

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
JULY 18, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Jane Branigan, Chair; Susan Daly; Mary Flynn; Susan Graham;
Robert Marchesi

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

Ms. Branigan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

GUEST: FIRST SELECTMAN, JAYME STEVENSON

Ms. Stevenson thanked the Commission for getting the Weed Beach project completed. She said that she was here to have a dialogue with the Commission about a request that came to her office from Roger Frate, a commercial lobsterman who has been running his business in Darien for over 50 years. She asked if there was any way to give him a limited pass on occasion to tie his boat to Pear Tree Point on the side of the dock.

Ms. Stevenson said that he has been grandfathered to keep his small craft there but it is difficult for him to get in and out of the water. She said that she does not want to set a precedent.

Ms. Swiatek said that he has two small skiffs and she has had complaints. Ms. Branigan said that she does not want to set a precedent. Ms. Daly said that while it is important to preserve his livelihood, she is concerned that his boats will block access to other users. Ms. Branigan asked who will enforce this. Ms. Stevenson said that she talked to the Marine Police and the Boat Club. She said that she feels that the Town has squeezed his ability to run his business. This request is for time to time, in a specific location and not on weekends.

Ms. Russell said that she polled her committee and of the 14 members, 11 responded. Ten members said that it was not the right thing to do because it would set a precedent and one person abstained.

Ms. Branigan said that no one should tie up their boat during the summer. She said that it would set a precedent and questioned how you would stop someone else from doing the same. Ms. Graham said that she would like to see the location. Ms. Branigan suggested that everyone go down and look at the location and get as much

information as possible before voting in September. Ms. Swiatek noted that he has a crew that goes out to do the fishing.

APPROVE MINUTES OF JUNE 20, 2012

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 1: last sentence – Ms. Daly asked if there was already a sprinkler system there.

Page 2: first paragraph - but not one in the old bath house.

Second paragraph – She added that the alarms were not spec'd into the design. She added that there is now an alarm but it is not hooked up as a sounding alarm

Last paragraph – Cherry Lawn courts are being renovated with asphalt, but the condition of the tennis courts at Weed Beach are in worse shape.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**

**** MR. MARCHESI SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT, STONY BROOK PARK **GUEST: ANDREW FLETCHER**

Andrew Fletcher came before the Commission and described his proposed project. He distributed a map of the site. He said that he needs the Commission to accept his project. He said that this is a park where people bring their dogs. He would like to add fencing, receptacles for waste and clear an area for ball throwing. Ms. Swiatek asked him if he thought about staging the project because it will be a major undertaking.

Mr. Fletcher said that if the project is accepted, he would like to start work in September. He said that he expects it to take one to two weekends. The work will be done with other Eagle Scouts and their families.

The sense of the Commission was that Mr. Fletcher could move forward with his plan and they will vote when his final plan is presented.

DISCUSS REQUEST FOR COMPLIMENTARY BEACH PERMITS – POST 53 EMS

Ms. Branigan explained that Post 53 has requested complimentary beach permits for their volunteers. Mr. Marchesi noted that they are first responders and are not paid. Ms. Flynn said that she would have a hard time giving permits to the Fire Department and not to Post 53. It was discussed that any group that requests complimentary tickets need to go before this Commission with their request.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO ISSUE ONE (1) FREE BEACH PERMIT TO PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION APPROVED VOLUNTEER FIRST RESPONDERS EFFECTIVE WITH THE 2013 BEACH SEASON**

**** MS. FLYNN SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

UPDATE ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN PROJECT

Ms. Swiatek reported that they are in the final punch list phase. They are under warrantee for the damaged plants. The dead plants were pulled today and they are waiting for a credit to be issued. She said that the project is being received very well.

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON FIRE ALARM MONITORING; IRRIGATION WATER EXPENSE - WEED BEACH

Ms. Swiatek explained that there are three alarm systems at Weed Beach, but they are not tied to a monitoring system. She added that it is a wooden structure. She said that it is an operational issue. She was told that two phone lines were needed per alarm; a dedicated line and a back up. She said that it would cost \$3,420 per year to monitor the three buildings, but that money is not in the budget. She said that she talked to several monitoring companies as well as the Fire Chief who all said that using two lines is what is done.

The Commissioners agreed that there was a need for the alarm monitoring service. Ms. Branigan suggested approving the item with reservation about the second line.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF AN ALARM MONITORING SYSTEM AT WEED BEACH WITH RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR A SECOND LINE AND THAT THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN DISCUSS THIS WITH THE INSURANCE COMPANY**

**** MS. GRAHAM SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Swiatek reported that the irrigation system is up and running. She said that the Department is not operationally budgeted for it and would like to re-visit this in September after getting a quarterly reading.

**DISCUSSION ON TENNIS COURT CONDITIONS – WEEK BEACH, CHERRY LAWN
PARK**

Ms. Swiatek reported that Cherry Lawn has scheduled renovation work on their tennis court in late August. The front courts at Weed Beach will get warrantee work, but the problem is that the back courts have some cracks that have opened up significantly. She said that asphalt courts of a lifespan of less than 20 years; these courts were put in in 1973. She said that she asked for estimates:

Cracks and re-surfacing	\$50,000 - \$121,000
Cracks only	\$23,200
Fully resurface	\$130,000

Ms. Swiatek said that she was looking for direction on how to proceed. Money for repairs is not in the budget. A discussion ensued.

**** MS. GRAHAM MOVED TO REQUEST A SPECIAL APPROPRIATION TO
RECONSTRUCT TH TENNIS COURTS AT WEEK BEACH
** MR. MARCHESI SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Swiatek said that programs will be impacted if they lose three courts.

Ms. Graham left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

REPORTS:

DIRECTOR

Ms. Swiatek reviewed her written report that was included in the meeting packet. She noted that the paddle court specs will be opened on August 26th.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Mr. Coghlan reviewed his written report that was included in the meeting packet. He reported that they had the largest number of participants in summer programs to date. The Commissioners discussed parking issues at Weed Beach.

CHAIRMAN

Ms. Branigan read the letter to the editor about Weed Beach. She distributed a copy of the response going to the newspaper. She said that she hoped it will all come to an end.

SUB-COMMITTEES

There was no report this evening.

DISCUSS ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other discussion this evening.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak this evening.

ADJOURN MEETING

**** MR. MARCHESI MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MS. FLYNN SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services