

FINAL



January 16, 2020

The Westport Parks and Recreation Commission held a meeting on Wednesday, January 15, 2020 @7:31pm in the Green Room at Town Hall.

Members Present:

Charles Haberstroh, Chairman; Karen Hess, Edward Iannone, Alec Stevens, Steve Axthelm

Also Present:

Jennifer Fava, Director - Parks & Recreation; Rick Giunta, Deputy Director; Cyndi Palaia, Program Manager; DJ Simmons, reporter for the Westport News, Edward Batlin, President of P.A.L., along with members of the public.

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Karen Hess, seconded by Edward Iannone, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting of November 20, 2019 were approved 5-0.

2. Public Comment:

Sal Liccione, RTM Member, 50 Church Lane requested that the locker rooms be put into this year's Capital Budget for repairs.

3. Reports of:

Boating Advisory Committee

- Charles Haberstroh reported that the Boating Advisory Committee has not met since November 2019.
- Jennifer Fava reported:
 - Invoices have gone out with the updated fees. The fee increases were approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission in November, and approved by the Board of Selectman.
 - The boarding fingers for the "F" Dock at Compo Marina are in need of replacement, due to structural decline. An Appropriation was submitted and approved by the Board of Finance, and will be going to the RTM for \$240,000, due to the necessary lead time. Work will begin in November 2020. Bids will be going out for the removal and disposal of the current ones, and the installation of the new fingers, as the project gets closer.
 - The next Boating Advisory Committee meeting will be on March 2, 2020.

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Golf Advisory Committee – Jane Dally

- The Golf Advisory Committee met on January 6.
- Progress has moved forward with the switching of holes #9 and #14. Starting the 2020 season, they will be playing the course with a slightly different layout.
- There was discussion regarding the fee increases for charity golf outings, and the overall feeling was it is a modest increase and met with approval.
- Jennifer Fava stated that the MGA has not be able to return to rate the ladies course, due to its lack of volunteers and Jon Janik is looking for an alternate way to have it rated, perhaps through the Connecticut section.
- Jennifer Fava stated that the Golf Maintenance Contract was put out to bid, receiving two bids. One was Brightview and the other was disqualified, due to lack of Northeast experience. Brightview was selected and a new contract was signed for three years. The Town will incur a savings of \$20,000 this year.
- Brightview will also be spearheading the upgrades to the controls of the irrigation system this spring. This was an agenda item on the Board of Finance and will also be reviewed for approval by the RTM. The cost will be \$125,000. It has a lifespan of approximately 15 years, at which time it may be necessary to replace the entire irrigation system. This project will be done in the off-season, with no disruption to the course.

Parks Advisory Committee – David Floyd

- The Parks Advisory Committee met on January 6.
- The Riverside Park property survey has been completed. The committee has given Jennifer Fava a list of site plan suggestions. Jennifer Fava will be sending out an RFQ for On-Call Landscape Design Services to assist in the planning.
- As part of the preliminary plan, shrubs and debris were removed and guard rails were installed, connecting the three properties. Space was left to continue expanding the existing sidewalk.
- Grace Salmon Park was also discussed.
 - There have been numerous requests from local neighbors to install a water fountain for dogs. Also, the walkway that runs the circumference of the park seems to be getting smaller as time goes on, and local neighbors would like to see that widened.
 - The peninsula north of center at Grace Salmon is under-utilized. The suggestion was made to look at clearing some of the under-brush that's cluttering the area.
- Looking to confirm a date in April for the annual clean-up day.

Racquets Advisory Committee – Ward Doonan

- Paddle courts and Platform Tennis are in good shape.
- Both Platform Tennis Leagues are doing well, however there is enough demand to add a third team to the Saturday program, which is under discussion.
- There is a constant demand for a women's Platform Tennis league, but not enough flexibility to fit it in.
- Still requesting the addition of two courts and warming hut. Would like an update on the Longshore Site plan.
 - Jennifer Fava stated that they have received eight proposals for the Longshore Site Plan, and they are in the process of reviewing and selecting a firm.
- Pickleball is going great at Bedford.
 - 35 resident season passes have been sold, 6 non-resident season passes have been sold.
 - 19 guests played this past Sunday at \$5 per person.
- The Racquets Advisory Committee is short two members and the committee has proposed two candidates and they are waiting for feedback.

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Levitt Pavilion Sub-Committee – Charles Haberstroh

- Two meeting dates have been established for the 2020/2021 calendar. The first meeting will be an organizational meeting scheduled for February 13. Second meeting will be on October 29.

4. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to the approval of the 2020 Charity Golf Tournaments at Longshore.

Charles Haberstroh stated that Parks and Recreation Department has received seven (7) annual applications and one (1) new request. The number of fund raising golf tournaments is limited to eight (8) annually. Fees were also raised slightly for this year's tournaments.

Applications reviewed:

- Westport Professional Firefighter's Association
- Staples High School Gridiron Club
- VFW Post 399
- Westport Police Athletic League
- Longshore Men's Golf Association
- Staples Lacrosse Association
- Children's Community Development Center
- Learning Community Day School (new request)

Charles Haberstroh reviewed the "Usage of Westport golf facilities for fund raising tournaments". He had questions regarding the timing of submission requests, as well as the timing for receiving the final financial results. As this was not an agenda item, it will be addressed at a different time.

Each application was reviewed by the Commission. If the representatives were in attendance, they were asked to speak about their organization and explain how their net proceeds would benefit the community. Charles Haberstroh stated that next year, the applicants should provide more detail on how the proceeds of their events are allocated.

Upon a motion by Charles Haberstroh, seconded by Steve Axthelm, and pass unanimously 5-0

RESOLVED: the Parks and Recreation Commission approves the following charity golf outings at Longshore Club Park for the 2020 season subject to dates approved by the Parks and Recreation Director:

- Westport Professional Firefighter's Association
- Staples High School Gridiron Club
- VFW Post 399
- Westport Police Athletic League
- Longshore Men's Golf Association
- Staples Lacrosse Association
- Children's Community Development Center
- Learning Community Day School

The Parks and Recreation Commission approved waiving the golf cart fees and greens fees for the Longshore Men's Golf Association's charity golf tournament (Club House Cup) for 2020.

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5. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to a request from Westport P.A.L. to use Compo Beach for the 2020 town fireworks.

Jennifer Fava reviewed the submission letter by Ned Batlin, President of the Police Athletic League requesting the use of Compo Beach for the 2020 town fireworks.

Ned Batlin, P.A.L. President, requested July 2 as the date for the fireworks, with a rain date of July 3. He also requested to allow P.A.L. to increase the fee from \$35 to \$40 per car, and reduce the amount of tickets sold from 2,000 to 1,800. Ned Batlin stated that Uber and walk-ins have affected the number of ticket sales and they have not sold out in the last two years. Jennifer Fava stated that the public has a better experience with fewer cars. Charles Haberstroh would like to include that alcohol will be allowed on east beach for this event*, however, there needs to be emphasis on “no glass” allowed on beach property.

Public Comments:

John Polayes, 15 Over Rock Lane - is concerned about alcohol and glass on beach property.

Sal Liccione, RTM member, 50 Church Lane - requested signage regarding no glass for the beach for that night.

Jessica Bram, RTM member, 32 Webb Road - commented that traffic was handled very well last year. She is concerned about people “reserving” space on the beach by laying down towels or by monopolizing the tables. Jennifer Fava stated that picnic tables cannot be reserved and staff will correct any “reserving of tables”; however, there is no way to police people setting up their areas on the beach.

Commissioner Comments:

Charles Haberstroh asked if there should be more police patrolling the beaches that night? Ned Batlin stated that he would pass it along.

Steve Axthelm is also requesting that “no glass” needs to be enforced.

Jennifer Fava suggested that a “no glass” statement be added to the fireworks ticket.

Upon a motion by Charles Haberstroh, seconded by Karen Hess, and passed 5-0

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission grants approval to the Westport Police Athletic League to host the 2020 Fireworks at Compo Beach on Thursday, July 2, rain date of Friday, July 3. Compo Beach parking lots to close at 4pm and reopen to only fireworks ticket holders. Additionally, entry fee per car is approved at \$40.

After the above motion passed, the following amendment was proposed:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT: To allow alcohol on east beach during the 2020 fireworks.

Upon a motion by Charles Haberstroh, seconded by Karen Hess, and passed 5-0

6. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to increasing the Daily Parking fee due to requirements regarding Connecticut State Tax.

Jennifer Fava stated that effective January 1, 2020, the state of Connecticut implemented a new law that expands sales tax to include municipal parking lots. This affects both the sales of beach emblems, as well as daily fees charged at beaches. There are two options: 1) the tax is included in the sales price and the receipt must indicate “tax included” or 2) the tax is added to the sales price and separately listed on the receipt.” To minimize issues with making change, it was proposed to raise the daily fees to include sales tax, as indicated in the memo from the Director.

