

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes - Thursday, July 23, 2009

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board held their annual park tour beginning at 5:45 p.m. The tour started at the Community Center and board members visited Cove Park, Broad Street Green, and Mill Woods Park. Members present for the tour were Chairperson Tom Ragonese, Kevin Rogers, Dan Silbo, Charlie Wood, Richard Lepore and new board member Tom Pentalow. Also present were Kathy Bagley, Parks and Recreation Director, and Marty Sitler, Recreation Supervisor.

Chairperson Ragonese welcomed Mr. Pentalow to the Parks and Recreation Board and thanked him for his interest in serving on the Board. Mr. Pentalow commented that he is looking forward to working with members on the Parks and Recreation Board.

Ms. Bagley pointed out the damage to the parks from the tornado in June. She explained that town staff are still picking up storm debris from residents throughout the town and have been gradually working on cleaning up the parks. She reported that damage to Cove Park and the Broad Street Green was the result of many trees falling down during the storm. Damage in Mill Woods Park included falling trees which landed on different park facilities. These facilities included the playscape, pool fencing and park fencing. Electricity was lost in the park for seven days after the storm. She explained that the playscape needs to be replaced, because parts are no longer available for this unit. The insurance company will determine whether or not the fencing can be repaired or will have to be replaced. The town will be spending many hours cleaning up all the fallen trees in Mill Woods Park. One piece of good luck was that many of the trees that fell in the park around the new Little League field all fell away from the field and did not do any damage to the new field. Board members were appreciative of this piece of good luck and recognized that the damage could have been worse. They commented on how well town staff was working to pick up the storm debris and hoped the parks would get back to normal shortly. Ms. Bagley explained that the Mill Woods Beach area did not open until July 13 because the town staff needed to start over to get the water clean for the summer season. The pool had opened Wednesday, June 24 but was closed when the tornado hit town June 26. The tour ended back at the Community Center at 6:45 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Tom Ragonese. The meeting was held at the 9/11 Memorial Sports Center at the Pitkin Community Center. Members present were Tom Ragonese, Rich Lepore, Kevin Rogers, Dan Silbo, Charlie Wood and new board member Tom Pentalow. Also present was Kathleen Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation.

A. Public Comments.

No comments.

B. Minutes – June 25, 2009.

Richard Lepore moved to approve the minutes of June 25, 2009. The motion was seconded by Dan Silbo and voted unanimously.

C. Monthly Report – June 2009.

Chairperson Ragonese asked board members if they have any comments about the monthly report. Board members reviewed the monthly report.

D. Letters and Announcements.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the Teen Theater will hold their summer show "Thoroughly Modern Millie" July 23, 24 and 25 at Wethersfield High School. The show actually opens this evening. Ms. Bagley reported that this production has approximately 40 actors and actresses, a 15 member orchestra and stage and tech crew of another 15 students. These students are ages 11 to 21, mostly teenagers, and it is a very successful program. It is successful because the high school students run their own production. Ms. Bagley will be attending the production after the Park Board meeting this evening.

Chairperson Ragonese noted that the Dance and Drama shows will be held at the Wethersfield High School next week on July 28 and 30. These shows spotlight the younger children in town, who put on a dance recital on one evening and a drama show the other night. Approximately 80 children are registered for this program.

E. Old Business.

1. Cove Park Docks.

Ms. Bagley provided an overview of the status of the plans for this project. The plans were reviewed by the Town Planning and Zoning Commission on July 7, 2009. They will be sending a positive recommendation back to the Town Council of their review. The next step is to have the plans reviewed by the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Historic District Commission. A final review will be done by the Town Planning and Zoning Commission and then the plans will be forwarded to the Department of Environmental Protection for their review and approval. Once approved and the plans are in place, the town can apply for grant funds for the installation of the new docks and boat launch ramp.

2. New Little League Field.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that he had a meeting with Roberto Giansiracusa, President of Little League, Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager and Kathy Bagley to discuss the status of the new Little League field. He reported that Little League has some issues with the new field. Some of the grass has worn out, there are weeds on the warning track, and the pitchers warm up area and the backstop fence needs to be higher. The meeting with the town manager was to discuss the maintenance of this field and how to accomplish some of these projects. The town manager will be looking into these improvements and will get back to him and Roberto Giansiracusa. Another priority of Little League is to have Greenfield Softball Field skinned for the girls division. Little League will be working with the town to have this project completed in August.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley about the status of the bleachers for the new Little League field and the press box. Ms. Bagley reported that the bleachers have been delivered and will be installed at the new field as soon as time permits. The press box is on hold because the town mason is still working on storm damage, but it is anticipated that the mason will complete his work around August 1 and the volunteers will then be able to build the second story of the building.

Chairperson Ragonese will keep the Board updated on the field projects.

F. New Business.

1. Tornado Damage to Parks.

Board Members reviewed the damage to the parks during their tour. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to give Board Members an update at their next meeting on the damage repair. Board members suggested a replacement program for all the trees lost during the tornado. They suggested looking at a memorial program where people can purchase and plant new trees in the parks in memory of individuals. Ms. Bagley will work on this suggestion.

2. Cottone Football Field.

Chairperson Ragonese asked about the status of acquiring lights at the football field in town. Ms. Bagley reported that they are still short of funds to pay for the lights on the field.

3. Keane Carnival.

Board members discuss the Keane Carnival's campaign to get volunteers to help with this event. Tom Pentalow reported that he is working on the Oktoberfest part of the Carnival and will be looking for volunteers to help him with this operation. Board members were interested in helping out and will talk with Tom Pentalow.

4. August Meeting.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Board Members if they would like to have their August meeting. Board members decided to hold their August meeting. This meeting will be held August 27 at the Town Hall.

5. Broad Street Green.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Economic Development Commission in town suggested a plan be considered for the Broad Street Green to include sidewalks because people walk around the Green on the street. With the loss of trees from the tornado, some new sidewalks could be installed. Board members discussed this suggestion and noted that sidewalks were originally on the Green and were removed because people did not use them. At this time the board is not interested in adding sidewalks back to the Green.

6. 375th Anniversary Celebration.

Ms. Bagley reported that a flyer has been printed to identify all the events of this celebration. She will mail this flyer to all Board Members. The fireworks will be held on August 22, 2009.

G. Motion to Adjourn.

A motion was made by Charlie Wood and seconded by Richard Lepore to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks & Recreation Department