

**Parks and Recreation Commission**  
**7:00 PM Wednesday, December 10, 2014**  
**Groton Senior Center**  
**Meeting Minutes - Revised**

- I. Call to Order - 7:02 PM
- II. Roll Call  
Commissioners Present: Phil Butta, June Evered, Jim Kamercia, Jeff Zuliani  
Staff: Mark Berry, Jerry Lokken
- III. Approval of Minutes: November 12, 2014  
Motion to accept made by: Jeff Zuliani  
Seconded by: Phil Butta  
Approved 3-0-1
- IV. Citizens Petitions and Comments  
Phil received a communication from the CT conference of municipalities about FOI training, free if the town is a member. Phil will find out about that.
- V. Town Council Referrals
- VI. Correspondence/Communications
  - A. Commissioners
  - B. Director of Parks & Recreation
    1. Mark received correspondence about refund of golf dues. Person's health has deteriorated to the extent that this person is now unable to play golf any more. The Golf Advisory Board and Mark will provide a referendum on a change in the policy to allow refunds strictly on a case by case basis. The Commission approved this change after some discussion on the merits of this particular case. Jeff felt that pro-rating the refund is the proper way to go. He suggested full refund for the first year and lesser refunds for resulting years. Phil felt that returning a certain amount of the dues is good customer service. Jerry explained that medical refunds are given for Parks and Recreation programs but that is on a much lesser scale as the sessions only last a few weeks and the cost is not nearly as great. If the person is able to continue playing at a later date, the fees are carried over until the following year. The group was not happy with the Town losing money over this. Discussion was delayed until we receive the referendum of the Golf Board.
    2. Mark received communication from user of the G&S Trolley Trail – unaware of the problem with Mumford Cove.
    3. CIP project on the 11<sup>th</sup> green - \$50,000 for the project. Area is close to the road. Project involves removing 35 trees and removing resulting dirt and other obstructions. Mark has been getting phone calls from people across the street. They are concerned that removing the barrier will cause water to flow into their basements. These builders are blaming the golf course for the water in their basements. Mark feels that the golf course repairs are not the reason for the flooding as some years ago the trees were small and the obstructions did not exist. Years ago, the Town paid for a drainage system of water from one basement. Now the neighbors are

expecting the Golf Course to pay for drainage for them all. Then Mark said that notices are always posted before such work is started, allowing neighbors to file complaints. One such complaint did not reach the intended recipient. Mark feels that the golf course is not responsible for providing for that area and does not have the money. As a final solution, it would be possible to do the improvement. He intends having a study done to determine the causes of the flooding and who has the responsibility of getting a professional opinion.

This project was originally recommended to facilitate the golfers' play as the trees constitute a barrier to long shots.

## VII. Reports

### A. Director of Parks & Recreation

Mark and Jerry attended a meeting with Town officials to discuss purchasing a mobile phone credit card machine to enable off-site payments. The purchase was made.

Mark worked on a new format for the monthly reports.

Jerry mentioned that the Winter DISCOVER will be out shortly after Christmas. He added that changing from four to five seasons had a positive impact on the department's financial situation.

### B. Monthly Reports – Parks & Recreation

Phil asked if Parks and Recreation is planning on holding more events such as races. They have people who are interested in a cycle cross race. Jerry walked the course on Fields of Fire as that owner is interested in expanding his offerings. Jerry felt that hosting races in partnership with local businesses is mutually beneficial.

### C. Golf Course Report / GAB – Jim

The Golf Advisory Board is discussing a 3% increase in prices. They also wish to stimulate youth playing golf. They suggest a \$350 charge for youth members to play in a tournament. A youth member may play up to 40 tournaments a season. Jim suggests charging \$10 for a minor to play with a paid adult to promote youth golf. This would encourage families to play together. Jim feels that it would be effective for pros/coaches to visit schools to promote golf during PE. The board is also considering providing training for more youth to encourage play. Jim feels that it would be effective for coaches to visit schools. The Advisory Board also considered the effect of all this, and the new nine-hole course on present members.

