



**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 19, 2023
7:30 PM, WEED BEACH PADDLE HUT**

ATTENDANCE: Lorene Bora, Chair, Susan Daly, Mary Louise Morgan, Cathy Mulrow-Peattie, Chris Taylor, Kara Bohnsack, Janet Cling and Jim Farrell

ABSENT: Amy Doering

STAFF: Pam Gery, Director of Parks and Recreation , Cassandra Schull, Recreation Program Supervisor

AUDIENCE: Kevin Marks, Sean Shay, Susan Marks, Kristen Greene, Patrick Hirscht, Mike Burke, Helen Johnson, Patti Bumgardner, Annalise Brown, James Palen, Kipp Visi, Meghan Carroll, Rob Gagliardi, Kateri Daly, Chris Deak
RTM Parks and Recreation Committee Members:
Patti Bumgardner
Kim Kiner
Adele Conniff

Ms. Bora called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

**INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME OF NEW P&R COMMISSION MEMBER,
JIM FARRELL**

Ms. Bora introduced Jim Farrell, the new Parks and Recreation Commission member and he provided some brief background.

APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSION MINUTES FROM MARCH 15, 2023

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM MARCH 15, 2023
WITH AMENDMENTS
** MS. MORGAN SECONDED**

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
April 19, 2023

**** THE MOTION PASSED – UNANIMOUS**

Ms. Bora requested to change the order of the agenda based on the volume of public comment anticipated.

DISCUSS AND VOTE ON AN EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT – PRESENTATION
BY KATERI DALY ON A BEACH CLEANUP STATION PROJECT

Ms. Daly recused herself from the discussion and vote.

Kateri Daly, Lifescout of Troop 190 and Darien high school freshman, presented her project to the commission. The proposal is to design and build a structure to house perforated buckets and trash bins for residents to use to pick up and dispose of trash with the goal of cleaning up the beaches. She would like to have the structure in place by Memorial Day. Kateri Daly answered various questions from the commission.

**** MS. MORGAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED BEACH CLEAN UP STATION AT WEED BEACH PARK AS PRESENTED**

**** MR. FARRELL SECONDED**

****MS. DALY ABSTAINED**

**** THE MOTION PASSED**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Marks, 39 Fairfield Avenue

Mr. Marks spoke in favor of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Sean Shay, 135 Leroy Avenue

Mr. Shay spoke in favor of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Susan Marks, 39 Fairfield Avenue

Ms. Marks spoke in favor of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Kristen Greene, 10 Runkenhage Road

Ms. Greene spoke in opposition of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Patrick Hirscht, 17 Wakemore Street

Mr. Hirscht spoke in opposition of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Mike Burke, 15 Lake Drive

Mr. Burke spoke in favor of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Helen Johnson, 46 Stonybrook Road

Ms. Johnson spoke in favor of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Patti Bumgardner, 64 Hanson Road

Ms. Bumgardner spoke in opposition of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park from a parking demand standpoint.

Annalise Brown (not present), High School Girls Varsity Tennis Coach

Ms. Bora read a letter submitted by Ms. Brown speaking in opposition of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

James Palen (not present), 5 Hickory Lane

Mr. Taylor read a letter submitted by Mr. Palen speaking in favor of the proposed pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park.

Kipp Visi, 68 Noroton Avenue

Mr. Visi spoke on the new 3-hour parking signs at Baker Park.

Meghan Carroll, 65 Noroton Avenue

Ms. Carroll spoke on the new 3-hour parking signs at Baker Park.

UPDATE ON DARIEN JUNIOR SAILING 2023

Chris Deak and Rob Gagliardi provided a general update on the Junior Sailing Program stating that there are a total of 8 employees and currently 54 participants registered for the 2023 season. He added that they have expanded the program by adding laser sail boats. There was brief discussion on the possibility of using town land to store the boats during the winter.

PICKLEBALL/ TENNIS SURVEY RESULTS

Ms. Bora explained that there were 554 survey responses. She addressed many repeated comments regarding the color of the tennis courts, confirming that the gray color is not permanent and that the courts will be painted. She also confirmed that staff is obtaining bids to repair the cracks on the pickleball courts and to paint over the graffiti. Ms. Bora also stated that the \$20 reservation fee is for the whole court and not a per person fee.

Ms. Bora clarified that according to correspondence from Annalise Brown, Darien High School Tennis Coach, the FCIAC is more lenient with Junior Varsity match regulations

when concerning pickleball lines on tennis courts. Ms. Bora confirmed that the JV team plays at Cherry Lawn and that the Varsity team does not.

Ms. Schull, Recreation Program Supervisor, provided the Commission with more general survey results, stating that the responses were evenly weighted in favor of and in opposition of painting pickleball lines on the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn Park. She added that pickleball lessons for the spring are currently 80% enrolled.

The Commission discussed the results and numerous options. Ms. Daly suggested postponing the decision until more information is gathered. There was no decision or vote.

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON MR. FRATE'S DOCKING OF HIS FISHING BOAT AT PEAR TREE BOAT LAUNCH FOR THE PERIOD OF APRIL 30, 2023 TO NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Ms. Bora reminded the Commission that at this point, there are no other alternatives for Mr. Frate's boat than trailering it in and out of the water daily.

Ms. Bora suggested notifying Mr. Frate about the potential renovation plan at Pear Tree Point Beach and that the Commission may be unable to make accommodations in the future.

Ms. Bora asked Ms. Gery to confirm that all insurance documents provided by Mr. Frate are up-to-date and to request updated documents if necessary.

**** MS. MORGAN MOVED TO APPROVE MR. FRATE'S DOCKING OF HIS FISHING BOAT AT PEAR TREE BOAT LAUNCH TO NOVEMBER 1, 2023
** MS. MULROW-PEATTIE SECONDED
** MS. DALY AND MS. CLING ABSTAINED
** THE MOTION PASSED**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Gery highlighted the *Adventure Day at Selleck's and Dunlap Woods* event to be held on May 21, 2023 and encouraged the Commission to volunteer or to help recruit volunteers. She also noted the *Guinness Book of World Records 48-48-48 Pickleball* event to be held on May 23, 2023. The Commission complemented the new flagpole at Weed Beach and thanked the Darien Foundation.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Bora highlighted that there was a very warm Thursday and Friday recently where Weed Beach was very crowded with very little parking remaining. She added that pizza boxes are frequently left at the beach. There was brief discussion regarding town issued email addresses for Commission members.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. MULROW-PEATTIE MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MS. DALY SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 PM.

Next Regular meeting: May 17, 2023, 7:30 pm at the Weed Beach Paddle Hut

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Eberhardt

