



TOWN OF HAMDEN

Town Center Park Commission

Hamden Government Center
2750 Dixwell Avenue
Hamden, CT 06518
203-287-7100
203-287-7101 (fax)

MEETING MINUTES

The Town Center Park Commission held a meeting on Wednesday July 21, 2010 in the Mayor's Conference Room in Hamden Government Center at 7:00 p.m. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mat Fitch, Ann Bell, Berita Rowe, Jaime Allesandrino.

Others in Attendance: Liaison to the Mayor's Office Julie Smith, Commission Clerk Rose Lion

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Berita Rowe called the meeting to order at 7:15.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes from the TCPC meeting of June 16, 2010 were reviewed and approved. There was a discussion to clarify the topic of the Stump Dump area usage which was mentioned in the minutes. Chairman Fitch explained that there is a remaining condition with the sub-soil where the Stump Dump once was. An inch of appropriate soil will need to be placed there to prepare the area for any type of future use. Julie Smith informed TCPC that she is aware that the Hamden Soccer Leagues are planning to utilize TCP for games. She explained that a need exists for athletic fields due to the current high usage of all of our existing fields. The Commissioners present expressed concern that TCP remain available for development and that it not become a permanent athletic field.

GENERAL DISCUSSION: Funds and Permitting

Next there was a discussion of possible funds available for use in TCP. "LoCip" funds were briefly defined and Mr. Fitch explained that these funds can only be used for specific purposes such as improvements like infrastructure upgrades. Julie Smith indicated that there are other monies (not "LoCip"), available which can be appropriated for use/upgrades in TCP.

Mr. Fitch initiated a discussion of "permitting" for TCP use, and strongly suggested that the TCPC move quickly to establish a current application process for TCP usage. Guidelines with built in timelines are important so that park users know there is a time limit on permits. Mr. Fitch emphasized the need to streamline the application process and modify the existing procedures.

PROGRAMMING

Julie Smith began by reporting on the upcoming "Restaurant Week" which is a joint event run by the Town and the Chamber of Commerce, to be held from September 20 through the 26. Ms. Smith indicated that the plans are going well and that it should be a very nice event/week. The TCP Commissioners all agreed that they still like the idea of "A Taste of Hamden" which was previously discussed for programming in TCP. Ms. Smith strongly emphasized the need to start planning now, for next year, especially for a large undertaking such "A Taste of Hamden". Ms.

Smith also offered the idea of connecting the afternoon Farmer's Market to the evening concert in one of the summer concerts next year, and coined the phrase "Come for the food, stay for the music". Mr. Fitch asked that we place programming for 2011 on next month's agenda. Next, Ms. Smith explained how water is provided to the Farmer's Market to compare with what might be required for future events. There is water near the commercial gardens, there is a hand washing station, and the vendors actually bring their own water. QVHD requires water, portolets, and hand washing stations. Mr. Fitch suggested that TCPC pitch in and help Ms. Smith with the current Farmer's Market and all agreed to do so. Mr. Fitch expressed an interest in expanding the Market and making it more eclectic. It was suggested that the TCPC seek out good vendors and recruit them for this year or next year. This can be done by visiting other area markets. Ms. Smith explained that the Market needs pastry/baked goods vendors, and cheese or meat and dairy vendors. Other ideas were offered as potential Market features including, coffee stands, chair massage, maple syrup and honey vendors, and specialty food carts/trucks. Some local businesses were mentioned for possible involvement, such as Whitney Donut, Legal Grounds, #1 Fish, Starbucks. Ms. Rowe mentioned the "Cupcake Truck" as an option and also an Asian Food Market which is currently being held in Hamden in The Hamden Industrial Park that might have interested vendors. Ms. Lion suggested holding the next TCPC meeting on location in an establishment which the commission is interested in recruiting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Submitted by Commission Clerk, Rose Lion
Next Meeting: August 18, 2010

The idea of planting a tree in Town Center Park in honor of Captain Sklaver has been delayed.
The Sklaver family is not ready to proceed.

PROGRAMMING

The central focus of this commission meeting was to explore programming for Town Center Park. Mr. Fitch stressed that increased usage of the Park is desirable. Many suggestions and ideas were entertained. Practicality and feasibility of ideas, as well as their appeal were key considerations. It was suggested that public activities be done in conjunction with already scheduled events. Ms. Lion suggested tacking live music and a little dance party onto the end of a Farmer's Market. It is noted that any performers will have to volunteer, since financial resources are limited. Outdoor movies were also suggested and requirements for such were discussed, such as, time of year, (it has to be dark outside), and style of projection, (inflatable screens etc.) and cost factors. Line dancing with a DJ, based on the style of the West Haven Board Walk's successful program was explored. Ms. Bell noted safety and liability issues such as surface for safe dancing, and also the cost of a DJ was noted. Other proposals were, outdoor yoga, birdwalks, a concert series with local bands, ethnic festivals, "Pic-nic in the Park", and food festivals. Ms. Smith recommended that the commission focus on one or two ideas. The favorite and seemingly most feasible idea was "A Taste of Hamden" which Commissioner Matthews proposed. The group agreed that this has proven public appeal and also can pay for itself if managed correctly. Chairman Fitch has experience in this type of event. An ethnic theme can be incorporated into this concept as well, for example an Irish or Italian Festival. Late June or early July were both proposed for this type of event. Mr. Fitch noted that these programs should take place during the times when the port-a-potties and pails are already out in the park. "A Taste of Hamden" would fit in well in July during the Summer Concert Series season. July 6th may be a possibility. Mr. Fitch also pointed out that this event can pay for itself and that we don't need to make money, but to, at least, "break even". The commissioners present and Julie Smith all agreed that between now and the next Town Center Park Commission meeting, they would investigate vendor costs, permit requirements and police and clean – up needs. The group agreed that a realistic goal is to focus on producing one (maybe two) events this summer. Other suggestions were, promote new events by making announcements during summer concerts, check New Haven's Irish and Italian Festival days to avoid schedule conflict, and to schedule a consulting meeting with Tom Conway and Mimsi Coleman.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09.

The next Town Center Park Commission meeting is Wednesday May 19, 2010, in the Mayor's Conference Room in Hamden Government Center.

Submitted by Commission Clerk, Rose Lion