident of Newtown. All the commissioners stated how happy they were to have him on board, to which Commissioner Payne replied; "I'm happy to be here".
- Chairman Marks noted that he and Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson appeared at the recent Board of Finance meeting to answer questions regarding the P & R budget.

Commissioner Clinton DePaolo also attended the meeting and spoke during public participation against cuts to the Parks & Recreation budget. Chairman Marks indicated that he expressed a concern to the Board of Finance that long-term planning, which is highlighted as a key focus of the Board of Selectman budget, and which has been a primary factor in Parks and Recreation's budget and CIP planning, appears in some cases to be bypassed in favor of short term goals, noting as an example that a capital budget reduction which necessitates the purchase of a cheaper vehicle will likely cost the town more in the long run. Finally, Chairman Marks remarked that the budget presentations have become difficult to deliver in a manner which does not appear to contradict the decisions of the Board of Selectman, and questioned if it is in the long-term best interests of department staff to speak freely and candidly in such presentations.

Director's Report:

Amy Mangold, Director of Parks and Recreation:

- None.

RoseAnn Reggiano, Assistant Director of Recreation:

- Ms. Reggiano reported to the commission that she met with Helen Brickfield and Judith Miller of Newtown Chamber of Commerce about remaining a part of Newtown Day. They thought that Parks & Recreation could man the inflatable bounce house portion of the day, and keep whatever revenues come in through that channel for Parks & Recreation. It was then decided upon by the commission that Parks & Recreation would not be involved in Newtown Day as earlier in the meeting Chairman Marks emphasized the need for Parks & Recreation to not stray from its major priorities. Everyone agreed that Parks & Recreation needs to focus on what is fundamentally theirs, and stick to its core agenda.
- Ms. Reggiano stated that Food Truck Festivals are the trend for Parks & Recreation events now throughout the country. Although, Newtown Parks & Recreation will not be involved in Newtown Day this year, they are providing Food Trucks at each of the free summer concerts.
- Ms. Reggiano then told the commission that Director Amy Mangold will be back to work (part time at first) after a brief, but serious illness. "She has a clean bill of health now, and is looking forward to resuming her busy schedule," Ms. Reggiano said. All the commissioners were pleased and relieved to hear it.
- Jennifer Arnold left the full time secretarial position for a job at Newtown Continuing Education so right now, Parks and Recreation is short staffed. First Selectman Dan Rosenthal stated that a temporary employee may be hired until a full time replacement is found. Still, Ms. Reggiano announced that the staff has been staying on top of things quite well, and weekly meetings have proven fruitful.
- The Parks & Recreation Spring Brochure is now out and online. The Summer Brochure is already at the printer.
- The Victory Garden committee is hosting a Farm to Table fundraiser at the Community Center on August 12, 2020.

- The egg hunts that usually take place at the parks in the beginning of April may have to be cancelled or postponed due to the COVID 19 crisis.
- Commissioner DePaolo mentioned that he has found 3 or 4 T-ball coaches for this spring which is great news.

Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director of Parks:

- Please see attachment #2.

Commissioners out and about:

Commissioner Clinton DePaolo attended the Bike & Trails Committee Open House at the Community Center on Sunday, March 8, 2020. A total of 65 people attended, and the excitement at the event was palpable. The Bike & Trails Committee is making great strides.

Motion:

Commissioner Vincent Yanni made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 pm. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Clinton DePaolo, which was carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 6:00 pm in the Multi-purpose Room located at 8 Simpson Street, Newtown, CT.

Submitted by,

Kate Geerer, clerk

User Organization Categories:

These categories place non-school/non-Park and Recreation organizations into scheduling categories that are listed in the following priority use levels. Any users who add programming, or change affiliations, must present changes to the Commission prior to field use for approval.

Category A – Must meet all criteria

- Newtown Non-Profit Youth organization (Proof of 501c3 required)
 - 80% or greater Newtown Residents per team and;
 - Youth Established Organization and;
 - Submit organizations Treasurers Report or tax return from most recent fiscal year.
 - Games and Practices only, priority does not trump special events.

