

## **Minutes of the Joint Meeting between the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board and The Mill Woods Master Plan Sub-Committee Thursday, February 23, 2006**

The meeting was held at the Community Center at 7:00 p.m. Members present from the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board were Chairman Richard Dobmeier, Thomas Ragonese and Daniel Silbo. Members present from the Mill Woods Master Plan Sub-Committee were Bill Smyers, Joe Slepski, Thomas Ragonese, Martha Mayer, Wesley Sargent and Craig MacGovern. Invited guests present were Perry Cornwall, Don and Kathy Griswold and Rene Dansereau. Staff members present were Kathleen Bagley, Director, Parks and Recreation; Salvatore Cucia, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation and Marty Silter, Recreation Supervisor, Parks and Recreation.

Chairman Richard Dobmeier welcomed all members and guests to the meeting. He explained that the first order of business would be to approve the minutes of each group's meeting in January.

### 1. Minutes.

- a. Advisory Parks and Recreation Board - [Minutes - January 26, 2006](#). Thomas Ragonese moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Daniel Silbo and voted unanimously.
- b. Mill Woods Master Plan Sub-Committee - [Minutes - January 17, 2006](#). Motion made by Martha Mayer and seconded by Thomas Ragonese to approve the minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

### 2. Public Comments.

Chairman Dobmeier asked if anybody at this time had any comments before the meeting. No comments at this time. Chairman Dobmeier then went to the next Agenda item to discuss the status of the Mill Woods Master Plan. He explained that the purpose of this meeting was to bring together many of the groups that had already completed projects in Mill Woods Park or had ongoing or future projects in the park. The Mill Woods Master Plan Sub-Committee members asked for this joint meeting to discuss strategies for moving the project forward and fund raising for the project. Chairman Dobmeier asked each person present to introduce themselves and give their background on interests in Mill Woods Park. After these introductions, the first item discussed was the completion of the new Nature Center in Mill Woods Park.

### 3. Status of Mill Woods Park.

#### a. Completed Projects.

1. Perry Cornwall, Chairman for the Nature Center project, gave members an update on that project. He explained that it was an outstanding project to have completed in the park. The fundraising was handled through the Friends of the Nature Center in partnership with the Town of Wethersfield. He explained that the most success that they had with fundraising was through personal contact with individuals and keeping them updated on the status of the project. He explained that the Friends of the Nature Center were fortunate to have a large private donation. He was pleased with the outcome of the project and has received many compliments on the building. He appreciated the opportunity to meet with members of both committees to discuss their successes and how they were able to achieve them. He explained that their job is not over yet. They will continue to fundraise for future costs for the Nature Center. He reiterated that their success for fundraising was through the personal contacts made by members of the Friends association. Chairperson Dobmeier thanked Mr. Cornwall.
2. Skate Park.

Ms. Bagley reported that none of the students were available to attend this meeting because it was school vacation. She reported that the skate park was built with funds raised by the students. They raised their money in a variety of different ways including grants, youth events held throughout the year and a major state grant. They had a grant come from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving for \$40,000. A condition of the grant was to name the

skate park in honor of Robert Alan Keeney, a resident of Wethersfield. They also received a state grant for \$100,000.

b. Ongoing Projects.

1. Dog Park.

Representatives of the Dog Park Committee were at the meeting. Kathy and Don Griswold and Rene Dansereau gave committee members an overview on their status for the dog park. They explained that they started up in November and have received support from volunteers in the community to serve on the committee. They are excited about their future and they are looking at approximately a \$30,000 cost, which is mainly fencing, to get started with the dog park. They have a committee in place and have done some small fundraising events to date. They reported they have sub-committees working on rules, design and fundraising. They have developed a Web Site and a pamphlet giving information on their process. One of their projects is a mailing to raise funds for the dog park. They did receive a copy of the dog license list for Wethersfield and have put together a solicitation letter for those individuals. They are looking to do some work days in April and May out at the site to get it ready to go and they are planning a large fundraiser event in June. On June 11, they are going to have a "dog walk" down at Cove Park to use as a fundraiser for the dog park. They are excited about the people they have already met and are working with. They are happy to be at the Park Board meeting tonight to get other ideas from groups and to share what they are doing to date.

2. Bocce Courts.

Ms. Bagley reported that a UNICO member, Mike Fortunato, had thought he could attend as he was coming from another meeting, but she would go ahead and give a status report at this time. She reported that UNICO is possibly looking to build the courts in the spring of this year. One of their fundraising events was a wine tasting program, in the fall of 2005. They are now looking to sell engraved bricks at the Bocce courts. Cost is \$100 a brick with your name on it.

3. Walking Trails.

Ms. Bagley reported that there are many walking trails identified on the Master Plan in the park. She has been working with Eagle Scouts and other volunteer groups to build these trails in the park.

4. Future Projects.

1. Little League Field and Soccer Field.

Ms. Bagley reported at this time, the main emphasis of the group should now be funding and construction of these two new fields. She reported that the Capital Improvement budget request for next year is \$70,000 for an architect to begin design plans for these two fields. She also reported that they are waiting on a potential state grant for \$700,000 to be awarded in fiscal year 2006-07. She explained that now the committee needs to develop momentum to begin fundraising for these two new fields and to bring all the other sports leagues and everybody else in on this process.

4. Fundraising Strategies.

a. T-Shirts.

Craig MacGovern reported that he is in the process of having the T-shirts made. They have been designed and he discussed with everyone present the type of design. He expects to receive them in a few weeks. They will be sold for both exposure and fundraising for the park. He anticipates selling the T-shirts for \$10 each.

b. Sport Group Pledges and Advertising on Outfield Fences.

Little League will be meeting with members of the Parks and Recreation staff for approval of advertising on ballfield fences. Also, Little League stated that they will pay for the lights for the Little League Field. The soccer club has said that they will help to buy the new goals and player benches needed for the new soccer field. Discussions were centered on naming rights for the Little League and soccer fields and this would be a good way to help raise money for the fields. Also, a suggestion was made that for registration for all sports groups in town to possibly include an additional fee to go towards the Mill Woods Master Plan projects. For instance, an additional \$10 on top of each registration would begin to raise some dollars for the sports fields. Everyone thought that was a good idea and will look to pursue that. It was suggested we need to check with the Chamber of Commerce and see if they are interested in getting involved with this process.

Chairman Dobmeier thanked everyone for coming and the variety of ideas they had at this meeting. The next step will be to have both the Master Plan sub-committee and the Park Board look at ways to fundraise for the park. Chairman Dobmeier felt everyone gave some great information regarding the next steps for the Mill Woods Master Plan and we will need to follow-up on some of these ideas. As he was concluding the meeting, Mike Fortunato came to the meeting representing UNICO and he showed members the plans for the Bocce courts.

5. Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn was made at 8:00 p.m. by Thomas Ragonese and seconded by Daniel Silbo.