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The Commissioners discussed the current fees vs. the proposed fees to understand the details involved on how the percentages were determined . The discussion also included sending out email blasts to inform residents that this increase is based on a State tax requirement and not the Town, and additional signage at the beaches to explain the inclusion of the tax to their purchase.

Public Comment:

John Polayes, 15 Over Rock Lane was concerned that this wasn't a consistent raise across the board.

Upon a motion by Charles Haberstroh seconded by, Karen Hess, and passed 5-0

RESOLVED: the Parks and Recreation Commission approves increasing the Daily Parking fees as proposed, due to the inclusion of the Connecticut State Tax.

7. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to recommended proposed fee changes for Parks and Rec programs.

Jennifer Fava stated that the proposed fee changes for Youth Tennis Instruction, Camp Compo, REcing Crew, and Youth Basketball are due to the increase in minimum wage, as well as an increase in operating expenses, such as the fees for volunteer coach background checks.

Cyndi Palaia, Program Director discussed in detail the proposed 2020 fee increases for those programs with the Commissioners and background information factoring into this request.

Public Comments:

Jessica Bram, RTM member, 32 Webb Road – inquired who does the finger-printing? Cyndi Palaia said we don't do fingerprinting and stated that the Town works through a company who does the background checks, and they reach out to the different states.

Upon a motion by Charles Haberstroh seconded by, Edward Iannone, and passed 5-0

RESOLVED: the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen approval of Parks and Recreation Department fees as proposed.

8. To take such action as the meeting may determine regarding the moratorium on Compo Beach Bench Donations.

Jennifer Fava stated that the moratorium has been in effect for the past two years and recommends lifting the suspension now that the construction at Compo Beach is completed. The donation fee would remain the same, at \$2,500.

Karen Hess inquired about the longevity of donated benches. Jennifer Fava stated that per the policy, a bench is donated for a period of eight years. There are some that may be out for more than eight years. It's something that we need to review and figure out how to handle this policy.

Also discussed were the pros and cons of planting trees, either at Compo Beach or in the other parks.

Public Comments:

John Polayes, 15 Over Rock Lane – suggested planting donated trees, and have a sign that indicates the donors of the trees.

Upon a motion by Charles Haberstroh seconded by, Steve Axthelm, and passed 5-0

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RESOLVED: the Parks and Recreation Commission approves lifting the hiatus on requests for dedicated benches at Compo Beach beginning January 2020.

9. Discussion relative to the banning of smoking at Westport Town Beaches. (Discussion only).

Jennifer Fava stated that this is a continued discussion. She reviewed with the Commissioners several of the surrounding town's policies and/or their rules and regulations regarding smoking at their beaches and/or parks. Most of the Commissioners were in favor of no smoking at playgrounds, athletic fields and beaches, but need to specifically define areas. Charles Haberstroh would like to know the feedback from the town's who banned smoking, such as was there any backlash, how has enforcement been, and any unintended consequences?

Public Comments:

John Polayes, 15 Over Rock Lane – would like to see no smoking implemented at Compo Beach.
Jessica Bram, RTM member – is in favor of no smoking.

Charles Haberstroh would like representation from our Legal Department and Police Department at a future meeting to discuss this.

10. To take such action as the meeting may determine to approve the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting dates for February 2020 through January 2021.

Charles Haberstroh reviewed the dates with the Commissioners. Alec Stevens said he would not be available for the March meeting.

Upon a motion by Charles Haberstroh seconded by, Karen Hess, and passed 5-0

RESOLVED: the Parks and Recreation Commission approves the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting dates for February 2020 through January 2021.

11. Commissioners Report – No Report

12. Administrative Report: Jennifer Fava

- RFP for the Concession has gone out, with the mandatory walkthrough on January 7. Eight groups attended the walkthrough. RFP's due back January 22.
- BrightView was selected to continue the golf course maintenance. One other company which did not have any experience in the northeast was disqualified.
- Putting together RFQ for On-Call Landscape Design Services, and will go out shortly.
- Operations Manager position is posted, due January 29.
- New guard rail has been installed at Riverside Park.
 - Waiting on 100% complete survey to get approval to start stump grinding.
- January 8, 2020 BOF meeting
 - Board of Finance Budget Workshop 6:30pm, February 10 at Library
 - Two Appropriations - \$125,000 irrigation control system at Longshore Golf Course, \$240,000 replace F dock boarding fingers

Upon a motion by Steve Axthelm, seconded by Karen Hess, the meeting adjourned at 10:37pm.

Respectfully, Debbie Detmer, Recording Secretary