

Wethersfield Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - June 24, 2004

The Wethersfield Advisory Recreation and Parks Advisory Board meeting was called to order by Chairperson Richard Dobmeier at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Manager's conference room in the town hall. Members present were Chairperson Dobmeier, Thomas Ragonese, Jackie Pentalow; Council Liaison Andy Adil and Kathleen Bagley, Director, Recreation and Parks Department. Guests were Pastor Mark Adams and Dale Harris and Mike Orsini from the Eagles Youth Football program.

- A. Chairman Dobmeier welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked Pastor Mark Adams to address the Board with his issue of the use of a town park for a youth group visiting from Tennessee. Pastor Adams explained to the Board that he will be hosting a church youth group from Tennessee as they travel along the eastern United States. He asked permission to use a park on Sunday afternoon July 11 for a picnic for his group and also for the opportunity for his group to interact with people in the park. He explained that there will be sixteen people-five adults and eleven teenagers-on Sunday, July 11 and it was suggested that the park could be Standish Park adjacent to Mikey's Place. Ms. Bagley explained to Board members that any group is able to picnic in the park since the park is open to the public. Groups are allowed to have their own event, but they are not there to encourage or disturb other members of the public who are also enjoying the park. Board members felt it would be appropriate for the youth group to meet in the park. If the group has their picnic and members of the public wandered over, that is okay. At no time could the youth group solicit members to come and sit with them and pray or worship. Pastor Adams had no problem with this. He said they would picnic in the park and if people came over, he would explain to them about the group. If people were interested in joining in with the group, he could give them information. They would not go out of their way to encourage people to come over and sit with them. Ms. Bagley reminded Board members that we do have to be concerned about the separation of church and state and she will double check with the Town Manager to make sure this picnic is not a problem. Ms. Bagley did not view this as a problem as long as the church was not out recruiting people. She will also work with Pastor Adams regarding which park they would like to use for this picnic. Ms. Bagley will contact Pastor Adams after she has spoken with the Town Manager. Pastor Adams thanked the Board for their help and looks forward to his stay in Wethersfield. He has just moved to Wethersfield and operates his church out of the Griswoldville Chapel on Griswoldville Street.

Chairman Dobmeier introduced Dale Harris and Mike Orsini of the Eagles Youth Football program. He asked them to give Board members an overview of their football program and thanked them for attending their meeting. Mr. Orsini explained to Board members the operation of the Eagles Youth Football program. He spoke on the organization of their Board, which is composed of five Board members representing the divisions in the Youth Football program including cheerleading, flag and tackle. Their officers are members of the Board and the Board members are elected by vote of the coaches in the program. The adults are volunteers in the program and each division makes recommendations to the Board of any rule changes or operation changes for the program. Mr. Orsini explained the issues that face the Youth Football program every year and discussed Stillman Field with the Board members. He explained, in the future, they would look to request Cove Park as their home football field because of the adequate parking with Motor Vehicle adjacent to the field. He explained that one of their biggest problems at Stillman is the parking issue and also the trash left behind by the football participants. Ms. Bagley explained that the Youth Football program has worked very hard with the department to make sure the trash is picked up and the parking is not an issue in that area, but sometimes, unfortunately, the adult parents do not comply.

Mr. Harris spoke about the funds collected for the football program. He explained all their funds are taken in through registrations and the concession operation during their season. He explained the concession operation is used to pay the football referees and all the registration fees go to pay for the equipment. He explained that the equipment for one youngster for the travel football program is approximately \$300. Their equipment is checked each year for safety and safety is their number one concern. Their helmets are inspected by a company and either refurbished or replaced as needed. They have set up an equipment replacement schedule so that they are always checking and replacing equipment as needed. Ms. Bagley explained that all the Board members and the coaches are volunteers from the community. The program is open to both boys and girls in the fall with an

attendance of approximately 550 youngsters. Mr. Ragonese asked if there was anything the Park Board could do for the Youth Football program or if there was anything that they needed. Mr. Orsini said that there is good cooperation between the town and the football program and since the football program is directly sponsored by the Recreation and Parks Department, they receive a lot of support from staff member Marty Sitler. They did explain their future concerns would be fields and the availability for parking for their program. Chairman Dobmeier thanked Dale Harris and Mike Orsini for attending the meeting and giving them an overview on the program.

B. Public Comments.

Pastor Adams already spoke prior to the Eagles Youth Football representatives.

C. [Minutes - May 27, 2004.](#)

Thomas Ragonese moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Jackie Pentalow and voted unanimously.

