

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2010**

ATTENDANCE: Acting Chairman Susan Daly; Vin Burke; Marianne Gutierrez;
Bob Marchesi; Susan Graham (7:45 p.m.)

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

OTHER: Dick Albu, DJFL

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Swiatek began discussing the boat launch ramp area at Weed Beach with the Commissioners until they had a quorum. She said that at the last meeting, she had said she would bring some cost information back to the Commissioners for a vote, and then go to the Board of Selectmen. She said asked the engineer to take the boat launch ramp area piece out of the project and determine that cost separately. She expects to hear back from the engineer next week. The important part is to take the pavement out in order to make a turn-around.

Ms. Swiatek and the Commissioners then discussed the request for planted trees at Holahan Field. Mr. Albu from the DJFL was present, and both he and Ms. Swiatek said the DJFL fall season went well. They had six teams in the semi-finals, and two teams in the finals. Ms. Swiatek said the DJFL did a great job working with the lights, making sure they weren't a problem for the neighbors surrounding the field. She said that there is one family that has asked the Commission to plant 10-12 ft tall evergreen trees as a buffer to Holahan Field from St. John's Place. She explained that the Commission is not funded to plant trees. It was mentioned that a similar situation happened when the new high school was being built, but the tree planting was part of the building and renovation project, and the BOE was responsible for the tree planting. Ms. Swiatek said she is not sure of the cost of the tree planting. Mr. Albu confirmed that the DJFL accommodated the neighbor regarding how they positioned the lights. The lights were only used for two weeks. Mr. Albu said that next year, they would like to use the lights for three weeks, after the natural light is lost as they get longer into the season.

Ms. Graham arrived at 7:45 p.m.

Acting Chairman Daly called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

**** MS. GUTIERREZ MOVED TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA,
DISCUSSING ITEM #2 PRIOR TO ITEM #1.**

**** MS. GRAHAM SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON REQUEST FOR PLANTED TREES TO PROVIDE
ADEQUATE SCREENING BUFFER TO HOLAHAN FIELD FROM ST. JOHN'S
PLACE, FRANK AND NANCY ALBRIZIO**

Ms. Swiatek and the Commissioners continued to discuss the request for planted trees, saying that there is no money in this year's fiscal budget for planting.

**** MR. BURKE MOVED TO DEFER VOTING ON THIS UNTIL THE FUNDING ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED.**

**** MS. GRAHAM SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Swiatek said she will draft a letter to Mr. Albrizio, letting him know that he is welcome to bring this back to the commission for inclusion in the budget.

Mr. Albu thanked the Commissioners for their support of DJFL during this past season. He said that the kids enjoyed practicing under the lights towards the end of the season, and he said that the use of the lights on the field helped alleviate a safety issue. The coaches appreciated the use of the lights because they could hold their practices during regular evening hours without having to leave work early.

APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 20, 2010

The changes to the minutes of the regular meeting of January 20, 2010 are as follows:

On page 1, under **APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 16, 2009**, 1st paragraph, and throughout, change "501(C)3" to "501(c)(3)".

On page 1, under **APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 16, 2009**, 2nd paragraph, the sentence should read: "to cover any additional costs for the playground, including items such as brick corrections."

On page 2, under **DISCUSS THE LIGHT AND ULTRA-LIGHT BOAT LAUNCH RAMP AT WEED BEACH**, 2nd paragraph, add the following two sentences after the last sentence: "The ramp, in its present location, is an obvious safety hazard. The relocation of the ramp was recommended by the Harbor Master."

On page 3, under **STATUS REPORT ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN**, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence, change "disbanded" to "dissolved".

On page 3, under **STATUS REPORT ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN**, 3rd paragraph, the 2nd sentence should read: "A check in the amount of \$4,784.57 was sent to the Town with copies of the letter sent to Chairman Branigan, and Ms. Debbie Parnon."

On page 3, under **STATUS REPORT ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN**, 3rd paragraph, the 3rd sentence should read: “She said that a note was sent to 1st Selectman Campbell, saying that the playground is a beautiful addition to the Weed Beach Park, and to please consider finishing the Weed Beach project.”

On page 3, under **STATUS REPORT ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN**, add the following as the last sentence: “A grand total of \$246,328.39 was donated to the town.”

**** MS. GUTIERREZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 20, 2010 AS AMENDED.**

**** MR. BURKE SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSS THE LIGHT AND ULTRA-LIGHT BOAT LAUNCH RAMP AT WEED BEACH

Ms. Swiatek reiterated what was mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, saying that there is not much to do while she waits to hear back from the engineer. She said that her crews have started to do some work in the area of the boat launch ramp. Mr. Burke stressed the importance of moving the boat ramp because of safety concerns.

Mr. Burke said he and Mr. Goodyear will be putting together some talking points so others in the community can help support the project and realize the value of Weed Beach. He offered anyone on the Commission to forward to him any talking points they might have.

BUDGET REQUEST FY 2011 STATUS

Ms. Swiatek said it is in the hands of the Board of Selectmen, and she is waiting to hear on the vote. She said that not much was cut. Saturday overtime and beach cleanup was cut, but she explained that they will still have a beach cleanup on Sundays. The cut to Saturday’s clean-up resulted in a \$4,000-\$5,000 savings. It was suggested that the Commission invite Mr. Campbell to attend one of their meetings. She said she will let the Commissioners know when she is going to the Board of Finance.

REPORTS

a) Director

Ms. Swiatek said she has been busy with the Senior Center projects. She said that the new director is doing a great job. She said they do a lot of collaborative programming.

She said that the Parks & Recreation Commission monitors the ice conditions at Cherry Lawn Park and Tilley Pond Park, but it doesn’t do that for Gorham’s Pond. The Town then posts signs indicating “Skate at Your Own Risk” or “No Skating” and informs the Darien Police.

Ms. Swiatek said there was a grant program from CL&P, and they partnered with the Public Works Department to retro-fit the old lights with LED lights in Tilley Pond Park.

Ms. Swiatek read a letter from Mr. Ziga regarding the need for a skateboard park in Darien. She said she will respond to him, saying that the Town is not in a position to install a skateboard park at this time. A proposed skateboard park was already voted down at Weed Beach.

b) Assistant Director

Mr. Coghlan said the Spring/Summer brochures will be in the mail this week. New programs include preschool fitness/yoga, adult fitness classes, youth fishing lessons, and even a “green” engineering course. Beach permits go on sale on Wednesday. He said they are working to ensure that they are “PCI Compliant” by July 1, 2010. This will ensure that the credit card data used for in-house and on-line program registration and beach permits is protected.

c) Chairman

There was no Chairman report.

OTHER BUSINESS (TWO-THIRDS VOTE)

There was no Other Business to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting March 17, 2010, 7:30 p.m. Darien Town Hall, Room 119

**** MS. GUTIERREZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. GRAHAM SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr
Telesco Secretarial Services