### D. Boating Advisory Board (BAB) Update – Phil

Phil was unable to attend the meeting but is giving the report from the draft minutes. The Town is loaning Parks and Recreation the \$7,000 shortfall for the purchase of the new modular dock at Spicer Park. Parks and Recreation will repay the town in a few months.

Discussion was had on transitioning services from Groton Community Boating Club to Noank Boating Club.

Some discussion held on the suggestion that the Parks and Recreation Department be moved from Spicer House to the former Fitch Middle School. There is also some discussion on moving people from the Annex into the former middle school. Nothing is expected to be done soon.

The Boating Advisory elected officers. They proposed doing a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new dock on June 6, which is National Learn to Row Day. Small boat day continues to grow and best successful. No date has been set for 2015.

E. Trails Coordinating Task Force – June

John Reiner was invited. The Task Force looked at projects on the previous Bike Pedestrian and Trails Master Plan. They identified the top six projects for the CIPs.

VIII. Old Business

A. Master Plan Committee

Jim – A letter was mailed to the MPC that notified them that the committee was disbanded as they had completed the tasks for which they were formed. There has been no communication from any of the former members.

B. Monthly Report

Mark came up with a new format for the reports. He is trying to focus on the benefits provided by Parks and Recreation (P&R) to the community. If nothing else gets accomplished, the highlighted bullets in bold will get the department's involvement across. He emphasized those projects that, if not done by P&R, would cause deterioration. Mark is trying to refocus the impression that P&R is only fun and games without offering anything substantial. Mark completely disagrees with that impression.

Jerry mentioned that Dr. Crompton, a top academic in the country, suggests tying the need for P&R into existing community needs. He feels that everything that P&R does to bring people into town benefits the town in numerous ways. Also, a community needs to offer services that out-of-town people wish to have in any town they move to. Jerry states that yes, we are spending money to provide services, but people coming into our community spend money and they wouldn't do that if the services did not exist. Mark is trying to change the impression that Parks and Recreation is only fun and games and show the benefits that they can offer the community. How we are making a difference, how we recognize all people in social equity, etc.

Jim made a suggestion that a section of the new reports be devoted to the playing fields.

Phil made the suggestion to start sentences with action verbs as these have more impact. We are developing an asset list for the Town.

Jim and Jerry both suggested including photographs in the monthly reports.

Mark stated that, because of the due dates involved, some of the information on the monthly reports is more than six weeks old. He would like to change these dates so that the information provided in the reports might be more topical. Phil supported in this, stating that he would like to get the reports sooner than at present.

A discussion ensued on whether draft minutes can be circulated ahead of time.

C. Merritt Update

Mark – there will be a joint meeting tomorrow night at the Annex (December 11 at 6:30 pm) on the Merritt property and proposed school project.

Mark – update on Copp Property. Trail has been flagged, posted for tree removal, still in the 10-day public comment period.

Jim asked about the possibility of asking Grasso Tech to build the proposed comfort station for Shennecossett Golf Club. It may be a good learning opportunity for them and the town could get a facility built for a lower cost.

**IX. New Business**

**A. Reappointment of Boating Advisory Board members**

Motion to re-appoint George O'Brien and Tom Tobin for three year terms on the Boating Advisory Board was made by Phil Butta and Seconded by Jeff Zuliani. Motion passed unanimously.

**B. Elect 2015 Officers for Parks and Recreation Commission**

June made the following nominations: Jim as Chair, Phil as Vice-Chair and June as Secretary. Seconded by Jeff  
All accepted unanimously.

**X. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 14, 2015 - 7:00 PM at Groton Senior Center**

**XI. Adjournment**

Proposed by Phil, seconded by Jeff - adjourned by 8:55 pm.

Minutes have been approved and accepted.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Date

3/11/15