

## **Wethersfield Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - Thursday, July 24, 2003**

The Wethersfield Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting began with their annual tour at 6:00 p.m. at the Wethersfield Town Hall. Members present for the tour were Richard Dobmeier, Gregory Even, Peter Kalousdian and Thomas Ragonese. The tour included Mill Woods Park and Moeller Home. Chairman Richard Dobmeier opened the regular meeting of the Advisory Park Board at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Manager's conference room. Members present were Chairman Dobmeier, Gregory Even, Damon Herring, Peter Kalousdian, Thomas Ragonese and Kathleen Bagley, Director, Recreation and Parks Department.

Chairman Dobmeier welcomed new Board members Peter Kalousdian and Gregory Even to the Recreation and Parks Board.

### **A. Public Comments.**

Martha Mayer spoke to the Advisory Board regarding parking in Mill Woods Park. She explained that she has been counting the number of cars during the spring and summer months in the park at various times. She explained this was in addition to her report done in the fall. Ms. Bagley reminded Board members that they received a copy of this survey in the fall of 2002. Richard Dobmeier thanked Ms. Mayer for her input and will await the results of the summer parking count at the beginning of August. He thanked her for providing this information to the Park Board. Board member Damon Herring mentioned that he is a former member of the Griswoldville Association of which Martha Mayer is Chairperson.

1. Other public guests present were Perry Cornwall, Pat Yagmin and Mel McComber representing the Friends of the Nature Center. Chairman Dobmeier welcomed the representatives for the Friends and thanked them for attending the Park Board meeting. Ms. Bagley explained to Board members that she invited the Friends of the Wethersfield Nature Center to the meeting at the request of Town Council. Town Council asked the Friends of the Nature Center and the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board to meet and discuss the renovation of the Moeller Home as it would relate to the Mill Woods Master Plan. Ms. Bagley explained that the Recreation and Parks Board has always assumed the Moeller Home would be some type of recreational facility; either the Nature Center or Recreation and Parks offices. Therefore, the Mill Woods Master Plan was designed to include parking for the Moeller Home building. Board members explained that they will keep in touch with the Friends of the Nature Center to make sure the Moeller Home is provided with the appropriate parking necessary for the building. Perry Cornwall spoke to members about the Friends of the Nature Center's plans for the renovation of Moeller Home. Ms. Bagley explained that the Friends have been working on this project. They have had two open houses at the Moeller Home to begin to stir up interest in the project. They currently have half a million dollars committed towards the project with a construction cost of approximately \$655,000. They need an additional \$155,000 to renovate the Moeller Home. They will begin their fundraising campaign in the fall. Perry Cornwall reported the reasons why the Nature Center would be best situated in the Moeller Home. He explained to Board members that if they do not use the state grant of \$250,000 by February, 2005, the town will lose that funding. He thanked the Board for their support and time. He looks forward to the process of renovating the Moeller building.

Chairman Dobmeier expressed the Board's support of the project and offered the Board's help to the Friends of the Nature Center.

### **B. Minutes - June 26, 2003.**

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

### **C. Monthly Report.**

The report was reviewed.

### **D. Letters and Announcements.**

1. Board members reviewed the list of new Board members.

### **E. Old Business.**

1. Mill Woods Master Plan.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Town Council has referred the Mill Woods Master Plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission will meet August 19 at 7:30 p.m. and the Mill Woods Master Plan will be on the Agenda for that evening. She reported that she is putting together a packet of information for Commission members and will see that the Advisory Park Board members receive a copy of that packet. She encouraged Advisory Park Board members to attend this meeting. She also reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission members requested a park tour to visit Mill Woods Park. She will be setting up a date for the park tour. She also reported that the architect, Richard Webb, of Kaestle Boos Associates will attend the August 19 meeting of Planning and Zoning. Chairman Dobmeier requested that Ms. Bagley include names of the Planning and Zoning Commission members in the Board's packet.

Chairman Dobmeier also reported that he had a conversation with Senator Ciotto regarding funding options for the Mill Woods Master Plan. Senator Ciotto asked that he send a letter to him identifying the costs for the Mill Woods Master Plan and requesting funds for the project. Senator Ciotto explained at the present time there are no funds available in the legislature, but certainly get him the information and he will keep it in mind for future consideration.

F. New Business.

1. Friends of the Nature Center - Moeller Home.

This topic was covered in the meeting and Board members, once again, expressed their support of this project.

2. New Board members requested additional information on the Mill Woods Master Plan. Ms. Bagley gave an overview of the process of the Mill Woods Master Plan. She will provide background information to new Board members regarding the process and information on the Master Plan for Mill Woods Park.

3. Status of Ballfields.

A Board member requested information on the maintenance and repair of ballfields in town. Ms. Bagley reported that the town has a capital improvement program. All facilities and ballfields are identified for repair and improvements. She will provide information on the capital improvement program for Board members. Chairman Dobmeier explained that the Board each year reviews the Recreation and Parks Department capital improvement projects and identifies priorities for repairs to park facilities.

4. Chairman Dobmeier asked Ms. Bagley to talk with Town Engineer, Mike Turner, regarding a state program of funding to improve hazardous intersections in the state. Senator Ciotto suggested he look into this avenue as a means of identifying funds for the Master Plan.

5. Ms. Bagley reported on the appointment of members to the Moeller Home Building Committee by the Town Manager. She explained that two members of the Friends will be on the Moeller Home Building Committee along with Brian O'Connor, Town Building Inspector; Laura Briggs, Director, Nature Center and Kathleen Bagley, Director, Recreation and Parks Department. Chairperson Dobmeier asked if a Recreation and Parks member could serve on the Building Committee. Ms. Bagley said she would talk with the Town Manager and ask if this was possible. Peter Kalousidan, a Board member, volunteered to serve on this committee.

6. Ms. Bagley reported that the town has done a study on the Moeller Home renovation. The study was done by Moser, Pilon, Nelson and is being used as a guide to develop cost estimates for the current renovation project. This study was done in November, 2000.

G. Adjournment.

Thomas Ragonese moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Damon Herring and voted unanimously.