

Parks and Recreation Commission
7:00 PM Wednesday, September 9, 2015
Groton Senior Center
Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

Phil Butta, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners: Phil Butta, June Evered, Jonathan Grossman and Jeff Zuliani

Jim Kamercia reports in late, delayed in traffic

Staff: Mark Berry

Guest in Attendance: Evan Mitchell, recent UConn graduate

III. Approval of Minutes: August 12, 2015

Motion was made by Jeff Zuliani, seconded by Jonathan Grossman.

Discussion: Jeff questioned the words "movie camera" in the golf report. This is changed to "showing a movie on the green." Jim had originally suggested showing a movie in a location where non-golfers could watch. June had thought he meant a movie camera so that players could photograph themselves putting halfway through the game. The minutes were amended as suggested and approved unanimously.

IV. Citizens Petitions and Comments - None

V. Town Council Referrals - None

VI. Correspondence/Communications - None

A. Commissioners

VII. Reports

A. Director of Parks & Recreation

1. Mark reported that the Town Manager has been authorized by the Town Council to negotiate the sale of William Seely School. Mark reported that it could be costly to move the Parks and Recreation programs that are presently conducted in Seely into the former Fitch Middle School as Fitch needs costly repairs to meet present building codes.
2. The department is working on a Letter of Intent for a grant for a Butterfly Habitat Restoration Project within Copp Park. There has been a national effort to restore the natural habitat of this butterfly. Groton Parks and Recreation are participating in this effort.
3. The grounds have taken a beating over this long, hot summer. Sam Popinchalk, the Parks Foreman, is retiring. Mark is working with Human Resources to have the position announced as a Parks and Maintenance Supervisor with a budgeting background. It would be the same job but the description may need to be adjusted a little.
4. The Fall 2015 "DISCOVER" brochure has been circulated. It was sent both by direct mail and also online to Facebook. Also on GrotonRec.com. By the end of August, there were 722 people registered for classes which brought in over \$46,000.

The department has been in the news a few times. The Day published a very nice article about the Esker Point Beach concerts. This is a program that used to be paid for with tax dollars but is no longer. We made up the difference by charging for parking. The concerts remain free. Attendance and parking both increased this year.

5. Our summer day camps saw a 23% decline in daytime enrollment but enrollments in specialty and sports camps grew by 9%. Overall our revenue is up as we charge more for the camps. The fee for day camps is \$61 but we also can give scholarships. We serve a diverse group of people but we are still searching ways to do more.
6. Chrissy Post, a young female athlete on Groton's Special Olympics Team won a silver medal in unified golf at the World Special Olympics in Los Angeles.
7. The Senior Center has lost participants in the exercise programs to Silver Sneakers, which allows seniors with certain health insurances to use commercial gyms free of charge. We are now certified for a program, "Silver & Fit", which is similar. Participants don't put money up front, the center is reimbursed for the classes that a person attends. Staff will be watching this situation closely to ensure they are reimbursed.

B. Golf Course Report / GAB – Jim

The golf course had a very good summer. Revenue for August was down a little, but overall revenue increased. The course was actually closed for 30 days this calendar year but is still up by \$3,000. The good thing is that kids have started coming on Tuesdays and Thursdays to play with their parents. Mark will ask the Connecticut PGA to find out how much these people are spending overall. Jim suggested different placements of tournament signs to make them more visible. Phil asked if we could get some press about the tournaments. Jim says that we are missing opportunities to make money for, as primitive as a T-shirt is, we could sell at least 300.

June brought up efforts by other public parks to get rid of the geese problem. She saw that one club suggested a mechanical hawk. Mark said that Shennecossett now has a dog which handles the geese problem. Jim says that there is still the problem over the Rangers receiving formal wages. The Rangers have always worked in exchange for playing free golf. Mark replied that when the ranger system was set up, they met the qualifications for regular employees. Now we have been advised by the Town attorney that they must be paid regular wages.

C. Boating Advisory Board (BAB) Update – Phil

No meeting but there has been activity. The new dock is installed. There will be a proclamation this Saturday morning, September 12, 2015, with different groups. Phil, Judge Kepple, Sandra Dombro (President of Noank Rowing Group), and Mayor Rita Schmidt will be speaking. The company that supplied the dock is the same company that supplied the docks for the Olympics. The new dock is more accessible, safer, and does not need to be removed over the winter. Next meeting of the Boating Advisory Board is September 17.

D. Trails Coordinating Task Force – June

No scheduled meetings for July or August

E. Sports Complex

Mark has put together a list of places that host tournaments and given it to Kent and Frost together with contact information. Mark will also assist Kent and Frost with baseball team information. This is to reduce Kent and Frost's costs to an extent.

Mark had previously sent an E-mail to the Commission identifying potential alternate sites if we cannot use the Merritt property. These are:

1. Birch Plain Creek golf course – Ackley
2. Vogt
3. Wolfebrooke Development LLC
4. Winds property
5. JJ Realty – Noank/Ledyard/Sandy Hollow Road.

VIII. Unfinished Business

A. Marketing Plan Overview

1. Completed at August meeting

B. Proposed FYE'2017 CIP

1. Mark reviewed proposed Capital Improvement Projects for FYE 2017. They included Trail Improvement Program.
2. Open Space Management Plan. \$35,000.
3. Golf Course Improvement Plan. \$50,000 to restore bunkers near the 14th green.
4. Golf Course Comfort Station. \$50,000. A comfort station near the 9th hole both reduces time spent going to the clubhouse and provides shelter against sudden storms.
5. Aquatics Center. \$75,000 for a feasibility study on budgeting, marketing and management planning. The Recreation Master Plan done in 2009 identified an aquatics center within the top three wanted facilities. (Commission members felt that a local aquatic center could be a profitable venture).
6. Golf Course. \$40,000 for software and hardware to replace the irrigation system.

IX. New Business - none

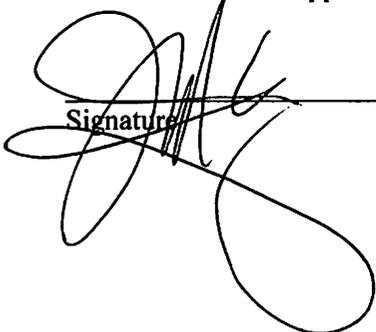
X. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 - 7:00 PM at Groton Senior Center

XI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Jeff Zuliani, seconded by Jonathan Grossman. Approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted by June Evered.

Minutes have been approved and accepted.



Signature

10/14/15

Date