

**Parks and Recreation Commission**  
**7:00 PM Wednesday, January 13, 2016**  
**Groton Senior Center**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**I. Call to Order**

Jim Kamercia, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioners: Jim Kamercia, June Evered, Jonathan Grossman, and Jeff Zuliani  
Staff: Mark Berry, Kate Bradley  
Guest in Attendance: Mike Buonano

**III. Approval of Minutes – November 18, 2015**

Motion to approve the minutes was made by June, seconded by Jonathan. Approved unanimously.

**IV. Citizens Petitions and Comments**

None


**V. Town Council Referrals**

None

**VI. Commissioners' Correspondence/Communications**

June commended the Senior Center staff on their excellence and the number and variety of new activities being offered.

Jim reported a call from a basketball family member stating that it is disheartening for young teams to lose all the time. Mark responded that the league practices if a team is getting blown out. Winning team can't press if a team is down by more than 10 points. If a team falls behind 15 points, the score is not put on the board. Discussion ensued. This kind of complaint is heard frequently. The teams are made up by the year. Players are presently being picked one by one by from the group until all are eliminated. Jim suggested that a Parks and Recreation manager could be appointed to select the teams to ensure equality of strength. Parks and Recreation will continue to use and consider more methods to achieve a more equitable mix of the players' skills.

  
~~Jon~~ reported that the City of Groton has been informed that they must pay State taxes on parking fees for their beach. The Town of Groton's Esker Point beach parking is free except for concerts and that tax is paid. Mark discussed areas of town where parking fees might be collected in the future.

**VII. Reports.**

**A. Director of Parks and Recreation - Mark Berry**

1. Mark updated the commission on the potential relocation of recreation programs to FMS. He distributed a diagram of the proposed areas that the administrative and programming functions would be located. He also mentioned that there is a proposal to place a small community police outpost in the building.
2. Mark met with the Town Manager to discuss cuts for the FYE16 budget. Each department must cut 2.4% from the current budget. Mark says that we have two positions not filled, a park foreman and a programmer for the person overseeing the computer lab. That is where our required \$58,000 cut will be made.
3. Mark received an inquiry about placing a memorial bench for Fitch High School graduate Mitchell Kuflik. Mitchell was one of the 33 crew members aboard El Faro, the U.S. cargo ship that the Coast Guard says sank off the Bahamas during Hurricane Joaquin.
4. Mark also received a request from the Women's volleyball league to form a "substitute pool", a list of available substitutes.
5. Mark had a conference call with Vermont Systems to discuss installing RecTrac data base software at the Senior Center. The hardware will cost \$1,500, software licensing \$4,000 and \$4,700 for installation and training. . Jonathan felt that this cost seems high for data entry. Mark replied that it is not just for data entry. Presently every transaction needs to be entered twice, wasting a lot of time. It also enables online registration not presently available at the Senior Center but on the wish list for many seniors. It also has a barcode reader, point of sale, and two cash drawers. The Recreation division is gearing for this upgrade, expected in March, and is making operational changes in preparation.
6. 115 people attended the free Christmas day dinner at the Senior Center. 75 people attended the "Age of Love" documentary with a Skype session with the author following. The Senior Center is working on their Souper Bowl funding event. We prepare bowls and local restaurants donate the soup. We also have donations of signed sports memorabilia such as football helmets.
7. Because of the warm weather, Park workers have been able to extend their outdoor work later into the year.
8. Golf course. The course is doing very well. \$52,000 in revenue in December 2015 compared with \$30,000 in December 2014. January 2016 very busy, Saturday mornings are full.

**B. Golf Course Report/GAB**

- C. No meeting.**

**D. Boating Advisory Board (BAB) Update.**

**E. Trails Coordinating Task Force – June**

The Task Force extension has been approved. They will now be meeting quarterly, next meeting on March 24, 2016. Ribbon cutting for the Copp Property will be on April 22, 2016. Jenna in GIS has created a mobile trail map for Groton's trails for peoples' phones.

We have a \$25,000 matching grant in hand and have submitted a grant for \$2,300 to Norcross for a trails map. The developer is providing an easement on Briar Hill Road, backing up to YMCA and school property. The YMCA property will be transferred to DEEP. This is a connection to another trails network.

The TriTown trails are presently seeking easements from 9 land owners. They are now on Twitter.

