

Wethersfield Advisory Parks and Recreation Board
Harbor Management Commission
Minutes - Thursday, February 26, 2015

The meeting was held at Town Hall and called to order by Chairperson Tom Ragonese at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Bill Derrick, Bill Leonard, Rich Lepore, Tom Mull and Dan Silbo. Also present were Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, Mike Zaleski and Dan Tenney from Little League and Steve Randall, town resident.

A. Public Comments.

Chairperson Tom Ragonese welcomed representatives from the Wethersfield Little League organization, Mike Zaleski and Dan Tenney and thanked them for attending the board meeting. Chairperson Ragonese explained that the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board invited Little League representatives to their meeting to discuss current and future field needs of Little League. A discussion ensued about Little League's needs, including ongoing maintenance, field availability, scheduling conflicts and renting fields to outside groups. Chairperson Ragonese encouraged Little League to discuss their concerns throughout the season with the Park Board. In the past, he had worked with the Little League president to address their concerns. He offered to work with Little League again. Ms. Bagley explained the policy for scheduling fields and bringing them on line for the spring season. The first priorities are the high school fields and then Little League, Men's Softball and Youth Soccer. Mr. Mull went through the process of how he schedules the Men's Softball League with Parks and Recreation staff. He provides them with a schedule and then a discussion takes place about conflicts. For rainouts, he calls the department to determine what fields are available and then the makeup game is rescheduled. He has no problem with the process. Both Mr. Zaleski and Mr. Tenney appreciated all the information provided to them. Chairperson Ragonese suggested setting up another meeting to continue the discussion and to include the Town Manager. Little League representatives were in favor of this meeting and Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to work out the details and invite the Town Manager.

Steve Randall attended the meeting to speak about the fees for Cove Boating. He would like the Park Board to consider eliminating the fee for paddle sports (canoe, kayak, etc.). He has done research for other launch areas and they do not charge for canoes and kayaks launching into the river. He provided Board members with a copy of the current fees for boating at the Cove. Chairperson Ragonese thanked Mr. Randall for his information.

B. Minutes – January 22, 2015.

Dan Silbo moved to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Tom Mull and approved unanimously.

C. Monthly Report –January 2015.

The Monthly Report was reviewed by board members. Members discussed the indoor programs at the schools. They asked Ms. Bagley to provide information on who is directing the Youth Basketball program.

D. Letters and Announcements.

None.

E. Old Business.

1. Skate Park Request For Proposal.

Ms. Bagley informed the Board that the department is soliciting proposals to repair the concrete bottom at the Skate Park. Sections of the concrete are crumbling and need to be repaired. She will keep the Board updated on the process.

F. New Business.

1. Wethersfield Little League – discussion with representatives from Little League about their current and future needs and any concerns about fields. Refer to Item A. Public Comments. Chairperson Ragonese summed up the concerns from Little League: field maintenance, availability of fields and enhancing the game experience for the players. As noted earlier, he asked Ms. Bagley to set up a meeting with the Town Manager and representatives of Little League to continue their discussion. Ms. Bagley will follow up with the Town Manager.
2. Request from Wethersfield Public Schools to Charge a Resident Fee for Open Choice Students. Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the letter from Ms. Daigle, Director of Special Education, requesting that all Open Choice Students be charged a resident fee for afterschool programs and sports. She explained that participating in extracurricular activities helps the Choice students feel engaged with their classmates and the community. Approximately 85 students are in the Choice program. Board members supported this request. A motion was made by Dan Silbo and seconded by Richard Lepore to allow the Open Choice students to pay the resident rate for Park and Recreation programs and sports. The motion passed unanimously.
3. FY 2015-16 Proposed Budget.
Ms. Bagley distributed a draft of the proposed budget for FY 2015-16. Chairperson Ragonese suggested putting this on the March agenda and allowing members to review the proposed budget. Ms. Bagley noted that the benefit numbers were not finalized for this draft. Chairperson Ragonese asked that a revised budget be sent out prior to the meeting with the changes.
4. Wethersfield Cove Boating Fees.
Chairperson Ragonese discussed Mr. Randall's concerns with Board members. This request has come up before and the Board has been waiting to review the fees once the new docks are installed. He asked Ms. Bagley to provide a report to the Board of the past Cove boating season, so they can review the number of users and revenue for the past season.

G. Board Member Comments.

1. None

H. Harbor Management Commission.

1. Cove Docks Project.
Ms. Bagley reported that the project is out to bid and will be opened on March 20. Bids will be reviewed and submitted to the Town Council with a recommendation on April 6.
2. Harbormaster Report.
The Harbormaster Report was distributed at the meeting and reviewed by members. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to get a status report on the agreement for the use of a boat between the Town and the Metropolitan District Commission. She will contact the Town Manager.
3. Wethersfield Yacht Club Application to State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for Their Dock Project.
Chairperson Ragonese reported that he signed the Wethersfield Yacht Club's application to the State on behalf of the Harbor Management Commission. His signature denotes that the Harbor Management Commission reviewed their plan and had no issues as it related to the Wethersfield Cove.

I. Motion to Adjourn.

Tom Mull moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Motion was seconded by Rich Lepore and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director