

Wethersfield Advisory Parks and Recreation Board
Harbor Management Commission
Minutes - Thursday, June 25, 2015

The meeting was held at Town Hall and called to order by Acting Chairperson Richard Lepore at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Bill Leonard, Richard Lepore and Tom Mull. Also present were Charlie Forsdick, Harbormaster and Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation.

Acting Chairperson Lepore welcomed the members from the public and invited them to speak.

A. Public Comments.

Judy Parker, Jim Woodworth and Michael deGruchy spoke about the fees at the Cove boat ramp for canoes and kayaks. They were in favor of not charging any fee to launch canoes or kayaks. Mrs. Parker, 366 Pine Lane, Wethersfield said that she has to pay in Wethersfield to launch her kayak, but not in Rocky Hill, Hartford or other areas in the state. She protests the fees charged by the Parks and Recreation Department in Wethersfield.

Mr. Woodworth, 33 Mill Street, Wethersfield, protested the fees also. He explained that many places in the state do not charge for launching a kayak or canoe into the water. Some examples were Glastonbury, Middletown and facilities managed by the MDC. He recommended that the Board not a charge a fee this summer at the Cove for kayaks and canoes. He explained that these groups can bring added business to places in town, because they will stop and eat or visit some of the shops. Also, kayaks and canoes do not harm the environment; the sport helps people stay physically fit and is an activity the whole family can enjoy. Canoers and kayakers participate in clean up days on the river and can reach areas that walkers and power boats cannot access. Mr. Woodworth informed Ms. Bagley that a group will be sponsoring a kayak/canoe trip down the Connecticut River and one of their launching sites is the Wethersfield Cove. He reported that it would cost the whole group quite a bit of money to launch from the Cove. He hoped something could be done to help them out.

Mr. deGruchy, 3 Morrison Avenue, was also against the fees charged to launch a canoe or kayak in the Cove. He questioned the value he gets for his fee. He felt there is absolutely nothing he receives for paying the fee to launch and he is subsidizing the power boats that launch at the Cove. He doesn't use the boat ramp and he shouldn't have to pay to park his car. Other people come to the Cove facility to just visit and park their cars. They do not pay to park. He also mentioned that it is a healthy activity.

At this time, Ms. Bagley reported that she received five emails supporting not charging a fee to launch a canoe or kayak at the Cove. Listed below are the communications she received and shared with the Board members at the meeting.

1. Jim Woodworth – provided information on the towns that do not charge a fee. Also provided press releases on the new Middletown kayak and canoe launch and the Glastonbury Riverfront Park launch. Also, copied her on an email he received from Mr. de Gruchy supporting not charging a fee.
2. Gary Brummett – owner at CT Outfitters, Wethersfield, CT – he supported not charging fees for canoes and kayaks.
3. Peter Morse – Riverfront Recapture – does not charge for canoes or kayaks.
4. Alicea Charamut – Connecticut River Watershed Council – sent a letter supporting not charging a fee. Mr. Woodworth read this letter during public comments.
5. Rebecca Zaliznick – town resident, also supported no fees. She and her husband kayak around the shore and Farmington River and there are no fees.

Acting Chairperson Lepore thanked the individuals for speaking, noted that the Cove Boating fees were an agenda item under new business and they will be discussed at that time.

B. Minutes – May 28, 2015.

Tom Mull moved to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Bill Leonard and approved unanimously.

C. Monthly Report –May 2015.

Board members reviewed the monthly report and discussed the fireworks event in town. They felt it was a great community event, a good fireworks show and people enjoyed the evening.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Received the emails mentioned under public comments.

E. Old Business.

1. Field Status Update.

Acting Chairperson Richard Lepore asked Ms. Bagley for her input. She reported that everything was going well with the fields. The weather was cooperating so most games were being played. Town staff would be using some overtime for preparation of the Little League fields for their All Star games. Tom Mull reported that the softball fields were in good condition and they would water Fusco Field at Mill Woods prior to the start of games.

2. Webb Tennis Courts.

Ms. Bagley reported that the courts would be completed soon. The contractor was working on the surface coatings and then would need time for them to dry between coats. Hopefully the new courts will be open in July.

F. New Business.

1. Kayak & Canoe Fees at Cove Boat Launch Area.

Acting Chairperson Lepore discussed the kayak and canoe fees with board members. They agreed to discuss this issue at the next meeting when more members would be present. They discussed that the board had previously decided to review all Cove boat Launch fees once the new docks were installed,

1 because they wanted to look at the complete package of fees for the area. They requested that Ms. Bagley put this item on the agenda for the July meeting.

2. Summer Programs.

Acting Chairperson Lepore requested that Ms. Bagley provide information on the Parks and Recreation summer programs. She informed the board that the pools opened on scheduled and swim lessons and recreational swimming were popular again this summer. Also, the summer camp programs were doing very well with registration numbers.

G. Board Member Comments.

Bill Leonard reported that his term on the Parks and Recreation Board has ended with this meeting and due to work commitments will not be able to serve another term at this time. Acting Chairperson Lepore thanked him for his service and hoped he would be back in the future.

H. Harbor Management Commission.

1. Cove Docks Project.

Ms. Bagley reported that she is working with the contractor on the dock project. He is reviewing the contract and developing a timeline for the project. The mooring anchoring system has changed due to the nature of the surface under the water. The contractor will be using concrete blocks instead of the helical anchors. There will be no change in the cost of the project. Work is expected to start in July. Because of the change in the anchoring system, Ms. Bagley contacted the Yacht Club to make them aware of the new system. They are reviewing it to see if they want the new moorings for their mooring spots or will keep their existing moorings. They will get back to Ms. Bagley shortly.

2. Harbormaster Report.

Acting Chairperson Lepore asked Mr. Forsdick to review his report with them. The report was discussed and Mr. Forsdick noted that he does not have a deputy at this time and the boat is still under repair. He did report that the channel is clear and boaters are using the facility.

Mr. Forsdick presented his new plan for the mooring grid for the Cove. This plan was included in the agenda packet. The only change from the existing plan is to have a consecutive numbering system for the moorings. Tom Mull moved to approve the change to the mooring system as depicted in the plan. The motion was seconded by Bill Leonard and voted unanimously.

I. Motion to Adjourn.

Tom Mull moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Motion was seconded by Bill Leonard and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director