



WESTPORT CONNECTICUT
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
LONGSHORE CLUB PARK
260 SOUTH COMPO

5/17/19

FINAL MINUTES

RACQUETS ADVISORY COMMITTEE – WESTPORT PARKS & RECREATION

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

1. Call to Order: 7:30 p.m.

This was the nineteenth regular meeting of the Racquets Advisory Committee (“RAC”), held in Room 212D at Town Hall, Westport, CT.

- Committee Members Present: David Acelrod, Chairman; Lloyd Clareman (acted as Secretary); Ward Doonan, David Kaplan; Tom Lowrie; Patti Brill; Joseph DiMiceli.
- Representing Westport Parks & Recreation (“WP&R”): Cyndi Palaia, Program Manager.

2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the March 12, 2019 meeting were approved.

3. Public Comment: Reserved for pickleball discussion.

4. Parks & Recreation Update:

Longshore Tennis:

- The Longshore tennis courts opened on May 4. Adult clinics started last week. The men’s and women’s leagues have also started and a junior tournament is scheduled. The courts have started the season in excellent condition.

Pickleball:

- Pickleball remains closed at Compo until the bathroom construction is completed. It is hoped that the courts will be ready for play around June 1 but that is uncertain. Until then Cyndi is trying to arrange for pickleball clinics to be held at Doubleday in the morning (8:00-11:30 a.m.); since that is during school hours, it requires special permission from the Board of Education.
- Two temporary nets are available at Doubleday, and side nets have been installed there to keep pickle and tennis balls from rolling into each other’s courts.
- Greens Farms Academy has been using the Doubleday courts weekdays after school but that will be ending on Friday May 17.

Platform Tennis:

- Heaters are working on Court 1, but not on Court 2.

- It was suggested that a sign be posted on the shed to show the availability of an AED (defibrillator) unit.

5. Tennis Discussion:

- There was discussion that the prospective lighting project, which will also benefit the winter ice skating rink, needs to be moved forward. Dave Kaplan reported that it appears that no subsidies or other sharing of the installation costs of approximately \$150,000 are available from the power companies, and accordingly the economics of the project revolve around the projected operational cost savings of \$10,000 to \$20,000 annually. Dave Kaplan will follow up with Mr. DeVito to determine next steps.

6. Paddle Discussion

- No further items.

7. Pickleball Discussion

- Three members of the public were present who also participated in this discussion.
- A proposal was presented whereby the ability to reserve a court during various times of day would be restricted. As proposed, the restriction would be in effect during many prime playing hours: mornings from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm every day, and 8:00-9:30 am three days a week; and also three weekday evenings from 5:00-8:00 pm. Reservations would be available as usual during non-restricted times. The concept is designed to enable players to come to the courts without reservations during the restricted periods, at specific times that would be pre-designated for specific ability levels; in theory this would assure them of being able to play round-robin style at given times with players of similar ability, without needing to arrange their own games. It is thought that this will build participation and grow the sport.
- Questions were raised about whether this proposed plan represents the preference of a majority of the pickleball community. While there are no indications to the contrary, the breadth of support for this idea is currently unknown. Accordingly, before the Committee acts on this proposal, Patti Brill and Ward Doonan will design and email a survey to the list of known pickleball players in the community to obtain their views on this proposal. When the results of the survey are obtained, the Committee will take up the reservation proposal anew.
- Tom Lowrie presented a sketch of a proposed relocation of the Compo picnic table area, from south of the courts (where the new restrooms currently under construction will be located, which is the impetus for this proposed change) to the north side, where the skate park is. The design would intrude on a portion of the skate park. Accordingly, while the Committee generally favored the concept of relocating the picnic area away from the rest rooms, there were concerns that this proposal could not be advanced to Parks and Recreation without providing the skate park community, to the extent it can be identified, with an opportunity to express their views on the subject. Tom Lowrie and Patti Brill will determine the best way to accomplish this and will re-present the proposal to the Committee once input from users of the skate park are given an opportunity to be heard on this subject.

8. Meeting adjourned: 9:15 p.m.