Category B – Must meet all criteria

- Newtown Non-Profit Adult organization (Proof of 501c3 required)
 - 80% or greater “Newtown residents” (see definition) per team and;
 - Adult Established Organization and;
 - Submit organizations Treasurers Report or tax return from most recent fiscal year.
 - Game Schedules, priority does not trump special events

Category C

- New Newtown based Organization which meets all A or B criteria qualified for field usage under the “Field Administration Policy” (Proof of 501c3 required) and;
 - 80% or greater “Newtown Residents per team and;
 - Pays double currently established surcharge rates for a period of five years and;
 - Submit organizations Treasurers Report or tax return from most recent fiscal year.
 - Approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission as a qualifying organization for a period of one year prior to issuance of field time.

Category D

- Newtown Non-Newtown Youth or Adult organization with:
 - Less Than 80% Newtown Residents per team or;
 - Regional teams based in Newtown (Club, Premier, AAU, CFC, or other entity not qualified under category A&B or C)
 - Field usage fees due 7 business days prior to scheduled use.

Category E

- Outside Tournaments (One time, or no prior category or affiliation)
- Outside Special Events (One time, or no prior category or affiliation)
- Any organization not listed in prior categories
- Field usage fees due 7 business days prior to scheduled use.

Fee Structure:

2020 Spring / Fall surcharge: \$25.00 per player Newtown resident / \$50.00 per player non resident

	Grass no lights	Grass lights	Turf no lights	Turf lights	Other no lights	Other lights
Category A	PP/PS Surcharge	\$75 per event Plus Surcharge	PP/PS Surcharge	\$75 per event Plus Surcharge	PP/PS Surcharge	PP/PS Surcharge
Category B	PP/PS Surcharge	\$75 per event Plus Surcharge	PP/PS Surcharge	\$75 per event Plus Surcharge	PP/PS Surcharge	PP/PS Surcharge
Category C	2 x PP/PS Surcharge	\$75 per event Plus Surcharge	2 x PP/PS Surcharge	\$75 per event Plus Surcharge	2 x PP/PS Surcharge	2 x PP/PS Surcharge
Category D	\$70 per hour	\$100 per hour	\$100 per hour	\$150 per hour	Site Specific	Site Specific
Category E	\$100 per hour	\$150 per hour	\$150 per hour	\$200 per hour	Site Specific	Site Specific

TOWN HALL SOUTH
3 MAIN STREET
NEWTOWN, CT 06470
TEL. (203) 270-4340
FAX (203) 270-4333



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: March 10, 2020

RE: Monthly park update and field report

The warm weather has everyone calling wondering when fields will be open and why are we not ready to go. We are currently a month away from “Normal”, although we have begun the process of prepping and opening our facilities for the spring.

Dickinson Park: The old guard shed from Eichlers has been permanently placed here. The ice rink has been broken down and removed for the season. Bathroom vandalism has been repaired.

Newtown Middle School: No new news here, fields are closed for the season.

Orchard Hill: No new news.

Lake Lillinonah: We have been prepping for some drainage work here with Public works. We will be replacing some collapsed basins and metal pipe here.

Oakview: Colorant was sprayed last week. Worn goal mouth areas will be sodded here as soon as sod is available.

Tilson Field: No new news here.

Treadwell Soccer/Softball: Leaves against fences have been cleaned up for the spring, some softball backstop repair work remains.

Glander Fields: Colorants were sprayed here last week, spring field prep will begin soon.

Liberty Fields: No news here.

