

TOWN OF HAMDEN
TOWN CENTER PARK COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 2013
10:00 AM
MAIN FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
HAMDEN GOVERNMENT CENTER
2750 DIXWELL AVENUE
HAMDEN

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE: Matt Fitch, Chairman
Matt Corcoran
Meg Nowacki
Gerry Tobin

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Julie Smith, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Mimsi Coleman, Director of Arts, Recreation and Culture
Liz Frias, Parks Special Events Coordinator
Peggy Craft, Commissioner Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fitch called the meeting to order at 10:00 PM.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance was taken as noted above.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2013 MINUTES

Approval of the September 16, 2013 Minutes was tabled to the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Regarding the Truck Festival Mr. Fitch said his previous calculation estimating that 7,000 to 8,000 people would attend this event proved to be true. There was a lengthy discussion regarding this event. Mr. Fitch said the DJ was fantastic. He added that feedback has been great. He discussed the vendors that canceled and said he feels they should not be invited back. There was a discussion regarding The Soup Girl – she has told Ms. Smith that she was very sorry that she had canceled. There was a discussion regarding Lobster Craft and the fact that they were not allowed to enter the event because they had not been fingerprinted. Mr. Fitch and those present discussed this problem further.

Mr. Fitch discussed the amount of money each vendor made. Mr. Fitch said it is necessary to stress to future vendors that this is a huge event. He added that the bottom line is that we need to do this event twice, perhaps June and October, and we need a lot more vendors. Mr. Fitch said these two events could fund our events for the whole year, if this was done on a percentage basis. He estimated that, totally, the vendors made approximately \$65,000. He feels this idea needs to be explored. He also said if the next Food Truck Festival is held on June 20th a deadline of June 1st must be set for all paperwork. He discussed how this could be accomplished.

Ms. Fraiss said fingerprinting for the vendors is good for a year. The QVHD permit is good for a year also.

Mr. Fitch extended a special thank you to Commissioner Nowacki for standing in line to get food for him and Ms. Smith.

Next year on the third Friday of the month the Farmers Market hours will be expanded to 7:00 pm. Ms. Smith suggested this begin in August so as not to interfere with the Summer Concerts.

Ms. Coleman has received requests for use of the Town Center Park for next June. Two of these requests are for June 14th. There are two wedding requests and one graduation party request.

Ms. Smith said the Road Race would be held on June 7th (the first Saturday of June). The first Food Truck Festival will be June 20th, the opening day of the Farmers Market.

The Fourth of July Fireworks Celebration will be held on the June 27th.

There will be no events held on July 4th.

There was a discussion regarding the facebook page for Town Center Park. It was noted that this is a very successful tool for reaching people. Mr. Fitch provided the analytics regarding the facebook page.

There was a discussion regarding the comments that were received regarding this event.

Ms. Coleman said that the vendor from Sugar suggested that he be part of the planning strategy. There was a discussion regarding this suggestion. There was also a discussion regarding not having an exclusive on any one item. It was suggested that Spuds and Sugar be included in the planning. Ms. Smith suggested that a sub-committee be formed to handle this event. Mr. Fitch said he feels that we have the marketing "down pat". It was noted again how well the DJ interacted with the crowd especially with kids.

It was suggested that a meeting be set up to "debrief" the vendors. It was also noted that CERT and the Parks & Recreation staff were excellent.

There was seating for 270. Every table from Miller Memorial Library and Hamden Middle School was used.

There was a discussion regarding activities for kids. Frisbees, beach balls, etc. were suggested. Mr. Fitch also suggested a "Kids Zone". Ms. Smith suggested Youth Services handle this.

There was a discussion regarding the fee schedule for events on Town Center Park.

Mr. Fitch said regarding the Truck Festival we not only need to encourage food trucks, but also Hamden restaurants. .

Ms. Smith discussed finding a vendor to provide iced coffee, tea, and lemonade.

FARMERS MARKET

A debriefing will be set up with the Farmers Market vendors on November 7th. It was noted that the vendors meeting prior to the start of the Farmers Market this year was very beneficial.

There will be another market in southern Hamden in the Highwood Square Parking lot. This will be held on Mondays. This will not be a Town Center Park Commission function, but this Commission will assist them in getting started. This market will be held from June 23rd thru October 6th. The hours will be 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Mr. Fitch suggested that this market be called Highwood Square Farmers Market.

Ms. Smith said regarding next year's market we should look into expanding with food demonstrations, nutritious eating, etc.

TOWN CENTER PARK EVENTS

On October 27th the Halloween Pet Costume Parade will take place in Town Center Park. There will be vendors present. This event starts at 9:30 AM.

The Silverbells Festival will be held on December 7th.

Next there was a discussion regarding how many port-o-lets should remain in the Farmers Market for Josh's Jungle. It was decided that one wheel chair accessible port-o-let would remain.

Mr. Fitch told Ms. Coleman to let the Commissioners know what they could do to help with the Silverbells event. Ms. Fraiss will also assist Ms. Coleman with this event.

Ms. Smith discussed setting up a skating area in the park. There was also a discussion regarding a sledding hill and planning an event for these two activities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

There was a discussion regarding having a bike rack installed to service both the playground and the park.

There was a discussion regarding adding a fountain, a splash pad, the spur trail, and the need for permanent bathrooms.

There was also a discussion regarding P.L.A.C.E. creating a Children's Museum in the barn. It was noted that the Town needs to rehabilitate the building.

Ms. Coleman discussed the possibility of charging for the use of Town Center Park, specifically using the pavilion and the area around the pavilion. The Commissioners discussed this topic. It was noted that there would only be a charge for organizations using the facility.

Next, there was a discussion regarding a Commission Gift Fund. It was decided that this would be discussed with Town Attorney Sue Gruen.

There was a discussion regarding the placement of the trucks. It was noted that the spots for the trucks were planned, but they were located in order of arrival. Ms. Smith suggested that the vendors submit a picture of their trucks and equipment so spacing can be better planned.

Mr. Fitch said it is necessary to insure a way that the volunteers such as CERT, Parks Personnel and Police are fed. There was a discussion regarding how this could be done.

ADJOURNMENT

There was not further business to come before the Commission and Chairman Fitch called for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Tobin motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Nowacki seconded the motion that passed unanimously.** Chairman Fitch adjourned the meeting at 11:36 AM.

Submitted by: _____
Peggy Craft, Commission Clerk