



Town of Westport Parks & Recreation

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

September 12, 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 and Recreation; Rick Giunta, Administrative Manager and six(6) member(s) of the general public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m.

Mr. Moss arrived at 7:50 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Mr. Rogan, seconded by Ms. Johnson, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of July 11, 2011 were unanimously approved.

Upon motion by Mr. Franciscovich, seconded by Ms. Johnson, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of July 27, 2011 were unanimously approved.

Upon motion by Mr. Franciscovich, seconded by Mr. Rogan, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of August 23, 2011 were unanimously approved.

2. To take such action as the meeting may determine to approve a request from Save the Children/Team Mossman Triathlon Club to host an "Annual Polar Plunge" fundraiser for Save the Children at Compo Beach.

Mr. McCarthy - This is a request to have a polar plunge event on Sunday, January 1, 2012. This event was held last year with late approval. The Parks and Recreation staff notified the sponsor that because of the size of the event and public advertising to participate, the event would have to come before the Parks and Recreation Commission for approval. We have attached some conditions of approval that we think are appropriate with the costs to be paid for by the sponsor. (attached)

We do have a well established polar plunge fundraiser that takes place in March every year that benefits Special Olympics.

Mr. Stuart Rogan asked what the age level was of the participants and do they sign waivers?

Mr. Robin Myers (Team Mossman Triathlon Club) they have children as young as twelve. We have waivers that we have everyone sign.

Ms. Collins - You are charging your participants a fee and 100% of it goes to charity, to Save the Children.

Mr. Robin Myers - The minimum charge per person is \$25.00 or you can donate \$50, \$75 or \$100.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves a request from Save the Children/Team Mossman Triathlon Club to host an “Annual Polar Plunge” Fundraiser for Save the Children at Compo Beach subject to conditions of the Parks and Recreation Department:

The following will be required. All associated costs are the responsibility of the sponsor.

- **Parks and Recreation Department Site Supervisor**
- **Westport Police Officer**
- **Westport EMS on site during and following the swim**
- **Rental of portable toilet facilities**
- **Submission of certificate of insurance naming the Town of Westport as an additional insured.**

Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to require the sponsor to cancel the event if, in the sole opinion of the Parks and Recreation Department Site Supervisor, weather conditions make Compo Beach and associated parking inaccessible. In the event snow removal is required for safe access to the facility all costs of snow removal to be the responsibility of the sponsor.

3. Review of Parks and Recreation Department Revenues for FY 2010-11.

Commission members received information regarding department revenue overview; breakdown of beach emblem sales for 2010/11; comparison of beach emblem sales year-to-year; breakdown of handpass 2010-11 sales by category and comparison of handpass sales year-to-year.

Mr. McCarthy - The big item that is off significantly is the handpass revenue. We saw that trend coming in the last couple of years. The most easily explained is the golf pass revenue because we raised the cost of the golf pass significantly.

We have seen a leveling out of our credit card costs. We have a better handle on how we handle the credit cards for the marina from a recording standpoint. The golf course lost \$65,000 of revenue. That is a decline in rounds of play we had a terrible month of April and May this year.

On a whole we are down 3.7% in revenue. The biggest item is the handpass revenue which represents 60% of that shortfall. Our last general across the board fee increase was in 2008.

Mr. Stuart Rogan - Golf - suggested to open up selling handpasses to Weston residents.

Mr. McCarthy - I will note that our golf numbers year-to-year over the last several years have held up very well with regard to the area golf courses. Golf is a declining demand. The point is people playing golf now have a lot of options, a lot of places to go. There is a great deal of competition for rounds, and again trying to find that balance in holding on to your market share using smart discounts.

Ms. Collins - Would like to have the Golf Advisory Committee report to the Commission on how we compare to other communities with golf rates, handpasses, etc.

Mr. Franciscovich - What I would like to see is a spreadsheet of all of the different policies and fees for the different communities. How do they confirm residence and eligibility? What is the charge of the pass and what does it cover.

Ms. Collins - Basic Handpass - Would like to see usage figures for the pool, individual program users.

Mr. Franciscovich – Beach emblems - How do we confirm that people qualify for the senior rates?

Mr. Giunta - For anyone to purchase an emblem you need to have an account registered within our active net system. We verify through drivers license and when you produce the car registration, if it's registered to you, we can then verify through the drivers license being 62 or older.

Mr. Franciscovich – The beach season currently is May 1 to Sept. 30, 7 days a week, what if we were to change May 1st thru Sept. 30th to Columbus Day weekend and having weekdays only from Memorial Day thru Labor Day.

Mr. McCarthy – I could see extending the weekend staffing, I don't think it would be a good idea to decrease the weekday staffing. One of the benefits of having staff down there, it does give that opportunity for us to properly enforce by May 15th for people to get their emblem.

Ms. Johnson - It might make sense going forward that we request a per person or per event charge for special events.

