

**TOWN OF DARIEN - MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MAY 20, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Jane Branigan, Chairman; Susan Daly, Charlie Goodyear, Susan Graham, Andy Hunter, Robert Marchesi

ABSENT: Marianne Gutierrez, Vin Burke

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 15, 2009

The following corrections were made to the April 15, 2009 Minutes as follows:

Page 3, Section e. 2nd paragraph, 4th line,does block time.

Page 5, ... Playground By The Sound, 2nd sentence. Replace with - The group is looking for additional dollars...

Page 6 - line 1 add – ... around the new Weed Beach playground.

Page 6 - delete lines 2 and 3- per Ms. Daley

Page 6 – delete paragraph 4 - per Mr. Goodyear

**** MS. SWIATEK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.**
**** MR. GOODYEAR SECONDED.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

STATUS REPORT ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN
GUEST: PETER HOVELL, CHAIRMAN WBBC

Mr. Hovell gave an update on this project. He said that all the work is progressing. The work should be wrapped by in June as it did get a late start.

There was a photo op today and Sue Daly represented Playground By The Sound.

Mr. Hovell said they are digging a trench by the street to bring in the sewer line and that work should be done shortly.

Mr. Hovell said two people called about the boat ramp and that they are inconvenienced by the work and having to walk around it.

The dirt and debris is being piled up at the east end of the parking lot. A barrier will be placed around it until such time as it is removed. It is not dangerous, Mr. Hovell said. Mr. Goodyear asked if the playground can be opened without the bricks. Mr. Hovell did not know. Mr. Hovell said he has a meeting scheduled with Mrs. Klein to resolve open items. Mr. Marchesi inquired if there were any problems. Mr. Hovell said he is meeting with Mrs. Klein regarding money so as to move forward on projects. The Garden Club raised \$43,000 last spring and gave it to the Town for Weed Beach.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- ** MS. BRANIGAN MOVED TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA ITEMS TO ADD SONIA SMITH'S REPORT.**
- ** MR. MARCHESI SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Smith, of the Darien Garden Club, said that on June 17 at 6:45 p.m. there will be a small ceremony and dedication of a teak bench at Cherry Lawn. Ms. Swiatek inquired if the bench should be anchored. Ms. Smith thought not but will give it further consideration as to what is feasible to keep the bench from being removed.

Ms. Smith mentioned at the Gardens there is an issue with people from out of the area, who are visiting the gardens, taking produce. People are walking out with bags of food and especially tomatoes in the month of August where it appears that the person who tends to a garden may be on vacation.

Mr. O'Connor spoke briefly and tends to his daughter's garden there. There was one time he was questioned when leaving with produce from his daughter's garden.

Ms. Lydecker, a resident and gardener, said that signage should be put up.

Ms. Smith said there are sixty plots and twenty people on the waiting list. The garden is popular and brings much enjoyment to the participants and spectators.

Ms. Swiatek said that on June 30 the senior center director is retiring. She said that it is common for Parks & Recreation to oversee this area. Other towns have it this way in their organizational chart.

She said that the Commission on Aging will remain intact.

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON FORMATION OF A SUB-COMMITTEE RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A DOG PARK

Discussion took place on establishing a sub-committee relating to establishing a dog park. Ms. Swiatek asked for volunteers to be on the committee,

Ms. Branigan, Ms. Graham and Mr. Marchesi agreed. Ms. Daly is a possibility.

Darien Parks & Recreation Commission

May 20, 2009

Page 2 of 5

It was thoughts that the middle of Woodland Park would be a good dog park location.

Ms. Swiatek said there is no leash law in Town. The Town needs to put on a leash law. In 1998 there was a committee, as the dogs were ruling the parks.

There are dog walkers who have up to five dogs that they walk. The RTM is considering a leash law.

The Parks and Recreation department is not addressing other parks, only Woodland. It is the RTM's business to manage this.

If the RTM does vote on a leash law, Parks and Recreation can write a rule.

Ms. Swiatek suggested that the committee start by looking at the 1998 notes.

A vote followed.

- ** **MS. BRANIGAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FORMATION OF A SUB-COMMITTEE RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A DOG PARK**
- ** **MR. BURKE SECONDED.**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS

Director's Report

Ms. Swiatek read her written report as presented.

Administration:

She said the crews are working hard to get everything up and running for the season.

Stage is up for the Memorial Day Parade.

Ball fields look great.

She said that Jim Flynn, Supervisor of Parks Maintenance, works well with the sports teams.

Beach permits are up.

She said the Town website is up and running and Parks and Recreation has a dominant appearance on the site. There also is a section for citizens to register complaints.

Jim Coghlan is a website trainer. She said she has received compliments about how much good information Parks & Recreation is placing on the website. She said the Commission agendas and minutes are now available on line. Jim is using the site for daily public information updates.

The Weed Beach Master Plan Project plans were completed for the bathhouse and warming hut and are awaiting release of project funds to move forward.

She said the gymnasium floors were resurfaced. They are nearing the end as the floors are worn from years of sanding and refinishing.

Ms. Swiatek had an additional comment about her new role overseeing the senior center. She said that the crew has cleaned the grounds there, trimmed hedges, public works maintained the roads, etc. and said that this contributed to Parks & Recreation being chosen to oversee the senior center and staff.

Assistant Director's Report

Mr. Coghlan read from his written report as presented. He said that registration was up in the spring. There are many good program offerings and prices are good. One gets good value for their money spent.

He said the life-guard orientation is tomorrow. There is a full staff and most have returned from last season. There are five new hires. They will begin at Pear Tree Point Beach on Friday. Security guards will be on duty from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. He added that the security company is doing a good job.

He reported that Uncle's Deli is returning as the concessionaire at both Weed and Pear Tree beaches.

The tennis courts at Cherry Lawn and Weed Beach can be blocked for play throughout the year.

He said that the Little League currently has an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) installed at McGuane Park. Looking to install AED's on all town fields under the jurisdiction of Parks & Recreation and Board of Education.

Chairman's Report

No report.

Playground By The Sound

Report was addressed in Agenda Item #2 – Weed Beach Master Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. GOODYEAR MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
- ** MR. MARCHESI SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting June 17, 2009, 7:30 pm;
Room 119 Darien Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hohlweck
Telesco Secretarial Services