



# Town of Westport Parks & Recreation

## WESTPORT PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION Longshore Club Park, 260 South Compo Road Westport, CT 06880

June 13, 2011

The Westport Parks and Recreation Commission held a meeting in Town Hall, room #201/201A at 7:30 p.m. Those in attendance were Janis Collins, Chairman; Jennifer Johnson, George Franciscovich, Stuart Rogan and Andy Moss; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks; Karen Puskas, Program Manager and four(4) member(s) of the general public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Ms. Collins welcomed new commission member Stuart Rogan effective May 2011.

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Ms. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Moss, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of April 25, 2011 were unanimously approved.

### 2. To take such action as the meeting may determine to grant a temporary extension of the previous Athletic Field Policy as requested by the Westport Soccer Association for the fall 2011 season.

Ms. Collins - We have received a request (copy attached) from the Westport Soccer Association asking for a temporary extension of the old athletic field policy. The request is to allow the WSA to continue providing field space to two Beachside of CT premier soccer teams for practices and home games. This would allow the Beachside of CT teams time to make alternative field arrangements for next year's soccer season.

Mr. McCarthy - It is not an unreasonable request, given the timeframe that in which this all occurred. They have requested an extension just through the rest of the calendar year. Kydes Soccer which is the umbrella organization that includes Beachside Soccer Club, provides all of the coaches and expertise for the Westport Soccer Association program for many years. They also run camps through the Parks & Recreation Department under our camp policy. They have been a good partner for both Westport Soccer Association and for the Parks and Recreation Department. As outlined in Mr. Malowitz's letter they have also been good members of the community through their contributions to the Coleman's Scholarship Fund and the Field of Dreams project.

**Upon motion by Mr. Rogan, seconded by Ms. Johnson and passed unanimously, it was**

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves a request from Westport Soccer Association to extend its current agreement with Beachside Soccer**

**Club to allow two youth soccer teams to use Westport fields through the 2011 fall season.**

3. Review of 2010-11 fall and winter recreation programs.

Ms. Puskas indicated it was a good year despite the heavy snowfall. We did extend the season by a week to make sure we could get all programs completed. In terms of revenue and participants we are pretty much the same but our expenses were down about \$40,000.

Ms. Collins asked about the adult tennis. Ms. Puskas - We had about a \$6,000 deficit last year and turned it around into a \$391.00 positive. That's because we eliminated a couple of the pee wee, youth tennis programs and the weekend tennis. We cut back on our instructors. We also eliminated one session of tennis in October.

Ms. Johnson asked if there were any waiting lists on any of these programs. Ms. Puskas - There was a waiting list for Fitness Swimming, however, we were able to accommodate a lot of people off of the waiting lists because we increased our participation for the program. And, we had waiting lists for the Saturday and Sunday Ice Skating classes.

Mr. Franciscovich asked if there was a benefit to more widely disseminating the program information, i.e., to the RTM, and Board of Finance.

Mr. McCarthy - At the end of the fiscal year we will provide a revenue report, to which we could add some of this detail. And, we can put a presentation together and present it to the Parks & Recreation Committee of the RTM. I'm not sure that it would be appropriate for the entire RTM.

4. To take such action as the meeting may determine to adopt a gift policy for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. McCarthy - This proposed policy is based off of the last "draft" which was done about nine months ago. In essence, this policy will allow us to continue to receive gifts.

What is outlined in the policy is a gift given through the Parks and Recreation Department. This gift policy calls for donations to represent twice the value of the gift. (if the Town purchases a tree for \$500.00 – the Town requires a cash gift of \$1,000.00.) That allows us to put the balance of the money into an escrow account and have available for replacement, repair, etc. depending on what it is we are working with. Then those monies are available for that purpose.

Standard policy will be twice the value of the gift. So if someone is gifting an actual item they need to then have a cash contribution equal to the value of the gift to go into that maintenance fund. The gift policy also outlines the duration of the gift for park benches (8 year duration); trees and plants it would be 6 years – 1 year warranty from the nursery plus a five year replacement period. For other gifts we will determine prior to accepting the gift what that would be. All of these gifts will still require approval of the Board of Selectmen and the RTM so we are really not formerly accepting these gifts, it's simply outlining what types of gifts on what condition we would accept the gift. The Board of Selectmen and RTM will still make a decision of accepting the gift on behalf of the Town.

The one item and the reason this policy came about, originally was the issue of park benches in our “high visibility” areas of Compo Beach, Burying Hill Beach, Old Mill Beach and Hillspoint Road. I came to the Commission and asked them to establish a more firm gift policy allowing us to not except gifts if we deemed it was not appropriate. In the opinion of staff we have enough benches at the beach. In this policy what we have done if you want a bench in one of those premium areas the cost of that bench is now \$2,500 for the bench. We are looking to regulate that demand for the benches in that fashion. We presently have four requests for benches that we have been holding for a long time and in fairness my suggestion would be that we establish this policy as of July 1, 2011 and allow us to clear off the four that have been waiting under the old policy.

**Upon motion by Mr. Franciscovich, seconded by Ms. Johnson and passed unanimously, it was**

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves a policy for gifts to the Parks and Recreation Department as proposed.**

**The Parks and Recreation Commission approves premium pricing of \$2,500 per bench for gifts of park benches located at Compo Beach, Burying Hill Beach, Old Mill Beach and Hillspoint Road effective July 1, 2011.**

5. Old Business

Ms. Collins - This Saturday at Longshore Golf, the 9-1/2 Hole Committee will be there along with members from all of the golf associations asking for pledges for the Golf Halfway House. Please stop by give your pledge. It will be from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Bill Meyer thanked everyone that had done work for the RTM and Board of Finance meetings with regards to the budget. That was a really good victory for Parks and Recreation Department.

6. New Business  
None

7. Commissioner’s Reports

Ms. Johnson - I have participated in some of the Downtown Planning Sub Committee meetings. Some of the new efforts are to set up certain committees to deal with some of the issues related to downtown. I have been mostly working on the sidewalks with one of the planning representatives and mapping out the sidewalks or areas where we can improve pedestrian flow.

I have also been speaking with Stuart about seeing what we can do to improve public access to Winslow Park. I want us to be able do something before something tragic happens. (Understanding traffic and pedestrian safety on Rte. 136 is the responsibility of the State of Connecticut.)

8. Administrative Update

Mr. McCarthy - Athletic field lighting - we will hopefully be able to move ahead on this soon.

Levitt Pavilion continues to move forward with their plans; they need to make a decision on 2011 or 2012 construction within the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Collins has received several complaints about the trash at the Inn at Longshore.

Mr. McCarthy - I am aware of the issue we are aggressively dealing with it.

The Town has been brought into the lawsuit related to the death at the sailing school two years ago.

We are in full swing with a very slow start to the season. It was a bad April and May and we have picked up a little in early June.

Camp enrollment is a little behind and hoping that in the next couple of weeks it will pick up.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully,  
Sheila Kavey  
Recording Secretary