

**TOWN OF HAMDEN
TOWN CENTER PARK COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 21, 2012
1:00 PM
MAIN FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
HAMDEN GOVERNMENT CENTER
2750 DIXWELL AVENUE
HAMDEN**

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE: Matt Fitch, Chairman
Jay Matthews, Vice Chair
Ann Bell
Ed Grant
Ernie Reed

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Julie Smith, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Peggy Craft, Commission Clerk
Rick Gentile, Recreation Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fitch called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

ATTENDANCE

The Clerk called the roll and a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 9, 2012 MINUTES

Mr. Fitch motioned to approve the Minutes of the April 9, 2012 Meeting as presented. Ms. Bell seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

BRIDGE BEHIND THE HAMDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. Fitch asked Ms. Smith if she had any information regarding the bridge behind the Hamden Middle School.

Ms. Smith said due to financial reasons the project to connect the Farmington Canal Trail to Town Center Park will not be done. Mr. Fitch noted that this would require an additional grant. Ms. Smith will look into this.

2012 FARMERS MARKET

Mr. Gentile said the Farmers Market would start on June 22nd. It will be open every Friday from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM through October 5th. He said they are still seeking vendors. There is one vendor, Lovely Lathers, that will not be coming back, and one new vendor. The new vendor will be selling Greek pastries. Mr. Fitch noted that they are holding steady. He added that if anyone has any ideas regarding vendors or any improvements to the Farmers Market to let Mr. Gentile know.

Mr. Grant asked why the hours are 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Ms. Smith said that the original hours of the Market were 12:00 PM to 5:30 PM. Several complaints were received from the vendors; they said after 3:00 PM attendance fell off. Mr. Fitch said when the hours were 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM, people were there by 11:00 AM to catch the vendors while they were setting up. He added that the start time was changed to 11:00 AM, and the vendors were usually sold out by 3:00 PM.

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Mr. Reed asked if there was a list of vendors to share. Mr. Gentile said there was. Mr. Reed also asked what the attendance was each week. It was estimated to be between 300 and 600, depending on the weather and the week. Ms. Smith pointed out that attendance usually falls off when school starts. It was noted that attendance is difficult to track.

Next, Mr. Fitch discussed the WIC (Woman, Infants and Children) coupon program. Ms. Smith explained how the WIC program works. These coupons can be used for produce, milk, cheese and cereal. Mr. Fitch said marketing should be done toward people who are likely to have these coupons.

Mr. Gentile discussed seniors applying for assistance. He said it is difficult for seniors to do paperwork and qualify for assistance. He added that the assistance that is received is less than in the past. Mr. Fitch said there are many seniors who attend the Farmers Market. He said it would be good to be able to speak with the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD), senior organizations and residences to assist elderly citizens to visit the market. Ms. Smith discussed a bus run by the GNHTD that makes a loop on Whitney and Dixwell Avenues with stops along the way, including the elderly housing facilities and the library.

Mr. Gentile said he has contacted Gil Simmons of News Channel 8. Mr. Simmons will do a spot in Hamden to be shown on the morning show.

Mr. Reed asked what marketing is planned for the Farmers Market.. He said his expertise is in marketing and advertising. He added that he would be happy to help with this aspect. He said the quicker the message gets out the more people will know and attend.

Mr. Fitch said the Market should be advertised through the schools and the Town website. Mr. Reed asked if we are involved with the PTAs and PTOs in Town.

Mr. Matthews discussed events that could be held at the Farmers Market that could draw people. Ms. Smith said they have tried to limit this in the past because it opens the door to a floodgate of requests. It was noted that there is also advertising on facebook. Mr. Reed asked if the Farmers Market is on Twitter. It is not. There was further discussion regarding the website and facebook, etc.

Mr. Fitch asked Mr. Reed if he would be interested in working with Ms. Smith regarding advertising and marketing for the Farmers Market. Mr. Reed said he would. He will contact Ms. Smith regarding this. Mr. Reed discussed the possibility of WQUN doing Public Service Agency spots on the radio. He also discussed the possibility of WQUN doing a remote at the Farmers Market. Mr. Fitch suggested that Franz Douskey handle the microphone at the proposed remote. Mr. Gentile discussed the problem of trying to associate our vendors with the participants. He said the question is whether there should be more farmers or should we expand the realm of offerings. It was noted that during the hours of 1100 AM to 3:00 PM there are more seniors participants. Mr. Grant said it could be a matter of "out of site - out of mind". He added that we should find a way to encourage children to attend.

Mr. Gentile suggested using the grill that the Town owns to cook hot dogs at the Farmer Market. This was discussed at length. All felt it would be a good idea. Mr. Grant will speak with businesses in town regarding donations/purchase of food.

Ms. Smith asked if anyone had noticed the Clock Tower. The area has been cleaned and the clock is working. Ms. Smith talked to Public Works Director Craig Cesare to discuss a sign being put there with a light to advertise various events in Town.

