

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes - Thursday, August 27, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Tom Ragonese. The meeting was held at Town Hall. Members present were Tom Ragonese, Rich Lepore, Kevin Rogers, Dan Silbo, Charlie Wood and Peter Kalousdian. Also present were Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, Kathleen Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation and Town Council Liaison, Jeff Kotkin.

A. Public Comments.

No comments.

B. Minutes – July 23, 2009.

Charlie Wood moved to approve the minutes of July 23, 2009. The motion was seconded by Richard Lepore and voted unanimously.

C. Monthly Report – July 2009.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley about the Teen Theater's summer musical production of Thoroughly Modern Millie. She reported that the shows were very successful and the teenagers had a great time with this production. He also inquired about the status of the pool passes and verifying residency for all users. Ms. Bagley reported that some people were upset about showing identification for all members of the household. Once staff explained the policy to these individuals, for the most part they understood why the Parks and Recreation Department was confirming residency. She did report that some people thought it was not appropriate to check identification for all individuals. Board members commented that they felt it was appropriate to verify residency for people purchasing pool passes. Ms. Bagley informed the Board that many families took advantage of placing their caregiver on the family pool pass and appreciated this policy.

D. Letters and Announcements.

Ms. Bagley distributed the department's fall brochure to Board Members. She reported that the brochure was just completed today and would be going online on Monday for residents. This brochure will be distributed to households through the Rare Reminder Newspaper on September 10. This distribution will reach approximately 11,000 households in Wethersfield. Board members reviewed the fall brochure. Charlie Wood suggested adding Cove Park and the Broad Street Green under facilities on page 4. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, asked if the classes listed in the brochure were all held. Ms. Bagley explained that the majority of these classes were held. There might be a few classes canceled for lack of enrollment, but almost all the classes advertised in the brochure are conducted.

E. Old Business.

1. New Little League Field.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that he had a meeting with Roberto Giansiracusa, President of Little League, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, and Marty Sitler, Recreation Supervisor, to discuss the maintenance of the new Little League Field and some small projects for this field. These projects include extending the warning track, installing first and third base coach's boxes and raising the backstop fence. Chairperson Ragonese explained that a meeting will be scheduled with town staff, Little League representatives and Dr. Dest to discuss the maintenance of the new field. Chairperson Ragonese will also be present at this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to identify all maintenance procedures for the new field so that everyone understands what can and cannot be done with the new field.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, commented on what an asset the new field was to the Town of Wethersfield. He looks forward to his son playing on this field in the future. Ms. Bagley reported that she is working with the Little League volunteers to begin their construction of the press box. The elevator lift for the press box has been delivered and board member, Peter Kalousdian, was instrumental in helping with the ordering and delivery of this item for the press box. Ms. Bagley thanked him for all his help in unpacking the lift and getting it into the press box. The town mason has completed the first floor concrete block work for the press box and now it is up to the volunteers to build the second floor and finish building the press box. Ms. Bagley also reported that she is working with a boy scout on his Eagle project. His Eagle project will be constructing a storage shed for the new Little League Field. This shed is anticipated to be built later this month.

Chairperson Ragonese reported to board members that he is scheduling a Mill Woods Building Committee meeting for next month to go over these projects for the field and give the committee an update on the status of the field. They will review the budget for the field and determine priorities for spending the remainder of the funds. Currently the fund balance is being used to purchase materials for the press box, and if there are funds left over, the Building Committee will determine priorities for the remaining projects.

2. Keane Carnival.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the Keane Carnival is moving along with their plans. They are currently soliciting volunteers to help cover the days of the event which are October 16-18. Any board members interested in volunteering can contact their website.

3. Cottone Field.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Town Council has approved the bid for the construction company to install the bases for the light poles at Cottone Field. A gap still exists in funding for this project of approximately \$100,000, and individuals are looking at ways to fund the remaining dollars. The Town Manager, Jeff Bridges is having a meeting on fund raising efforts for lights on this field.