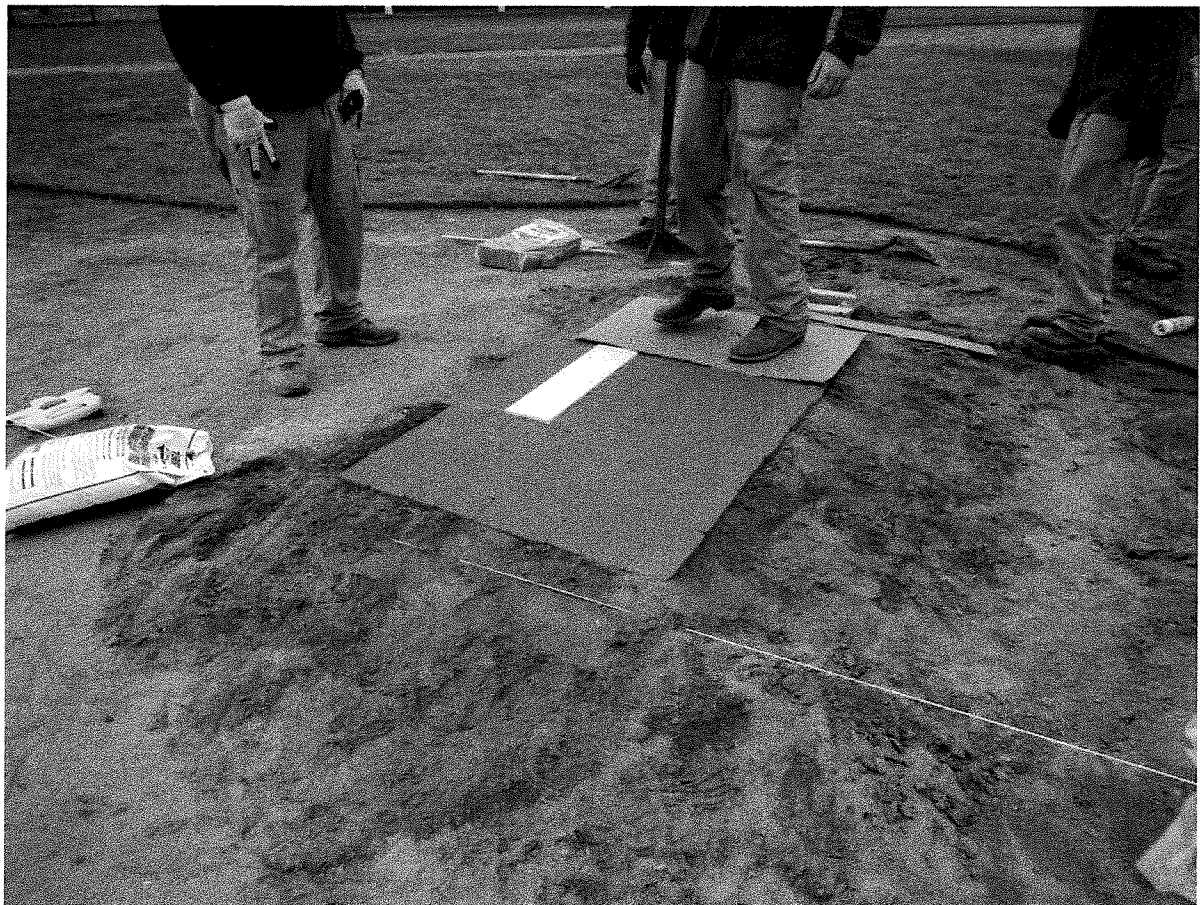
Walnut Tree: Major invasive and brush cutting has been completed here. Wildflower and native grass seed has been planted. Public works removed a few dead Ash trees and a Willow that was a major liability. We have a grant for 6-7 new native trees that will be planted here.



Fairfield Hills: Worked with Public works installing new campus signs and lawn areas around new brewery. We fabricated and installed housings for trail counters to better assess the usage of trails on campus.

NHS Fields: Colorants have been applied here. Major spring field prep has started at the baseball and softball fields. Pitching mound renovation, sod repairs and field edging are all underway. Scoreboard construction will also be ramping up in the next week.





Sandy Hook School: No new news here, fields are closed for the season.

Hawley School Fields: No new news here, fields are closed for the season.

Eichlers Cove Marina: All of the banks have been cleaned of debris, litter and deadwood. Driftwood and the rest of the winter debris that gets trapped on the beach has been cleaned up.

Dog Park: A meeting with a new splash pad vendor has been set. Spring clean-up will start in the next few weeks as well as bench installation next month after athletic fields open.

Treadwell Park: Treadwell pool deck project should be starting up here in the next couple of weeks.

A new Oak tree has been planted in the center island. A playground inspection has been completed and any needed items were repaired.

Pole Bridge Preserve: No new news.

Watertown Field: Watertown field #2 rough grade has been completed. Need the field to dry out before work can continue.

Staff:

- 152 hours of vacation/sick/personal/injury/discipline hours were used out of 1672 potential work hours in the past month. This represents a 9% loss in workforce.