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Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - Thursday, November 16, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chairperson Ragonese. Members present were Chairperson Ragonese, Richard Lepore (left at 8:00 p.m.), Daniel Silbo, Timothy Verre and Kathleen Bagley, Director, Parks and Recreation Department.

A. Public Comments.

Jennifer Wolf, 345 Wolcott Hill Road, attended the Board meeting to find out the status of the Elementary School Learn to Ski Program that she discussed at the last Park Board meeting. Chairperson Ragonese reported that Ms. Bagley and her staff have reviewed the issues over the past several weeks and have developed a plan for this program. Ms. Bagley reported that in speaking with the Town's insurance carrier there is no difference in insurance for the town, whether utilizing Powder Ridge Ski Mountain or Mount Southington ski area. The only difference as explained by the insurance agent was that with a larger mountain at Mount Southington the risk factor was higher than the small mountain at Powder Ridge. Ms. Bagley explained that she spoke with staff and developed a process to still continue the after school ski lesson program. She reported each bus would need a minimum of 25 students to go on the trip as had been done in the past with the addition of two paid Park and Recreation staff members. Ms. Bagley explained these staff members would be trained in all the policies and procedures of the Parks and Recreation Department and would attend to the operation of this program for the department. She also stated that the department would still maintain the ratio of one (1) chaperone per ten (10) students with the help of the adult volunteer chaperones. Ms. Bagley explained the cost for the program with the two (2) additional staff would be approximately \$30 per skier. The trip cost would be somewhere between \$280 to \$405 for a five (5) trip visit to Mount Southington. Jennifer Wolf reported that she had different numbers that put the package at a more reasonable cost for the skiers. Ms. Bagley explained the bus cost was for a coach bus because of the storage utilized underneath for the skis. Mrs. Wolf reported their bus cost was based on a school bus and felt they could carry the skis on the bus and utilize the backend of the bus for the skis. Ms. Bagley suggested discussing all these details for the cost and investigate the possibility of using a school bus. Ms. Bagley also explained that with a ski trip in the winter months, the possibility of having to cancel due to inclement weather is a concern. Ms. Bagley explained to Board members that the Police Department and the town Maintenance Department are contacted to get accurate information. If ski trips are canceled, there is the possibility of "no refund" for inclement weather. The schools interested in participating in the ski trip would need a certain number of students in order to qualify for a bus stop at that school. Students could certainly be driven by their parents to another school for pick up, but the bus could not make too many pickups otherwise they would end up too late at Mount Southington. Jennifer Wolf asked Ms. Bagley for a timetable for setting up the program. Mrs. Wolf will get information to the Park and Recreation Department Friday, November 17, 2006, with the hope that all the details can be verified with sign ups scheduled for the following week. Ms. Bagley will work with her staff to make this all happen. Tim Verre asked about the possibility of one (1) staff member for each bus. Ms. Bagley explained that because this was a program at new facility, she would like to start with two (2) staff members. Ms. Bagley said she would like to see how this works and it certainly is something that can be reconsidered in the future.

B. [Minutes - October 26, 2006.](#)

Richard Lepore moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Timothy Verre and voted unanimously.

C. Monthly Report - October, 2006.

The October monthly reported was reviewed by Board members.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Therapeutic Recreation Thanksgiving Dinner Party on November 21, 2006.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the Therapeutic Recreation program sponsors this Thanksgiving dinner. Ms. Bagley reported that approximately 100 people participate.

2. Santa's Pancake Breakfast.

Board members discussed this special event for December 2 and reported how popular it is. It is a family event geared to young children and their visits with Santa Claus.

3. The Holiday Carol Sing and Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that this event will be held on December 11 at the Solomon Welles House at 6:30 p.m. He explained that he has attended it in the past and it is a great place to hold a Carol Sing and turnout is very good.

E. Old Business.

1. Mill Woods Master Plan.

Richard Lepore reported that he attended the last Master Plan meeting. They discussed the status of the hiring process for the architect for the design of the Little League and soccer field. The Request for Qualifications has been advertised with proposals due back on December 4 and interviews are tentatively scheduled for December 14. Mr. Lepore reported that the committee spent time discussing fundraising ideas and reviewing the list of ideas presented by Mary Ellen Bonelli. They began to prioritize these suggestions. He also reported they are looking to make contact with a teacher at the high school for help with the Web Site and possibly a brochure. If they cannot make contact with this teacher, they have asked the Parks and Recreation Department to have a brochure ready to go for their December meeting.

Chairperson Ragonese suggested that we check with Charles Wood, since he volunteered to help with the design of the brochure.

2. Ski Trip Program.

Board members agreed with Ms. Bagley's proposal for this ski trip program as listed above under "Public Comments."

F. New Business.

1. Dock Project at Cove Park.

Ms. Bagley reported they have negotiated with an engineering firm to do a design and cost estimate for new docks at the Cove Park boat launch area. They hope to get this design process started after Thanksgiving.

2. Keane Foundation Project.

Ms. Bagley explained that the Keane Foundation has been identifying individuals interested in serving on a building committee for this project. They have submitted five (5) names to the Town Manager and the Mayor. Since the building committee holds seven (7) people, they are looking for other people who are interested in serving on the committee. If any Board member is interested, they should contact Ms. Bagley. The Town Council may look to announce the building committee at their

December 4 meeting with the building committee starting up in January.

3. Meeting Dates 2007.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that in the packet was the proposed meeting dates for the upcoming year. Board members approved these dates.

4. Athletic Field Improvements.

Timothy Verre reported that the infield grass has been stripped at the Mill Woods Little League Field. At the current time, the field is too wet to proceed with the additional work of grading the infield and laying the sod. Hopefully, the weather will be better in the next couple of days and that work will be completed. He reported that the aeration work on the field has not happened at this time. He suggested that the work had been stopped due to some issues. Ms. Bagley will look into what may have happened with the aeration project. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to contact him as soon as she had some further information on this project. Ms. Bagley then reported they are still waiting for a proposal for improvements to the high school baseball field.

5. CIP Budget.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the Parks and Recreation capital improvement program will be reviewed by the Board at its December meeting. He explained to Board members that the Board reviews all the projects developed by Parks and Recreation Department and prioritizes them for submission to the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee. This committee then makes recommendations to the Town Manager and the Town Council and then certain projects are funded. Ms. Bagley asked Board members if they had any projects or items that they would like to see included in this project to please let her know. She will be developing it with staff and try to get it out to the Board as soon as possible.

G. Board Member Comments.

1. 1. Timothy Verre asked about the possibility of lights at Mill Woods Little League Stadium. Chairperson Ragonese explained the history of the lights for the stadium and the Mill Woods Master Plan process. He explained that the new Little League Stadium will be lighted and adjacent to the existing lighted softball field. He reported that to light the current Little League Stadium could present some difficult issues with the neighbors in the area.
2. 2. Chairperson Ragonese asked all Board members to be proactive in working with the community about park and recreation facilities and to provide any input to the Board and to the Park and Recreation Department to improve all facilities and programs. Board members that have Agenda items for the meeting should give him or Ms. Bagley a call to have it included in the Agenda. He encourages all Board members to be active in the community as we work together to provide better facilities and good programs for our residents.

H. Adjournment.

Daniel Silbo moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Motion was seconded by Timothy Verre and voted unanimously.