F. New Business.

1. Dog Park Drainage.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Dog Park Volunteer Committee has raised funds to install drainage in the park. The Dog Park needs this drainage because with the rain in the past summer the park has been very wet. Work on this project will be undertaken in September.

2. 375th Anniversary Parade.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to give an update on plans for the parade. She reported that the parade will be held September 27 with kick off at 1 p.m. from the Motor Vehicle Department parking lot. The committee is looking for volunteers to help with the parade that day. Chairperson Ragonese and Board Members will get the word out for volunteers.

Chairperson Ragonese commented on the Fireworks Display held in Wethersfield on August 22 as part of the Town's celebration of their 375th Anniversary. He thought the Fireworks were great and other Board Members concurred with him. It was a great community event held at Cove Park. The Board is looking forward to the parade in September.

3. Dick Dobmeier Sign/Bench.

Chairperson Ragonese asked about the status of the memorial bench and street sign for past chairperson, Dick Dobmeier. Ms. Bagley reported that the street sign was installed in June and the bench was to follow the following week. However, the tornado hit the town and all projects were held up due to the storm cleanup. Ms. Bagley has heard from Dan Smith, who is spearheading this effort, and he mentioned that the location of the street sign should be closer to Prospect Street. Board Members concurred with this suggestion and asked Ms. Bagley to move this street sign closer to Prospect Street and find out when the bench and sign can be installed.

4. Greenfield Softball Field.

Ms. Bagley gave a report on the status of the renovation work at this field. He wants to make sure the field is renovated correctly the first time so we don't have to go back and fix it in the future. Ms. Bagley reported that the town staff are stripping the infield grass per the request of Little League to make a dirt infield. Little League has also asked that some of the grass be removed from the foul territory and the town has agreed to do this. Drainage will also be installed in front of the third-base dugout, because that area floods during wet times. This work is expected to be completed at the beginning of September. Ms. Bagley mentioned that board member, Peter Kalousdian, has offered to work with Winding Brook Turf Farm to get any sod needed to help with the field renovation. Ms. Bagley will be in touch with Peter as the project moves along.

Board member, Kevin Rogers, asked that thank you notes be sent to any business or individual(s) that helped the town with projects for these fields. Chairperson Ragonese concurred with him and asked that thank you notes be sent to individuals to let them know we appreciate all the help that they give to the town. Ms. Bagley reported that she will be working with Little League to design a plaque for the new field that will identify all the donors for this field. To date all donors have been thanked for their help to the town.

G. Board Member Comments.

1. Field Maintenance.

Chairperson Ragonese discussed field maintenance for the fall season with Board Members. He asked Ms. Bagley to provide the board with an update each month. Richard Lepore asked about the status of the Silas Deane Middle School Soccer Field at the lower level. He recognized that it is used throughout the fall season for soccer and the field does get a lot of wear and tear from all this use. Ms. Bagley explained that this field is identified in the capital improvement program for renovation at a later date. Dan Silbo asked about the status of the design for a new parking lot at Mill Woods Little League Field. Ms. Bagley reported that she will be asking the Town Engineer if this can be an in-house project for design and possible construction by town staff. Chairperson Ragonese reminded members that the architect for the Little League Field, Dick Webb, suggested squaring off the existing parking lot. A lot of parking spaces would be gained in this area. Ms. Bagley will bring that suggestion to the attention of the Town Engineer. Dan Silbo also mentioned that when he was out at the Cape, he noticed that the gravel parking lots used painted railroad ties to delineate parking spaces. The Cape can probably get away with that because they have less snow and ice, but it was an interesting idea for having parking lines in a gravel parking lot.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Mill Woods Playscape damaged during the tornado was submitted as a claim to the Town's insurance. The Highcrest Playscape is under construction and scheduled for completion before school starts in September.

H. Motion to Adjourn.

A motion was made by Kevin Rogers and seconded by Charlie Wood to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks & Recreation Department