

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Daly; Erika Morris; Mary Flynn; Bob Marchesi;
Andy Hunter

STAFF: Susan Swiatek, Director; Jim Coghlan, Assistant Director

OTHER:

Ms. Daly called the special meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. This meeting took place at the Weed Beach paddle tennis courts warming hut.

APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2013

The changes to the minutes of the regular meeting of January 16, 2013 are as follows:

On page 1, under PUBLIC HEARING, 3rd paragraph, the 2nd sentence should read as follows: "It was suggested that the February meeting be held at the paddle court."

On page 1, under DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON REQUEST FOR FUNDING TO COVER REPAIRS AND RESTORATION DUE TO STORM SANDY, the 2nd and 3rd sentences should read as follows: "They addressed some safety issues that impacted the operating budget. She said that she has been keeping a running tally of the actual costs incurred."

On page 2, 8th paragraph, change "DISCUSS AND TACK ACTION ON EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT: STONY BROOK PARK" to "DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT: STONY BROOK PARK".

On page 3, under CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, 2nd sentence, change "Mr. Daly" to "Mrs. Daly."

**** MS. MORRIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 16, 2013 AS AMENDED.**

**** MR. MARCHESI SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Daly mentioned that the December 2012 meeting minutes have not yet been approved and suggested that they correct them at the next meeting.

REPORT ON STATUS OF STORM DAMAGE AND REPAIRS IN PARKS

Ms. Swiatek said that she has requested funding for the repairs but has not heard back from either the Board of Finance or the Board of Selectmen yet. In response to Ms. Flynn's question for a timeframe of work to be done, Ms. Swiatek said that it depends on who needs the facilities. If the high school team needs to use the front tennis courts, they would need the repairs to be done by March, and because she would have to bid the work out, it would delay the process. She said the Darien High School Athletic Director has been notified of the situation that only 6 courts will be playable; the three courts in the front are not playable; and one at Cherry Lawn Park is scheduled to be re-surfaced in mid-May. The sailing house building is compromised and will be fixed for safety issues.

Ms. Swiatek said that the second FEMA tour took place recently. She said she has not heard back yet from the insurance company regarding what will or will not be covered. She mentioned that there may be coverage for the oil spill.

Ms. Daly said that Ms. Swiatek did a good job presenting the information at the recent Joint Meeting of the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen.

REVIEW STATUS BUDGET SUBMISSION FY 2014

Ms. Swiatek explained that she presented the FY 2014 budget at the recent Joint Meeting of the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen. She said Ms. Daly had joined her.

Ms. Daly said they spent some time discussing the sand issue at the meeting. She said the boards' biggest concern was to not put sand on top of an already rocky base, and she said the boards suggested that some research should be done to consider removing some of the rocks. Ms. Swiatek said the boards were looking for some statistical information and/or data on how much sand is there. She said that the beach is typical rocky New England shoreline, and she said that they have never gathered data regarding sand. She said the sand replacement is a regular capital item, with each beach receiving new sand in alternating years. She said both boards, as well as the Parks & Recreation Department, put off sand replacement in recent years. She said Pear Tree Point received new sand in 2006, and Weed Beach received new sand in 2008. That is why both beaches have requests for new sand at the same time. She discussed sand replacement procedures at surrounding towns. The price of sand has gone up, as well as trucking costs.

Ms. Swiatek said on the capital side of the budget, the only question she could see being asked is the software for the paddle tennis courts so they could take online reservations and credit card payments.

REPORTS

a) Director

Ms. Swiatek said since Storm Sandy, they have had some additional significant storms that have further damaged some facilities. Pictures of the damaged facilities were included in the Commissioners' packets. She said the Pear Tree Point gazebo roof and Weed Beach tennis courts suffered damage. The tennis courts have an 18-20 year life span, and they are 40 years old.

Ms. Swiatek said that her crews are doing clean-up and tree work. She said the budget for tree work, with a small amount of money in it for replacement, is completely depleted after Storm Sandy.

Ms. Swiatek explained that Jim Coghlan, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation, recently spent a week at the Maintenance Management School in Wheeling, WV. This was part two of a two-year program, with an exam requirement for both years, and a project requirement for the second year. Jim was the team leader for the Park Facilities project, had a team of 8 people, and they took the first place ranking. Jim's exam score was the highest in the class, and his cumulative score for the two years was the highest. Jim discussed some details of the program.

b) Assistant Director

Mr. Coghlan said the Spring brochure is almost finished, and Nobu will be doing the cover again. It should be out in two weeks. Registration is schedule to start March 6. The tennis court situation is challenging, and he said they are working with the schools as best they can to accommodate all involved. Additional complications for the Spring are the Mather Center, with construction scheduled to begin in April, which will impact the availability to use that facility during construction hours. Some camps previously offered at Town Hall will be offered at Cherry Lawn Park. Another option for camps/programs to use the Town Hall gym when it rains may not be available this spring. While the gym is not part of the construction project, the zoning permit states that the facility cannot be used during construction.

Mr. Coghlan said that revenue and usage are up at the Weed Beach paddle tennis courts. There is a 50-60% increase in fees, and the fees have only been increased by 20-25%. The warming hut is now furnished and groups should be able to use it more now. Ms. Daly was commended for her work in getting the warming hut furnished and having plans for additional touches to be made. Additionally, Mr. Coghlan commended the crews for getting the paddle tennis courts ready by Sunday morning after the blizzard.

c) Chairman

Ms. Daly said Ms. Branigan will be back from Florida for the March meeting. She said that she signed up for a workshop on February 28 and will report back at the next meeting.

d) Sub-Committee

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (TWO THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED)

There was no new business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN MEETING

**** MS. FLYNN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. HUNTER SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr
Telesco Secretarial Services

**NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting March 20, 2013; 7:30 p.m;
Darien Town Hall, Room 119**

