

Minutes: A meeting of the Town of Hamden Parks and Recreation Commission was held on January 14th, 2020 at the Parks and Recreation Conference at the Hamden Government Center, located at 2750 Dixwell Avenue.

Members in Attendance: Chris Ruggiero (ran the meeting), Arnold Mann, Thad Watson, Christine Huber, and Sarah Morrill.

Others in Attendance: Patrick Donnelly, Deputy Chief of Staff; Natalie Barletta, Commission Clerk

The following topics were discussed:

1. Call to Order:

Mr. Ruggiero called the meeting to order at 5:28 p.m.

2. Attendance:

As noted above.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Month's Meeting:

Ms. Morrill made a motion to approve minutes, Ms. Huber seconded, and all were in favor.

4. Parks and Recreation Director's Report

5. Old Business:

Ms. Morrill said that a few of the council members wants to attend meetings. There was a brief discussion. Mr. Donnelly added that the council just wants to improve the processes, and they want to do this as a baseline to ensure they are done in a smoother manner. Mr. Mann stated that the Commission has a pretty good handle on how everything works. There was a brief discussion about it. Ms. Morrill mentioned that it might good for them is setting a basic template, such as number of team members, profits/losses, and how many players on the town of Hamden, and said that she doesn't want to be overly burdensome to the team coaches, as they are volunteers. Mr. Donnelly said that there might be a single page Google Document. This in term will make it easier for the Commissioners to review. There was a discussion about the cost of the fees and what the cost is absorbed by the parents.

Mr. Mann wants to know if there is an option for those who can't afford to apply. Mr. Donnelly said that there needs to be a guideline that classifies children for financial aid. There was a discussion about the financial aid of the sports teams. Mr. Ruggiero requested the clerk to add the item about League Stipend applications. Ms. Huber expressed the importance of differentiating Hamden vs. other towns. Ms. Morrill said that there was not that many out of town, but it is pretty limited. Ms. Morrill said that if the volunteer will either get a waiver for the fee, or a discount.

Mr. Donnelly suggested having a conversation with some of the league members to get an idea. Ms. Morrill asked Mr. Ruggiero to reach out to the couches to get the information. Mr. Donnelly said that they passed, and they still will get paid, and the payments are going out. Mr. Mann suggested having some representatives from each team at the meeting to help them with this process. Mr. Mann said that he will set up a list of questions for those to respond. Mr. Ruggiero said it is important to get the council's feedback on that. Mr. Ruggiero said that he will send it out, and that he will fill in with Chairman Leonardo.

6. New Business:

Ms. Morrill said that summer camps need to be discussed as changes are expected to be made. There was a discussion about whether or not the high school pool was open. That item will be added to next month's agenda. Mr. Donnelly said that it has been confirmed that the pool is once again open and functional and will be going to press later this week. Mr. Donnelly said that he has two areas that need be revised – park use and camps. They don't need to be done together. Camp fees are the most important ones at this moment, as they are happening sooner than the parks. There was a discussion about camps and the way the fourth of July holiday falls and whether or not they will offer five full weeks.

Ms. Morrill asked if there was a difference of where the camps are going to be. There was a discussion about bus trips, as they were cut. Mr. Donnelly said that this was cut and saved that the Town lots of money, but still offers quality programming. Ms. Morrill asked if they wanted to bring the field trips back, can they cost more but still offer it. Mr. Donnelly expressed the importance of having an affordability aspect. Mr. Donnelly said that they will take a look at it. Mr. Donnelly invited the Commission to come in and assist their staff with the ideas. Mr. Ruggiero said that this will be put on the agenda in the future to discuss.

Mr. Donnelly said that the Council wants to instead of doing a piecemeal approach, to do a master fee list that covers everything at once. Mr. Donnelly said that they have an opportunity to pause on that and include it in a town wide. Mr. Ruggiero said one of the questions was what town center park does for fees. Mr. Donnelly said that there was no fee, unless the field is left in poor commission. Mr. Donnelly said that there was a discussion about this with the Town Center Park commission, and that the Town Center Park would be included in this fee establishment. Mr. Mann said that they have to meet with them to discuss this.

Mr. Ruggiero asked about the current fees. Mr. Donnelly confirmed that the only park in the town that has a fee is Brooksvale Park. Ms. Morrill said that's the only commission that allows food. Pd said a large portion of this basically entails having grills, as Brooksvale Park is the only one that allows food. Mr. Donnelly said that he will have a conversation with Mr. Cesare. Ms. Morrill said that there was something that tells you what you can or cannot do in each Commission. Mr. Donnelly said that they have it, but it has not updated yet. Mr. Ruggiero also asked that he wanted to know what the process is with the permits, and who would it go to, and would it go on the website. Mr. Donnelly said that in terms of permits, it will be moving forward to getting it online, and is expected to be live before 2021. The permit process is exclusively paper for this year, until 2021. There was a discussion about policing.

There was a brief discussion to reschedule that meeting to Wednesday, February 19th, 2020 as it will be a regular meeting. The next meeting was moved until then.

7. Adjournment:

SM made a motion to adjourn, CH seconded, and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.