

**TOWN OF DARIEN - MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Charlie Goodyear, Acting Chairman; Susan Daly; Susan Graham;
Bob Marchesi; Marianne Gutierrez (7:45 p.m.)

STAFF: Susan Swiatek, Director

OTHER: Peter Hovell, Weed Beach Building Committee; Dick Albu, President DYFL;
Debbie Coley, DYFL

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairman Goodyear began the meeting with discussions with Peter Hovell on the status of the Weed Beach Building Committee project until there was a quorum present.

Mr. Hovell reported on the status of the Weed Beach Building Committee. He said that they are trying to finish it up Phase I. He said that they are trying to finish up Phase 1. There is a punch list of some items to be completed. The sewer and the utilities are complete, and the cable will be done next. He said they will be over on the budget, but he didn't know what the difference would be. He explained that there was an unexpected problem with two storm drains on the sewer portion of the project. There was also an unexpected increased need for sand, and it appears that the swing set area might have been overlooked when calculations were being taken.

Mr. Hovell said they met with the surveyor and they are willing to do the survey again, but they will wait until the fence installation is complete. An as-built will then be completed for the playground and the sewer line, and a marker will be left so that it can be clearly identified. He said he asked the Board of Selectmen if he could make a presentation to them at their July 27, 2009 meeting for full funding. At that time, he would present the plan and explain why the project is over budget. He took full blame for not having a real contingency fund, and instead of a budget of \$115,000, it should have been a budget of \$375,000.

Marianne Gutierrez arrived at 7:45 p.m.

Acting Chairman Goodyear called the meeting to order at 7:47 p.m., and explained that he was Acting Chairman for this meeting in Ms. Branigan's absence.

APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 20, 2009

**** MS. GUTIERREZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 20, 2009.**

**** MS. DALY SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

RECOGNIZE RESIGNATION OF MERRIE HAWLEY, COMMISSION MEMBER; APPOINT NEW MEMBER TO THE WEED BEACH BUILDING COMMITTEE

Acting Chairman Goodyear explained that Ms. Daly has volunteered to be the replacement for Ms. Hawley on the Weed Beach Building Committee. No replacement has been announced for Ms. Hawley on the Parks & Recreation Commission.

**** MR. MARCHESI MOVED TO APPOINT SUSAN DALY AS THE REPLACEMENT FOR MERRIE HAWLEY ON THE WEED BEACH BUILDING COMMITTEE.**

**** MS. GRAHAM SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Acting Chairman Goodyear explained that Ms. Hawley had served on the Parks & Recreation Commission for many years, had served on various other committees, and had worked extensively on the Weed Beach Building Committee. He proposed that he, Ms. Branigan and Ms. Swiatek create a resolution to thank Ms. Hawley for her many years of service to the Darien community.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO APPROVE MR. GOODYEAR, MS. BRANIGAN AND MS. SWIATEK CREATE A RESOLUTION FOR MS. HAWLEY ACKNOWLEDGING HER YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE DARIEN COMMUNITY.**

**** MS. GRAHAM SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

Discussion continued on the status of the Weed Beach Master Plan. Acting Chairman Goodyear said that Mr. Hovell hoped to present an update to the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on July 27th. The Weed Beach project is currently on hold due to economic constraints. Ms. Daly explained concerns about the boat launch location, which Mr. Hovell said that there will be one fence around the playground, and one fence around the swings. The cost for the fence around the playground was not available, but Mr. Hovell said that the fence around the swings would be about \$3,500. He explained that Ms. Swiatek cannot issue the purchase order for the fencing without the money being released by the Town.

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE WEED BEACH BUILDING COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Discussion took place about keeping the Weed Beach Building Committee intact so that when the project starts up again, everyone would be ready to proceed. Also, it was suggested that the committee have two professional members join on, one from the building trade and one from the financial trade. There will be an interim chairperson named until a replacement for Peter Hovell, who is resigning, is appointed. Acting Chairman Goodyear mentioned that Peter Hovell has done a fantastic job, and he said that they will acknowledge him appropriately at a future date. An advertisement will be placed in the newspaper, and he encouraged everyone to be involved in the search process for the candidates. Mr. Hovell said that there is an on-line application on the town website, and a press release will be in the newspaper. He felt strongly that these two trades people join the committee, and he further suggested that it would be important to have the builder be a local builder. Each of the 6 members on the Committee now represent another group in town, RTM, Board of Finance, etc. He said

that the Committee should keep meeting, and keep the people on that have knowledge of the project, as opposed to a suggestion that the Committee disband and reconvene when the money is available.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO ADD TWO NEW POSITIONS TO THE WEED BEACH BUILDING COMMITTEE, THEN FIND ONE PERSON FROM THE BUILDING TRADE, AND ONE PERSON FROM THE FINANCIAL TRADE.**

**** MS. GRAHAM SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON GIFT DONATION FROM THE GARDEN CLUB OF DARIEN
FOR WEED BEACH**

Acting Chairman Goodyear said that the Commission has received a letter from the Garden Club of Darien, saying that they wish to donate the proceeds from their Garden Show in September to the Weed Beach Building Committee, primarily for landscaping and beautification. The letter indicates that the Garden Club will give up to \$45,000 to the project, of which about \$42,000 is in CD's.

**** MS. GRAHAM MOVED TO APPROVE THE GIFT OF UP TO \$45,000 FROM THE GARDEN CLUB OF DARIEN FOR TREES AND OTHER LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE WEED BEACH BUILDING PROJECT.**

**** MS. DALY SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Hovell said the Democratic Town Committee has raised several thousand dollars for memorial benches for some members. Three benches are needed in the playground area.

