

Town of Darien
Parks and Recreation Committee
Representative Town Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
Monday May 7, 2012
7:30pm, Room 213

In attendance: Cheryl Russell, Rob Cardone, Adele Conniff, Ellyn Coyne, Mark Dailey, Peter Firmin, Lisa Haas, Jeff Marston, Bill Peters

Meeting was called to order by Chairwomen Cheryl Russell. With 9 members present a quorum was met.

Ms. Russell introduced Santo Golino and Tony Farren of the Darien Little League to discuss Darien Little League's proposed gift to renovate Gallagher Field at Cherry Lawn Park.

Mr. Golino showed us the plans to update Gallagher field at Cherry Lawn. The field is used extensively by Darien Little League players, primarily the 9-12 year olds. With its close proximity to Brookside Road and the significant slope of the playing field, DLL feels that the current field presents safety issues. The plan is to level the entire field and improve drainage. The field will be shifted 20 feet south away from neighboring properties. They will construct a retaining wall as well as fenced dugouts. There will be a 20 foot backstop fence built behind home plate as well as fencing that will run alongside Brookside to keep players and spectators out of the road and to keep cars from parking there. The entire field would be sodded and an irrigation system would be installed. The only additional operating expenses to be incurred by the town will be irrigation as well as continued maintenance.

Work would begin in late August and last approximately 3-4 weeks. Mr. Golino estimated the cost would be under \$250,000.

Ms. Russell inquired about the plaque honoring Bo Gallagher. She explained that Ms. Gallagher had worked tirelessly for the Parks and Recreation Commission to preserve playing fields in our town. Ms. Russell also explained that by dedicating fields, an ordinance protects those fields from being taken away unless replaced by a field of exact similar properties.

There was a discussion regarding P/Z proposal to change the originally designed chain link fence to a split rail fence for aesthetic purposes along Brookside Road.

Mr. Daley moved to accept the gift from Darien Little League. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The committee then took a vote on the 2012-2013 proposed Parks and Recreation Budget. There was some discussion about new expenses and revenues associated with the new Weed Beach paddle hut. A motion was made to accept the proposed Parks and Recreation Budget. A motion was seconded and the committee unanimously voted all in favor to accept the budget.

The committee also voted to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2012 meeting and there were no comments or revisions.

Ms. Russell provided an update on the Weed Beach progress. The construction is moving ahead on time and on budget. Paving is occurring this week and the official re-opening is scheduled for June 2nd.

Ms. Coyne commented that she was on the Friends of Woodland Park and noted a few issues that were currently impacting the park. Kids have been building ramps and jumps in the trails to be used for mountain biking. Recently the police were called because a man was using a rifle in the park. Lastly, she commented that dogs continue to walk in the park unleashed and she feels that the leash ordinance was not being enforced.

Ms. Russell commented that she often still sees dogs off-leash at the beaches as well and there too the leash ordinance is not being enforced.

Ms. Russell adjourned the meeting.