D. Monthly Report - May, 2004.

The monthly report was discussed and accepted.

E. Letters and Announcements.

1. Proposed Resolution on Council Agenda Regarding Referendum for the Mill Woods Master Plan.

Board members discussed the possibility of a referendum question for Phase I of the Mill Woods Master Plan for 4.1 million dollars. Councilor Adil explained to Board members that there would be a Council sub-committee meeting on this issue and possible other referendum projects in July. He asked the Board members to prioritize their request within the Mill Woods Master Plan. He was not sure the entire 4.1 million dollars would be appropriated for a referendum question, but suggested give the Council sub-committee some direction as to their priorities. Board members discussed their priorities for the Mill Woods Master Plan Phase I. In coordination with the Mill Woods Master Plan sub-committee recommendations, the lighted Little League field and the soccer field along with the utilities necessary for these fields are top priorities for Phase I of the Recreation and Parks Board. The Board reviewed the remainder of the Phase I projects and felt they were appropriate with the exception of reducing some of the parking/road improvements to stay within the 4.1 million dollar budget. Also, they suggested the Skate Park be eliminated and soccer field #2 added. Board members felt it was important to get the utilities done in the park and identify some of the roadwork necessary to facilitate safe traffic in the park. Board members directed Ms. Bagley to prepare a report for the Town Manager with their priorities for Phase I of the Mill Woods Park Master Plan.

F. Old Business.

1. Moeller Home Update.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Moeller Home project is very close to having bid specifications ready to go out to bid. She reported the estimated construction budget is approximately \$700,000. Available funding at the present time is \$613,000 leaving a balance remaining of \$87,000. She reported that the Committee asked the Town Manager if they should to out to bid knowing they were still short about \$87,000. The Town Manager recommended they go out to bid because it will give them additional time to raise more money and the bids may come in favorable. Also, Ms. Bagley reported that the Committee has met with the architect to reduce the scope of the project to try and bring the project in within budget.

2. Skate Park Update.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Skate Park Committee is awaiting the possibility of a state grant that may be awarded at the end of June. If they receive the \$20,000 grant, it will leave them with a balance of about \$8,000 still to be raised to build the skate park.

3. Mill Woods Master Plan Committee Update.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Master Plan Committee recommended Bill Dest be hired to do the soil study of Mill Woods Park at a cost of \$8,550. The Mill Woods Master Plan account has \$4,900 from permit fees for field use and the Committee will be asking the Little League organization and the soccer organization to contribute \$2,000 each towards the study. The timetable for the study is set for the month of July. Committee members will also be looking into fundraising projects to raise dollars for the building of the Mill Woods Master Plan.

4. Ballfield Fence Advertising.

Ms. Bagley reported that she has not done much work getting information on advertising on ballfield

fences around town. She will be talking with area towns to get their input on the process.

G. New Business.

1. Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Recreation and Parks Department will be surveying all their customers during the summer months to get feedback on their operations. She will be presenting findings to the Board in the fall.

2. Dog Park.

Ms. Bagley reported that a resident has asked her about investigating the possibility of a dog park in town. Ms. Bagley will be looking into this idea and will be talking with the resident. She just brought it to the Board's attention. Board members asked Ms. Bagley if she had a place in mind. Ms. Bagley reported that at this time she has not identified any land that might be available for this type of park.

3. Stillman Fence.

Ms. Bagley reported that she is still working with the town on the foul line fence for Stillman Field. She anticipates it will be going back to the Historic District Commission and Planning and Zoning for their approval. She will keep the Board posted on this topic. Tom Ragonese reported that the distance between the foul line and the temporary fence is very close to the new parking lot and a fence is absolutely necessary for this fence use.

4. Mill Woods Pond Swimming Area.

Ms. Bagley reported that they are experiencing a goose problem at the swimming area. They are looking into purchasing a particular type of spray to put on the grassy areas in the swimming area that is not harmful to people, but is not liked by the geese population. They will be looking to do this the last week in June to see if it has any effect on controlling the geese issue at the swimming area. They have checked this spray with DEP and the Health District in town and have also called other areas that have used this type of spray near swimming areas. All reports so far are that it is used around people and does not affect the water quality.

5. Ms. Bagley reported that Nature Center Director, Laura Briggs, will be resigning effective July 9, 2004. She will be advertising to fill the position by the fall.

H. Adjournment.

Tom Ragonese moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. The motion was seconded by Jackie Pentalow and voted unanimously.