**** MS. GRAHAM MOVED TO ACCEPT THE DONATION OF THREE BENCHES FROM THE DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE.**

**** MS. DALY SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Acting Chairman Goodyear said on behalf of the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Weed Beach Building Committee, that they never could have done this job without Peter Hovell.

**** MR. MARCHESI MOVED TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA, DISCUSSING ITEM 7 BEFORE ITEM 6.**

**** MS. DALY SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**DISCUSS THE REQUEST FROM MR. GUY WISINSKI REGARDING LIGHTS ON THE TOWN
HALL FIELDS**

Acting Chairman Goodyear mentioned Mr. Wisinski's email to the Commission, saying that it suggested the Parks & Recreation Commission deal with this and other issues in a professional manner. He felt that the comment was not helpful, and he asked the representatives present to discuss this topic tonight and to bring that sentiment back to Mr. Wisinski.

Mr. Dick Albu, 7 Briar Brae Road, is the President of the Darien Junior Football League. Ms. Debbie Coley, of 48 Old Farm Road, is a member of the Darien Junior Football League organization.

Ms. Gutierrez mentioned for the record that she is a DJFL parent.

Mr. Albu said the proposal before the Commission tonight was to put lights on Holahan Field every weeknight from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for practice for one month only. The season goes through mid-November, and the lights would allow, for safety reasons, less risk of injury, and better lighting when leaving the field. He said the coaching staff is completely voluntary, and most often can't start practice until approximately 6:00 p.m., and in the late Fall, there is diminishing natural light at that time.

Mr. Albu said the proposal is to have the lights on the opposite side of the parking lot, facing the building. Three lights are possible, and they are motorized, which gives off some noise. The lights are portable on trailers, and would have to be removed from the field in time for the Babe Ruth games to avoid the risk of players getting hurt.

Some discussion took place regarding this proposal. It was agreed that this proposal has to be approved sooner than later so the lights will be in place for the upcoming season. The lights can go as high as 30 feet, but Ms. Swiatek said the Parks & Recreation Commission can't approve 30 ft lights, that it is a P&Z approval. She said that Parks and Recreation's concerns should be the neighbors and the impact on the field/facility. It was suggested that a public hearing be scheduled before voting and sending it to P&Z.

Acting Chairman Goodyear wanted to confirm ASAP that the Commission hold a public hearing and vote on sending it to P&Z. A certified letter will be sent to people within 100 feet of property. He suggested that DJFL have conversation with the neighbors. The residents of Fitch & Cherry Street would be the most affected. If many of the neighbors are on vacation when the public hearing is held, they can send in written documentation.

Mr. Albu thanked the Commission for their time and consideration.

Ms. Swiatek said the fields are full with players and spectators, and it is a very well run league.

Ms. Gutierrez said she and her son had been a part of DJFL for several years, and that it is a very well run program.

The tentative date for the public hearing is Wednesday, August 5, 2009 for the purpose of this item only.

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE ANNUAL DEER CULL AT SELLECK'S WOODS

Acting Chairman Goodyear said that the annual deer cull at Selleck's Woods will run for four weeks from October 20th through November 12th, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The park will be closed during

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that time, and a notice will be sent to the neighbors. The target is to cull 9 does. Public hearings were held on this, but were not well attended. The town agreed to contribute \$2,000 for signs and for a butcher to prepare the meat. It is then given to the homeless shelters. There is no cost to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

**** MR. MARCHESI MOVED TO APPROVE THE DEER CULL IN SELLECK'S WOODS OCTOBER 20, FOR FOUR WEEKS, ON TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, AND THURSDAYS, UNDER THE SAME PROVISIONS AS IN 2008.**

**** MS. GUTIERREZ SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS

a) Director

Ms. Swiatek read from her written report, saying that the beach sticker numbers are down, most likely due to rainfall. The playground is generating lots of talk and so people should be buying stickers shortly.

She mentioned that there were many unusual projects addressed in the spring. The playground is generating more maintenance. A mention was made that the dumpsters were full at the beach due to increased use. The bathhouse is only cleaned once a day, and if there is increased usage, then it would appear in need of cleaning again. The lifeguards are being burdened by the increased need to clean up bathrooms and remove trash.

She said that she met with the parking lot line painter to address the playground area, specifically crosswalks where the sidewalk crosses the boat ramp, and no parking in front of the boat ramp. She hoped to have addressed in the next few weeks.

Ms. Swiatek said that the operations of the Senior Center have fallen under her realm, and a lot of time has gone into it. The new Director will start at the end of August.

There will be a final re-buff and coat on the gym floor, then the bleachers will be installed. In the sailing area, electricity is in, phone is in, and cable will be next.

b) Assistant Director

Ms. Swiatek gave Mr. Coghlan's report, as he was running the movie at the beach. She pointed out the graph on the back page, noting that there was a spike in 2005, and that was the year there was school construction as well as additional weeks of summer. That generated more programs and more money. In 2009 the numbers spiked again despite a short summer. She said that the security guard company at the gate was doing well.

c) Chairman

There was no Chairman report.

d) Playground by the Sound

Ms. Daly gave a report on the Playground by the Sound, saying that it appears everyone is enjoying the playground. They are finishing the Donor Wall, the bricks, and the fencing.

OTHER BUSINESS (TWO-THIRDS VOTE)

There was no other business to discuss.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting August 12, 2009, 7:30 p.m.; Darien Town Hall, Room 119

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

**** MS. DALY SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr
Telesco Secretarial Services