

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 virtual meeting on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 on our respective phones and laptops in Newtown, CT.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Marks at 6:04 pm.

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

Staff Present: Amy Mangold, RoseAnn Reggiano and Carl Samuelson

Public: Mr. Pat McCleary of Newtown Softball, 10 Main Street, Newtown, CT 06470
Mr. John Delpozo of Newtown Soccer, 28 Taunton Lake Dr. Newtown, CT 06470

Public Participation:

Mr. Pat McCleary of Newtown Softball brought to the commission's attention that he read the minutes of the March 2020 Parks & Recreation commission meeting, and stated that the accusations made against him by Newtown Thunder are outrageous and false. He wants to let them know that they need to be prepared to back up their statements, and that it is wrong to drop this into Parks & Recreation's lap. He stated that Newtown Thunder needs to put forth proof "for the record". Both Commission Chairman Marks and Parks and Recreation Director Mangold thanked Mr. McCleary for addressing the matter.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion:

Chairman Marks made a motion to accept the Minutes from the March 10, 2020 Commission Meeting with the correction suggested by Director Mangold. The minutes stated that there is a "No Lifeguard on Duty; Swim at Own Risk" sign down at Eichler's Cove Beach, whereas the sign actually says: "Beach Closed; No Lifeguard on Duty". Commissioner DePaulo seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the amended minutes.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion:

Commissioner DePaulo made a motion to accept the Minutes from the May 12, 2020 Commission Meeting. Commissioner Barczak seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- *Summer phase-in planning/reopening.*

Ms. Mangold reported that both Dickinson and Treadwell Parks partially opened on May 20, 2020. They have Park Ambassadors to check parking permits and provide information to visitors. No organized sports are allowed, the tennis courts are open for single play tennis only. The Skate Park is open and limited to fifteen people. Commissioner Payne asked if that was an arbitrary number or the number the state provided, to which Ms. Mangold said it was determined by her and Carl Samuelson by viewing the size of the skatepark that 15 is an acceptable number at this time. See more regarding camp planning under Assistant Director, RoseAnn Reggiano's report.

New Business:

- *Disc Golf – Ed Mikleaszewski*

Although Mr. Mikleaszewski was not present at the meeting, a disc golf trial course is being reviewed for outside the Newtown Community Center. Ms. Mangold stated that he was discussing a three hole course on the campus.

- *June 6, Executive Order to open fields.*

Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson said that his department is getting quite a lot of flak due to the Governor's reopening of fields on June 6. Some parts of the state are way less affected by COVID and their groups are competing with Rhode Island teams so they do not share the same degree of concern as those in the southern part of the state. Mr. Samuelson said his crew is working at full tilt getting projects ready. It's been tough getting all the fields and facilities up and running with employees only working two to three days per week instead of the full five days per week. They are making head way for everything to be done by their opening date of June 17, 2020.

Motion: Summer 2020 modified field surcharge:

Commissioner Vincent Yanni made a motion to accept Assistant Director of Parks, Carl Samuelson's recommendation to reduce the per participant surcharge by half due to limited field usage. Commission Clinton DePaolo seconded that motion, which was carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report:

Edward Marks, Chairman Newtown Parks and Recreation:

- None.

Director's Report:

Amy Mangold, Director of Parks and Recreation:

- Other than summer reopening, Ms. Mangold reported that she has been reviewing the 125 Union negotiations with First Selectman, Dan Rosenthal, together with Human Resources, and that they are going very well.
- The Bicycle Playground Committee has been meeting, and plans are coming along nicely. Commissioner DePaolo has been attending these meetings, to which, Ms. Mangold thanked him for his involvement. He said that the idea seems like a great one, and that the plan is shaping up nicely, and that all involved are very excited about the prospect.
- The Lion's Club is helping with the ADA equipment at Dickinson playground.
- The Summer Jam kids concert series has been postponed until 2021, but so far Ms. Mangold thinks that she will be able to go ahead with the Thursday concert series with social distancing in place.
- Parks & Recreation is still planning to have an Outdoor Movie night at Fairfield Hills in August this year.