Mr. Franciscovich - At the very least we should have the people running the events provide us with an accounting of the event.

Mr. Stan Nayer - Was there much of an increase or decrease in scholarships? Mr. McCarthy - There was a decrease it went from 338 to 290 in handpasses. That is number of families that requested handpasses verified by the Human Services Department. We did have an increase in demand for scholarships for programs. We have a cap on scholarships and then Human Services buys programs from us. Those are reflected in Karen Puskas' program report.

4. Review of Parks and Recreation Department operations related to on-line customer services.

Ms. Collins – From a staff standpoint it is still a very manual process for the beach emblems and handpasses. Once you go online to buy those the staff has to do the same process

whether you came in or did it online. However, program registration is much more automated and doesn't require the same task level of handling that transaction.

Mr. McCarthy - We have provided you with the information of the three years that suggests that we are now doing almost 70% of our activity registration online. Our membership registration which is the handpass and beach emblems is at 38%, that's up from 33% last year.

Right now the parking emblem fees are at 40% and I think one of the issues with the parking emblem is that we still require you to have a physical annual parking emblem because you can't renew an old emblem online.

At the present time we have not been able to have scanning technology at a reasonable cost to install at that beach location. That becomes one of our priorities for development of the next phase of online services is to look at that. We are investigating that technology and it's going to be a substantial investment to do that. One of the problems right now is that if you want to go to the beach today, you need to go into the office and get your pass. If you went online you would have to wait until we mailed the pass to you.

Ultimately we need to redesign the beach entrance so that you have an express lane for pass holders and you have a non-express lane for people who need to purchase a daily fee.

Today was the first day of walk-in registration and we had two customers all day. We are clearly seeing an impact. Right now the impact is being able to reduce seasonal staff. But as we predicted we have eliminated the \$10/hr clerks but we have supervisory staff that needs to be able to manage the software in-house. We have eliminated close to 60% in the extra help and overtime budget. We have three full time people that are involved in the active program. Rick Giunta is the Administrative Manager, Barbara Vornkahl, Customer Service Manager and Cyndi Palaia, Program Assistant. Cyndi spends 60% of her time doing a combination of the active net administrative setup and also troubleshoots, acts as a backup to the day to day operation of the programs and then fills in as a clerk.

All boat billing and bathhouse billing has been incorporated into the online program.

This has been a huge convenience for the 70% of the customers that do program registration online. We have decreased the hours that the office is open. We have changed the dynamic of the staff.

Ms. Collins – I think we should start a summary process of what the impact of the system has done both externally and internally.

Mr. Moss - Have you thought about doing a survey of how people like the online system, at some point I think that would be a good idea. Mr. McCarthy - No we have not.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

None

7. Commissioner's Reports

None

8. Administrative Update

Mr. McCarthy - Hurricane Damage - Staff did an outstanding job both in preparation and the cleanup to the storm. Compo Beach reopened to the public at 8a.m. on Monday morning. Golf course reopened on Tuesday morning. Our response organizationally and individually was outstanding.

We have already repaired the boardwalk for \$15,000.

Had contractors in doing some storm cleanup for the first couple of days with heavy equipment - \$5,000 - \$6,000

Did a full cleanup of Old Mill parking lot.

Outstanding Projects –

1. Wall behind the Sailing School and the Longshore Pool, the wall was completely demolished - we are estimating approximately \$150,000 for replacement. I have been in contact with DEP there is emergency permits that are available to us to do that work. We hope to have that work done by the close of the calendar year.
2. FEMA - We did an initial survey with FEMA which was simply FEMA determining the gross amount of damage, they were dealing with it on a state wide basis, and whether or not the state would be eligible for reimbursement. They did an initial assessment and there may be some dollars available.
3. Compo Beach - the wall and road on Soundview Drive is a priority that might be completed in the next week. That would include rebuilding the wall rebuilding the road behind the wall and then regarding the beach in that area.
4. Hillspoint Road - sidewalk washed away and needs to be rebuilt.
5. Burying Hill Beach - there is a small retaining wall that has been damaged
6. We are still accessing the pool damage – not sure if it is storm related.

The golf course there was a lot of tree and brush removal no real damage.

Bathhouses - doors got blown off (doors will be repaired).

Ms. Johnson suggested putting signs up in the bathhouse at Compo Beach “No Climbing.”

Ms. Collins - A proposal was received by a resident to redo the boardwalk at Compo Beach, to keep it inside the wall and extend it the entire distance of Soundview Drive.

Ms. Collins – Trash at the baseball fields - can the Little League collect the trash instead of us? The concern about the trash at the baseball fields is that there are bees this time of year.

Ms. Johnson - Are we keeping the meadows open? Mr. McCarthy they will be knocked down in the next couple of weeks. We have had some complaints and we also thought it was very successful.

The meeting adjourned @ 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully,
Sheila Kavey
Recording Secretary