

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Mary Flynn, Chair; Amy Doering, Lorene Bora, Marc Ioli; Susan Daly, Marianne Gutierrez, Erika Morris

STAFF: James Coghlan, Interim Director

GUESTS: Phyllis Hawkins, RTM; Diane Conologue, RTM

CALL TO ORDER.

Ms. Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2014.

The following corrections were noted:

Page 1, under Public Hearing, paragraph 1, line 1: please change:

“Chairman Flynn opened the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.”

to: “Chairman Flynn opened the public hearing on the proposed pilot program to walk dogs on leases at Weed Beach during the winter months at 7:30 p.m.”

Page 1, under Public Hearing, paragraph 1, line 4: please change: “favor of dogs and against” to “favor of and against”

Page 1, under Public Hearing, paragraph 2, line 1: please change: “Weed Beach exclusively as a” to “Weed Beach as a”

Page 1, under Public Hearing, paragraph 2, line 6: please change: “until October 1st.” to “until October 1, 2015.”

Page 2, paragraph 1, line 2: please change the following from: “would consider including the cost of these pilings” to “would consider an allocation of \$100,000 including the cost of the pilings.”

**** MS. BORA MOVED THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2014 AS CORRECTED.**

**** MR. IOLI SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2014 AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION: Budget Fiscal 2015-2016

Chairman Flynn said that the Commission would be reviewing the budget. Mr. Coghlan distributed copies of the summary of the various operating accounts and a line item budget to the Commissioners. Mr. Coghlan said that there was one line item that was incorrect because it was including the Mather Center. He has contacted the Finance Department about this and a correction will be made. He added that the Public Works Department will now be covering the gas expense for the trucks, weed whackers and other fuel driven equipment. He also said that the administration has been informed that the paddle tennis court charges for credit cards had been omitted. This will also be corrected.

The discussion then moved to the bids for cleaning the bathrooms at the beach. Mr. Coghlan gave an overview of the current level of service and explained it was a two year contract. The beaches are seeing a major increase in usage and this has been reflected by an increase in revenue. The security guards worked out well.

Mr. Coghlan was asked if he felt that there was anything that he felt should be included in the operating budget. He replied that he felt it was a solid budget. There is a decrease of 2%, but there will be an increase in the Capital budget. Ms. Bora pointed out that the Parks and Recreation budget accounted for approximately 1% of the Town budget.

There was a brief discussion regarding the position of Director. Mr. Coghlan said that he understood that the Town plans to have both a Parks Director and Assistant Director.

Mr. Coghlan was asked about the snow and ice removal. He explained that there were a number of variables, such as whether the plowing was done on a week-end or if the staff was assisting Public Works.

Mr. Coghlan then distributed copies of the Capital Budget. Chairman Flynn explained that the Town has a process of prioritizing the Capital Budget items. Mr. Coghlan said that he wished to know if the Commission wanted to change any items' ranking.

Chairman Flynn said that while she was not opposed to assisting the Junior Sailing Program, she felt that there needed to be more information. Erica pointed out that everyone on the commission would most likely support the program but a discussion needs to be had about the impact of Superstorm Sandy on the program. Ms. Daly said that she saw the Jr. Sailing program as an extension of the Recreation program. She reminded everyone that originally that the sailing building had been included in the Weed Beach renovations and after the budget went over, it was taken out. There will need to be a public/private partnership. There will need to be clarity of ownership. A discussion followed about the various issues.

Chairman Flynn said that she was not sure that she would be able to defend the capital budget request for \$100,000 without more information. Ms. Daly explained that last year, the program struggled because they didn't have a building and had to cancel if there was bad weather. Mr. Coghlan said that Parks and Recreation could not take on a sailing program at this time. Ms. Daly suggested that the program staff needed to talk to the Selectmen about it because the Parks and Recreation Department can't support the request. Chairman Flynn suggested that this item be included on the January agenda for further discussion. It was pointed out that if the request was not included in this budget, it would not be eligible for funding until 2016-17.

The discussion then moved to Open Space Plan and the Short Lane Property Study. Mr. Coghlan distributed copies of the 1996 Darien Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The Commissioner agreed that the Open Space would be the top priority followed by the Short Lane Property Study. The Commission also agreed that the mowers would also be critical to the department. The Weed Beach sand replacement was ranked as M-1.

The Commission discussed moving the Pear Tree sand and the gate house replacement to 2016-2017.

Ms. Gutierrez left the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

The basketball court at Cherry Lawn was the next item discussed. Ms. Morris and Mr. Ioli both pointed out that the court had a pitch to it. The Commissioners agreed that it would be ranked as an M-1.

The Commission agreed to move the Junior Sailing program request to the 2016-2017 budget year.

Chairman Flynn said that in 2016 the Commission would work on the Master Plan for all the parks and the start working on a plan for Short Lane.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO APPROVED THE 2015-2016 OPERATING BUDGET AS DISCUSSED.**

**** MR. IOLI SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. MORRIS MOVED TO APPROVED THE 2014 -2015-2016 CAPITAL PLAN AS DISCUSSED.**

**** MS. BORA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS:

a) **Interim Director** – Chairman Flynn asked Mr. Coghlan about the Boy Scout project. Mr. Coghlan said that the Eagle Scout put up the Osprey stand, and then it was discovered that it needs to have a DEEP permit. The DEEP announced that the stand was not in a good location and will have to be moved to a different location. Mr. Coghlan said that he would contact the Scout once the decision comes from the State.

b) **Chairman** - Chairman Flynn said that the Dog Committee should get started during the January thru March period.

Chairman Flynn said that it was important that everyone has access to the Town email. A brief discussion followed on how to do this.

c) **Sub Committees/study groups** -

There were no sub committee or study group reports at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one from the public wished to address the Commission at this time.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no additional business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MR. IOLI MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. MORRIS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

Town of Darien
Parks and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting
December 17, 2014