

TOWN OF HAMDEN

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

NOVEMBER 12, 2013

5:30 PM

PARKS & RECREATION CONFERENCE ROOM

HAMDEN GOVERNMENT CENTER

2750 DIXWELL AVENUE

HAMDEN

Commissioners in Attendance: Tad Watson, Chairman
Rich Leonardo, Vice Chairman
Michael McGarry

Others in Attendance: Mimsie Coleman, Director of Arts, Recreation and Culture
Peggy Craft, Commission Clerk
Judy Oppenheim, Guest Speaker
Aisha Sharp, SCSU Student
Moni Smith-Ocran, SCSU Student
Christopher Emerling, SCSU Student
KelliAnn Coffey, SCSU Student
Rashaad Slowley, SCSU Student
Allie Vilardi, SCSU Student

Ms. Coleman invited all present to introduce themselves and explain their interest in Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Coleman explained the merging of the Arts Department and the Parks & Recreation Department.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Watson called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM.

MINUTES

Commissioner Leonardo motioned to accept the Minutes of the August Meeting as presented. Commissioner McGarry seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Chairman Watson invited Ms. Oppenheim to address the Commission. Ms. Oppenheim explained that she was at this meeting at the invitation of the Chairman. She said she met Mr. Watson while waiting to get a shingles shot. Mr. Watson said he was interested in setting up programs for seniors and asked for her input and suggestions regarding these activities. She said her interest was in badminton and she would be interested in setting up games for seniors between the group she plays with in Orange and a group from Hamden. She said her group meets three days a week at the Mary L. Tracy School in Orange. There are approximately 60 members of her club – the Badminton Club of New Haven.

Mr. Watson suggested having Recreation Supervisor Dave DeMartino attend a meeting in regard to setting up a league for badminton and possibly ping-pong. Mr. Watson also suggested putting ads in the local newspapers to see if there is an interest in this activity. Ms. Coleman will follow-up on this.

Mr. Leonardo discussed activities that are available and programs that are offered at the Hamden Senior Center.

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S REPORT

Ms. Coleman distributed the monthly report regarding the activities of the Parks Maintenance Division. She described in detail the work that has been done by this division. She also discussed the activities that take place at Town Center Park.

There was a discussion regarding the Rectory Barn and the plans to have this made into a Children's Museum by P.L.A.C.E.

There was a discussion regarding the old tennis court at Frank Cesare Field. There was also a discussion regarding the need for repairs at the tennis courts at the Ice Rink.

Ms. Coleman reported that the fence has been put up at Morretti Field. A new entrance has been created, and the gate has also been installed. Brush has been removed and a stump has also been removed. The field has also been over-seeded and fertilized.

Mr. Coleman described Brooksvale Park and the activities that take place there, and encouraged the students in attendance to visit the park. She said they would especially enjoy attending the Fall Festival.

Ms. Coleman also discussed the pool at the High School.

Ms. Coleman distributed an e-mail regarding the Dog Park on Waite Street. She explained how the Dog Park was created by RDOG (Responsible Dog Owners Group). This group has requested lighting at the park so that dog owners would be able to walk/exercise their dogs in the late afternoon during the winter months.

Hamden Police Chief Thomas Wydra was invited to discuss this topic.

Chief Wydra pointed out that darkness provides cover for bad behavior, but this is not limited to violent behavior, it also provides cover for mischievous behavior. He said the Police Department's primary concern is public safety but damage is also a concern. He discussed the Farmington Canal Line Trail and requests he has received asking that the Trail to be open longer. He explained why he is opposed to this request and the difference between the Trail and the Dog Park.

Chief Wydra said he feels the request for lighting at the Dog Park makes sense, and he would not be opposed to a limited modification to the ordinance allowing only the Dog Park to remain open pass sunset. He would be willing to recommend this request providing the park be closed at 7:00 PM. Mr. McGarry asked how the lighting would be paid for. The RDOG group would provide the funding for this lighting. Mr. Watson suggested having this request reviewed by the Town Attorney. Ms. Coleman explained that the Town Attorney would write the resolution to be presented to the Legislative Council. Mr. Leonardo said RDOG has done an outstanding job in maintaining the park, and as a dog owner he would support this request.

The Chief pointed out that the park's proximity to the road would provide an added element of safety.

Mr. McGarry asked how long this organization has been in existence. Mr. Watson said at least ten years.

The Commissioners are favorably inclined to recommend this request to the Legislative Council pending the receipt of a formal proposal and plan from RDOG including startup and continuing costs.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business to come before the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. McGarry said the Soccer Association would stop paying Aqua Turf for the maintenance of the soccer field behind the Middle School in a few months. He said it would be necessary for funding to be established to continue to maintain the field. A representative of the Soccer Association will meet with the Board of Education regarding this topic.

Mr. McGarry mentioned that Carusone Field was soaked on Sunday. He will bring this to the attention of the Public Works Director Craig Cesare.

The Commission members congratulated Commissioner McGarry on his election to Legislative Council as the representative from the First District and wished him well. All agreed he would be missed by this Commission.

ADJOURMENT

There was no further business to come before the Commission, and Chairman Watson called for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner McGarry motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo and passed unanimously.** Chairman Watson adjourned the meeting at 6:29 PM.

Submitted by _____
Peggy Craft, Commission Clerk