



# Town of Westport Parks & Recreation

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

November 14, 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, Karen Puskas Program Manager and five(5) member(s) of the general public.

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

**Ms. Collins made motion, seconded by Mr. Moss to add to the agenda item #6 the “Stipulation and Settlement Agreement- Athletic Field Lights” and passed unanimously.**

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Franciscovich requested spelling correction on page #2, paragraph 6 “**associate**” to “**associated.**”

Upon motion by Mr. Moss, seconded by Ms. Johnson, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of September 12, 2011 were unanimously approved as amended.

### 2. To take such action as the meeting may determine to approve a request from Temple Israel to host a Polar Plunge/Fundraiser at Compo Beach.

Mr. McCarthy - We had two polar plunges last year normally we try not to have conflicting events but it seems like the date is particularly conducive to this type of an event. We told both organizations last year that we did require them to come to the Commission and place additional requirements on them. Mr. Patterson has had some conversations with Dan DeVito and is aware of those conditions. Dan DeVito will work with those two organizations to make sure that their events don't conflict with each other in the use of the facility.

Mr. Thomas Patterson (Temple Israel) - I am a member of Temple Israel and founded this event and have been doing this for five years now and actually didn't know about the requirements. This year we are doing the plunge for the Hole in the Wall Gang. Last year was for pancreatic cancer and we raised \$125,000 for five minutes in the water. We are hoping to raise at least \$100,000 for the Hole in the Wall Gang this year. All of the money goes directly to the organization we do not take any money to run or sponsor this event.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves a request from Temple Israel to host a “Polar Plunge/Fundraiser” at Compo Beach subject to conditions of the Parks and Recreation Department (attached).**

3. To take such action as the meeting may determine to approve the use of Longshore for charity golf/tennis outings for the 2012 season.

Mr. McCarthy - These are all returning events from last year. Most of these groups are smaller and are making less money than they have in the past. These are all Westport based organizations and the revenues are going to support their in-house causes or local charities.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves the following charity golf-tennis outings at Longshore Club Park for the 2012 season subject to dates approved by the Parks and Recreation Director:**

**Westport Professional Firefighter’s Association  
VFW Post 399  
Westport Rotary Club  
Westport Police Athletic League  
Staples High School Gridiron Club**

4. Review of Parks and Recreation 2011 Spring/Summer programs.

Ms. Collins - Looks like you have done an outstanding job of managing the expenses and the revenue to come out ahead.

Ms. Puskas - Spring/Summer you can see it was busy up and down in terms of the weather, but managed to get through. Compared to last year we had an increase of revenue of about \$34,000. In terms of participants we were up about 34 overall, but we are still staying around the same 3,300 – 3,400 people that participate in our programs every summer. The programs did very well, again with budget cuts we had to cut some corners but I have a great staff and they were able to make things work.

We raised the fee at Camp Compo and RECing Crew to be the same \$140.00 per week which worked out fine. RECing Crew is way above on the surplus side because we use fewer staff there because of it being middle school. Camp Compo we use more staff because of the age in children.

RECing Crew is a very popular program the only problem there is that we are limited in space. Coley Middle School is the only school available in the summer. The registrations are about 130 – 140 per week, where I could probably do closer to 150 – 160 if we had a larger facility.

Camp Compo we were actually lower in enrollment than we were last year. 2010 was our biggest year.

Mr. Franciscovich - How do these expenses flow through the budget? Mr. McCarthy - When we showed you the revenue reports we showed the program fees on a total basis. The total we were within \$20 - \$30,000 of a \$700,000 projection.

Mr. McCarthy - When we project our expenses we try and justify the budget based on our projected expenses and revenues. We do report both to you and the Board of Finance at the end of the year where we came out on those revenues. The answer is, if we had a good year the town takes the money, and if we have a bad year the town covers the loss.

Commission members congratulated Ms. Puskas on winning the National Alliance for Youth Sports award and asked how the department won this award.

Ms. Puskas - We are a member of the National Alliance for Youth Sports, which we have been for about 12 years. This is the biggest factor we have here in town on training people on how to work with children and become sports educated in terms of adult volunteers. Over the past 12 years we have trained close to 2,000 Westport residents to work with the different youth sports leagues in town. Currently in all of the youth sports leagues there are over 5,000 kids that are involved in the program. The National Youth Sports Coaches Association is a division of the National Alliance for Youth Sports. I am heavily involved in the National Alliance for Youth Sports. Every year they recognize five difference communities in the country for outstanding service. Three of them are military based and two are based in communities throughout the United States. I sent a power point presentation on Westport as a community, not only through Parks and Recreation but how Parks and Recreation manages to work with Little League, P.A.L., Lacrosse, etc. and how everybody is integrated in that and how we promote youth sports, youth sports environment and conduct sports education.