Assistant Directors Reports:

RoseAnn Reggiano, Assistant Director of Recreation:

- Due to COVID 19, many programs had to be modified and/or cancelled. Unfortunately, things must be constantly updated, as we get state and town mandates frequently. Here is the following status of many programs:
- Art programs are running with the instructors wearing masks, implementing social distancing and following all mandated hygiene measures.
- On the fence about basketball camps. If they do run, campers may be required to bring their own basketballs. As of now, Murphy Basketball Camp, Culinary Kids and Knit and Chat are NOT running. As far as Flag Football goes, it may open up again after mid-July, but until then, it may not run.
- Starting June 17, Summer Swim Team is able to begin, with staggered swim times per age level. Many sports camps are running still and implementing all the COVID 19 precautionary measures themselves. They are all hoping that come mid-July, restrictions will lighten up, but until then, many programs are stuck in a wait and see pattern.
- Gate Wardens have been checking all stickers to ensure that people are from the area and are following social distancing guidelines.
- All in all, the community has been extremely understanding with what has been thrust upon them.
- The Rooster Run has been moved to October 3, 2020.
- Eichler's Cove is up and running. Gabriella Chernoff has done a great job with the boat slips and dry storage, and Donna Culbert from the Health Department has been great in support to help Parks & Recreation in any way.
- Day Camp – camp will be starting on June 29th with all state guidelines and hygiene procedures in place. Some guidelines include, limiting group size, counselors wearing masks, insuring the campers follow social distancing and taking frequent hand washing breaks. Campers and staff will get their temperatures taken before camp each day and anyone with a temperature will be isolated until they can be taken home.

Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director of Parks: (See attachment #1)

- Please see attachment.

Commissioners out and about: None.

Motion:

Commissioner Clinton DePaolo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Patrick Barczak, which was carried unanimously.

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

Submitted by,

Kate Geerer, 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: June 9, 2020

RE: Monthly park update and field report

Reopening guidelines and Executive Orders have us changing directions on a daily basis. We still have two positive cases in our Department which has us operating at 80% at best. We had planned for a detailed three phase reopening which was spelled out over June, July and August. We are now trying to accomplish all of what we thought was needed for August by June 17. The orders we are following are contained in this reopening document below.

This is the Executive Order from Saturday June 6th. There are very strict guidelines on reopening athletic fields. We need to discuss which of these directives Newtown can follow. The Town must follow the Executive Order as a minimum, but can be more restrictive if we do not feel we can comply with what is outlined.

All of the sports groups will be responsible for the required sanitizing and precautions listed. All user groups will have to be Reopen CT certified as outlined in the order. We will send out additional information to all of the sports groups after tonight's meeting.

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid_Business_Recovery-Phase-2/Sports_FitnessCenters-C4_V1.pdf

Dickinson Park: The playground fence has been a constant battle here which gets pulled down on a regular basis. Our tennis court vendor has us scheduled for the last week of June and the first week of July. The tennis nets are up for the season, or until they have to be removed for recoating. Water fountains will remain closed as are bathrooms currently. Hopefully bathrooms can open in July.

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

Orchard Hill: No new news.

Lake Lillinonah: No new news here.

Oakview: Irrigation is up and running for the season. This field is ready for use.

Tilson Field: This field is ready for use.

Treadwell Soccer/Softball: These fields have been seeing a fair amount of passive use. Organized groups will start here on the 17th.

Glander Fields: Irrigation is up and running for the season. Fields need a little weeding but are all set for use.

Liberty Fields: Fields need grooming and weeding but can be safely used.

Walnut Tree: This field is ready for use.

Fairfield Hills: We continue to sanitize and spend a lot of time on litter patrol as the campus has seen tremendous use. We “fraize” mowed High Meadow field a couple of weeks ago and it has started to recover nicely. Fraize mowing is an aggressive dethatching process which also eliminates undesirable grasses and weeds with no pesticides. The process is very well known in Europe and gaining popularity here. High Meadow has become too thatchy over the years which has been making the turf difficult to maintain. We originally started this process as the CV-19 reopening schedule had competitive play restricted until August 15. We will be ready for play here by then.

NHS Fields: These fields are ready for use as they were prepped early this spring. The CIAC is considering scholastic athletic play this summer, which may drastically impact our ability to use fields. We are working collaboratively with the schools on scheduling.

Sandy Hook School: Irrigation is up and running for the season. The field is ready for use.

Hawley School Fields: No news here, fields are ready for use.

Eichlers Cove Marina: Things seem to be going well here. We have been coming up with various ways to set up the beach for use next week, and currently will have 10 usable spots for now.

Dog Park: This Park has been closed but should reopen with strict distancing guidelines and no water features on the 17th.

Treadwell Park: The pool is up and running and we are scrambling to open with some modified operating procedures, no diving boards and social distancing on the deck. A few minor punch list items remain from the pool deck project.

Pole Bridge Preserve: No new news.

Watertown Field: Watertown field #2 has been laser graded again and we are starting to place topsoil here. Progress has been very slow with limited staff for construction work.

Staff:

- 512 hours of vacation/sick/personal/injury/discipline hours were used out of 2000 potential work hours in the past month. This represents a 25.5% loss in workforce.