

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 22, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Jane Branigan, Chair; Charles Goodyear, Merrie Hawley; Robert Marchesi, Mary Ann Gutierrez, Susan Daly, Vin Burke

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

OTHERS: Robert Steeger, Public Works Director; Peter Hovell, Courtney Darby

CALL TO ORDER

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

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

**** MS. HAWLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2008.**

**** MS. GUTIERREZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT
AT BAKER PARK.**

Mr. Steeger came forward and displayed a flood control map for Stony Brook tributary. He then explained that the DEP had rejected the plan and other options were explored. A second plan was then created that was similar to the original plan. The low flow waters will continue in the original channel, but high waters will be diverted into a retention area. Baker will be dry between storms, most of the time that there will be no water flowing through the park. The area will remain forested meadowland. The trees will be removed. The meadow will be deepened to approximately 6 to 8 feet. Mr. Steeger said that he believes that this would solve a high degree of the flooding, but nothing will solve the problem of flooding. The DEP has also decided that the stream in front of Town Hall will need to have the retaining wall by the fields removed and a ten foot stepped bank created there.

Mr. Steeger then reviewed the details of the berm that will be constructed. Mr. Steeger then reviewed the details of the inundation study. The three month study has begun to determine what level of maintenance and inspection will be required when the berm is done. A reapplication will follow after the conclusion of the study. The earliest the

construction can begin would be next year. Mr. Steeger then reviewed the details of the pipes near Post 53. The total project budget is now estimated to be 5.5 million. A short discussion then followed.

Mr. Steeger distributed a copy of proposed wording for the resolution to the Commission, which read as follows:

The members of the Town Darien Park and Recreation Commission having carefully considered the proposed plan for the creation of a flood control stormwater detention basin on the Baker Park property as shown on drawing number 3.8A entitled CT DEP IWRD PERMIT ALTERNATE SITE PLAN, understanding the need to provide increased flood protection for the property owners and businesses on Heights Road, and having balanced the need for the project against the Commission's stewardship of Darien's Parks hereby accept the proposal. The Commission further states its belief that the detention pond can be accommodated on the park property without compromising the long term utilization of the space for park purposes.

Ms. Hawley expressed some concerns about wording of the proposal. Ms. Branigan asked if the park would be useable while the construction was underway. Mr. Steeger said that he really couldn't answer the question, but that he would do all he could to maintain as many activities on the property.

**** MR. GOODYEAR MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

THE MEMBER OF THE TOWN DARIEN PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION HAVING CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE CREATION OF A FLOOD CONTROL STORMWATER DETENTION BASIN ON THE BAKER PARK PROPERTY AS SHOWN ON DRAWING NUMBER 3.8A ENTITLED CT DEP IWRD PERMIT ALTERNATE SITE PLAN, UNDERSTANDING THE NEED TO PROVIDE INCREASED FLOOD PROTECTION FOR THE PROPERTY OWNERS AND BUSINESSES ON HEIGHTS ROAD, AND HAVING BALANCED THE NEED FOR THE PROJECT AGAINST THE COMMISSION'S STEWARDSHIP OF DARIEN'S PARKS HEREBY ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL. THE COMMISSION FURTHER STATES ITS BELIEF THAT THE DETENTION BASIN CAN BE ACCOMMODATED ON THE PARK PROPERTY WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE LONG TERM UTILIZATION OF THE SPACE FOR PARK PURPOSES. THE COMMISSION REQUIRES SAFE ACCESS AND USE OF THE FACILITIES DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE PROJECT.

**** MS. DALY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Swiatek reviewed her report. She said that the cedar trees that were planted to serve as windscreens at the beach tennis courts, but they have grown to 40 feet high and the branches are above the fence line. The sap is damaging the new tennis courts, and providing too much shade. Ms. Swiatek said that she would prefer to have something like arbor vitae or another low growing shrub. The consensus of the Commission was that the trees should be removed and the area be replanted with a different type of wind screening plant.

Ms. Swiatek said that she just got an information packet from a lighting company for the proposed lighting at Tilley Pond. These fixtures are cast aluminum and less expensive than the cast iron.

Since the Weed Beach project is on hold until next August, Ms. Swiatek said that she would like to paint the bath house and repair the doors for next summer.

There was a brief discussion about the fencing at Cherry Lawn. Requests for bids have been sent to a number of companies for new fencing.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON REQUEST TO DONATE THE PLAY AREA AND EQUIPMENT FOR WEED BEACH BY PLAYGROUND BY THE SOUND STEERING COMMITTEE

Ms. Daly then said that the Sound Steering Committee was asking the Commission to accept a cash donation for the Playground by the Sound, Inc. Ms. Daly said that she had met with First Selectwoman Klein and received the go ahead to continue with the project. The next step would be the Commission forwarding this to the Board of Selectmen.

- ** MR. GOODYEAR MOVED TO ACCEPT A CASH GIFT FOR A
PLAYGROUND AT WEED BEACH OF UP TO \$275,000 AS PRESENTED BY
THE PLAYGROUND BY THE SOUND, INC.**
- ** MR. BURKE SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON ISSUES RELATING TO WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN RENOVATION PROJECT

Mr. Hovell said that a meeting of the building Committee had just adjourned. He reminded everyone that the Selectmen have put a moratorium on building, other than the

Playground By the Sound. Mr. Hovell said that a meeting had taken place with the architect and the construction company about redesigning the buildings. Ideas like having pre-fabricated construction or other options have been discussed.

Mr. Hovell said that the new Planning and Zoning Department staff member, Andrea, would be speaking with the Flood and Erosion Control Committee regarding financial assistance for possibly raising the bathhouses a foot and a half.

Mr. Hovell then spoke briefly about the overall economic situation and the moratorium on construction and capital budget items. He pointed out that the price of commodities has dropped considerably in recent weeks.

Discussion followed about reclaiming more of the beach then followed.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Coghlan reviewed the Fall program registrations over the past eight years. There was a steady increase until 2005 and the last three years have shown a stable enrollment number. A discussion followed about the difficulties associated with online registration for beach stickers.

Mr. Coghlan said that the paddle court season has started and the propane heater will be replaced in the early November.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Branigan informed the Commission that Mr. Hovell has resigned from the Board of Finance. Ms. Branigan said that she would like to have Mr. Hovell continue on as Weed Beach Building Committee chairman. Ms. Branigan said that she was hoping that she could contact Mr. Stegelmann about appointing someone else as liaison to the Board of Finance, but allow Mr. Hovell to remain as chairman. Discussion about the details of increasing the size of the Building Committee then followed.

PLAYGROUND BY THE SOUND

Ms. Daly reported that she had been contacted by WNLK about the Playground fundraising. She said that the interview would be aired in the early morning. An article will also be published in the Darien News tomorrow. Ms. Daly said that the cocktail party would be the final wrap up for the fund raising project.

Mr. Burke said that he had heard some wonderful feedback about a recent raking of the beach. Ms. Swiatek said that the work that the new machine which was being demonstrated was phenomenal.

Ms. Swiatek said that the budget work starts in November. She said that there will be no new initiatives and that where there are areas that can be trimmed, she will trim.

WEED BEACH BUILDING COMMITTEE

There were no additional issues to discuss at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

There was no one present from the public who wished to comment at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. HALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. DALY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services