**F. Athletic Fields**

The consultant has identified three potential groups that are similar to what we are considering for our fields. Mark has questions to ask these three organizations. For example, how many tournaments do you host, how many players, etc. Mark will mail out the questionnaires. He is hoping for replies. Jonathan felt that there was an appropriate article in one of the Parks and magazine issues. Jonathan also heard that the State will be rebuilding Grasso Tech and replacing those playing fields.

**VIII. Unfinished Business.**

Mark reviewed Golf Survey results, three years worth of material. There is some consistency in the responses. Jim says that we get many customers from the Clinton area. Bunkers continue to be an issue that we always need to address. Most cases are that the bunkers have built up over time so that they must be razed, not just to have sand thrown in. The golf course has been investing \$50,000 a year to improve bunkers throughout the course. . Jim – are we providing updates on the improvements we are making? Mark – that was part of the introduction to the survey “Thank you for your feed back last year. We improved bunkers so and so.” Jim proposes placing announcements of what improvements we are making on the outside wall of the clubhouse for golfers to see.

**IX. New Business.**

**A. Golf Advisory Board –Reappointments to Golf Advisory Board**

Charlie Miller, Brian McCallen, along with the Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission were reappointment with terms ending in 2018.

Motion proposed by Jim, seconded by Jonathan. Approved unanimously.

**B. Marketing Update/Focus Group Summary – Kate Bradley.**

The new issue of “**Discover**” has been released. Kate is combining Winter and Spring activities this time as they are a better match than Spring and Summer. The Summer issue will be out in April. Pequot Woods is highlighted with its own page.

Grant money was spent on smart TV for the Senior Learning Network, program to start in January. Chelsea Groton Bank gave \$1,000 donation towards our scholarship fund

Focus group took place in October. This went well - 13 people with some previous involvement with Parks and Recreation attended. The point was to get opinions from the community, what was working and what wasn't. The first exercise was to have people think of the first word that comes into their mind when thinking of Parks and Recreation. Some of the words were Fun, Healthy, Expensive and Affordable. Discussions ensued on

- **Programs** (consensus – very good);
- **Summer Day Camp** (cost is a hot topic – staff to consider a special scholarship level);
- **Cooking** (much interest in cooking programs both for children and adults);
- **Special Events** (people looking for free, community focused events);
- **Parks and Open Space** (agreed to be excellent but many participants could not identify any other than the large well used parks);
- **Sutton Park problems** (condition and graffiti mentioned – most people are not aware of the suggested improvements contained in the Master Plan, or even of the Master Plan itself);
- **Trails** (most people not aware of the number of accessible trails in Town or of the online trails map);
- **Facilities** (people want a Town Community Center and also a swimming pool facility);
- **Lack of Playing Fields** (many participants expressed concern over the competition for field space);

Participants agreed that some requirements for initiating new programs include the right price, the right timing (day of the week, time of day), and advance information about the class. For example, for a cooking class, they would want to know what they would be cooking each week).

The feedback from this focus group will be helpful to Parks and Recreation in moving forward.

### **C. Election of Officers**

#### **Motions:**

Motion that Jim Kamercia continues as Chair made by Jeff Zuliani, seconded by Jonathan Grossman. Approved unanimously.

Motion that Jeff Zuliani be elected to Vice-Chair made by Jonathan Grossman seconded by Jim Kamercia. Approved unanimously.

Motion that Jonathan Grossman be elected to Secretary made by June Evered, seconded by Jeff Zuliani. Approved unanimously.

**D. Proposed field use fees.**

Mark – for the last couple of years, we have charged some groups, for using the fields. The recreation division is developing a more formalized plan to charge fees.

We have two pavilions in Sutton Park. They are very popular. The rental for these was \$35 for the entire day. We now plan to charge \$25 by the hour for the large pavilion and \$15 for the smaller pavilion. This way we could rent them out more than once a day. They are rented all the time over the weekends. We bring in staff Saturday and Sunday morning to clean up if the pavilion had been rented the previous day.

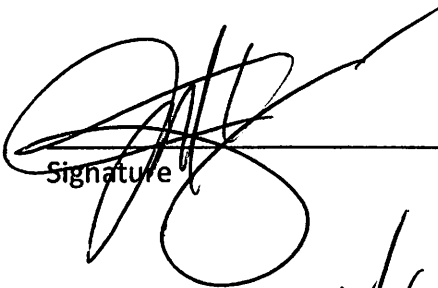
**X. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 - 7 00 PM at Groton Senior Center.**

**XI. Adjournment.**

Motion to adjourn made by June Evered, seconded by Jeff Zuliani. Approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by June Evered

Minutes have been approved and accepted.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

2/10/16  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

w/ (1) correction  
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