UPDATE ON TOWN CENTER PARK SUMMER EVENTS

Mr. Fitch said the Fourth of July Fireworks display would be held on June 29th. The Friday night concerts during the month of July will feature NRBQ, a Doo Wop Show, Three Dog Night, and South Side Johnny and the Asbury Dukes. Mr. Fitch noted that at previous concerts featuring South Side Johnny, Bruce Springsteen has been known on occasion, to jump up on the stage with them.

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Next, Mr. Fitch discussed the five Fridays in August and what is being planned for those evenings. He said that last year the Commission sponsored a Movie Night in the park for the first time. Mr. Fitch gave a brief summary of last year's event, and explained the voting procedure for the public to choose what movie would be shown. He said the Movie Night was very successful. He added that the vendors did a great, and would like to do it again this year. This year there is a budget allocation of \$5,000 for this event. He said with this amount, we could afford to do four Friday Night Movies. These will be held on the first, second, fourth and fifth Fridays of the month of August. This will cost \$3,600.

Mr. Fitch had asked for Commission members to submit names of movies they would like to nominate to be shown on the four nights, under the themes of Musicals, Eighties Movies, Family Movies and Academy Award Winning Movies. The movies nominated will be listed on a website for the public to vote on. The movies chosen are as follow:

Musicals

Wizard of Oz

Chicago

Grease

Moulin Rouge

The Producers

Academy Awards Movies

Casablanca

Forest Gump

King's Speak

Rocky

Around the World in Eighty Days

Eighties Movies

Back to the Future

Ghostbusters

Breakfast Club

Raiders of the Lost Ark

The Big Chill

Family Movies

Lion King

Ratatouie

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Mary Poppins

Princess Bride

Next, Mr. Fitch explained what is tentatively planned for the middle weekend of the month. He said they don't have the official letter yet, but have received permission from Major League Baseball to simulcast a New York Yankee vs. the Boston Red Sox game on Sunday, August 19th. It was felt that Sunday would be a better choice than Friday, since the game will be broadcast on ESPN, which will be a neutral channel, as opposed to the YES Network (Yankees) or NESN (Red Sox) and will have an 8:00 PM start when it is darker. Mr. Fitch said ESPN had not actually decided what game would be broadcast that evening, but he added it would be very surprising if they didn't broadcast the Yankees vs. the Red Sox, given the popularity of both teams, and the rivalry between them.

Mr. Fitch said the he and ARC Director Ms. Coleman had a conference call with the parties involved last week. There is a new Disney channel that could be promoted during the broadcast, possibly with giveaways. It is also possible that ESPN could do a cut-away to Town Center Park during the game. A program called Baseball Tonight is on just prior to the game and they might also do a segment on the event. There was a discussion regarding what would be done if it turned out not to be a Yankee-Red Sox game, or if it rained.

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Next, Mr. Fitch read an e-mail from ESPN Vice President Steven Wexler.

There was a discussion regarding George Grande, former Yankee Announcer, and Joe Castiglione current Red Sox Announcer appearing at the event. It was suggested that Mr. Grande be asked to act as Master of Ceremonies at the game. Ms. Smith suggested that Chief Administrative Officer Curt Leng could MC the event. Chairman Fitch stated (emphatically) that this would **never** happen.

A press release will be done next week regarding the Movie Nights and the voting for movie selection. The Baseball Game date will be listed as "To Be Announced". It was noted that if ESPN and Comcast sponsor this event it would probably draw more than 1,000 people. It was felt that if this occurs it would be necessary to get a bigger screen.

Mr. Reed asked what the capacity of the park is. Mr. Fitch said there was an estimated attendance of approximately 20,000 for the Fireworks. Ms. Smith said the attendance at the Tower of Power Concert was estimated at 25,000 to 30,000.

Mr. Gentile discussed an event with Greater Hamden Baseball on the night of the Game. Ms. Coleman will have more information regarding this.

NEW BUSINESS

There was a discussion regarding Johnny Quick, Goal Tender for the Los Angeles Kings, former NBA Star Scott Burrell and former NFL Star Rich Diana who grew up in Hamden. It was thought that they might make an appearance at the Game Night Event.

Mr. Fitch said the Commissioners could continue the discussion regarding the planned events in June. He will put together the press release with the choices for the Movie nights. Voting will start by next week and end at 11:59 PM on June 8th. Flyers detailing the Movie Nights will go home with students in the Elementary Schools on June 15th. The website address for voting will be linked to the Town website and Hamden Patch. It will also appear in the Register and the Chronicle.

Ms. Coleman will present a request for vendor fees at the June meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the Commission, and Mr. Fitch called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Mr. Matthews motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bell seconded the motion that passed unanimously.** Chairman Fitch adjourned the meeting at 2:10 PM.

Submitted by _____
Peggy Craft Commission Clerk