Mr. Moss asked if we share best practices with all of the other sports groups formally. Is there a website that you share documents on policies, a way to streamline that?

Ms. Puskas - Presently it is streamlined we all talk to each other so if someone has gone through the NYSCA training we know about it. Each sport might have its own training (football requires concussion training, etc.) we have streamlined it more. I talk more with the heads of each organization. We try to have the same information up on our websites, the same values, and same mission statements.

5. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to fee increases for the Parks & Recreation Department in 2012.

Mr. McCarthy - The Commission has been talking about this for about a year now with I think an understanding that at some point we need to adjust the fees. The last time we did a general fee increase was prior to the 2008 season so most of these fees have not been raised for that 3-4 year period of time. In 2010 the Commission made a decision to try and hold the line on fees again because of economic factors that individuals in the community are facing. Last year we got into discussions with the Board of Finance relative to who is going first, are we going to raise the fees or are you going to give us the money. We have not completely resolved this issue.

Mr. McCarthy presented the Commission with fees proposals for their consideration. There are two areas that are not included in these fee proposals - fees for programs we do those on an ongoing basis; 2) Staples High School Pool - that program begins in September so we are

already set for this year. The staff will present you with a more significant report on that whole program.

This is put on your agenda as an action item you have had a lot of discussion about fees over the last couple of months. I would say the one item that is somewhat time sensitive are the boating fees. If we are going to increase the boating fees we have work to do in terms of processing and updating the databases, the billing that generally goes out the first of January. The next deadlines are when we go to publish our materials in January.

Mr. Franciscovich - If you assume that the expense line is going to be kept at zero, what would do if you implemented all of these fee increases to the subsidy/deficit?

Mr. McCarthy - We are looking at about \$170,000 below projection of our revenues from the current year.

Mr. Franciscovich - I disagree with that premise because we don't get credit when the revenue goes up. You may get it as a management task from the First Selectman but as far as the commission is concerned we are kept flat.

Mr. Moss - Is the goal to close the gap between revenue projections and actual revenues? Or is the goal to get us back in line with where we were in terms of how much the town subsidizes us?

Ms. Collins - One of the realities that you are going to face is that the town would prefer to subsidize. I think that is the harsh reality of the economic situation that Westport and the entire country are facing. I think we need to put forward a special fund where our revenues go to a fund for Parks and Recreation facilities.

Mr. McCarthy - Creating with a special fund with guidelines on how that fund operates gives you some certainty going forward.

Mr. McCarthy - The reason for wanting to increase these fees now is because we do have short fall.

Mr. McCarthy - We started this discussion last year during the budget and I will be putting a budget together in December and January, it goes through the same process that everyone else goes through and by the time we figure out what that budget is going to look like and what kind of push is going to come on to that budget from the Board of Finance and the RTM, it's going to be too late to increase the fees for 2012. What I would suggest as you look at these fees is you haven't raised fees in four years, you did in fact have money restored to the budget last year by the RTM based on an argument that we would be good stewards of the finances of this department and we have not hit our revenue projections for 2010/11 fiscal year.

Ms. Collins - I think there is a general understanding that there is not much more cutting we can do.

Mr. McCarthy - Boating Fees - We did put together a proposal for the boating fees. The item that I would point out to you on the boating fees is that we have continued on a percentage basis to increase the larger boat sizes at a greater rate so that we have an 11% increase for the rowboat slot and 14% for the small boats under 18' - 20' when you get up to

the 32 – 40’ boats we are up to 26% increase. The larger boats there are less slips available, those are lifetime slips for the most part. As an example the market rate for a 21” boat is \$2,800 we are substantially below market value. Our idea was to keep the price down for the small boats.

Ms. Collins –If we could agree to increase just the boat slips tonight, with accepting these fees this year with the idea that next year we might revisit this. The only other fees I think we should address tonight are the non-resident daily parking fees at Compo Beach.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommend to the Board of Selectmen the fees for Parks and Recreation municipal boating as proposed.**

Mr. McCarthy - Compo Beach – daily parking fee - Last year the Commission had made a proposal and there was some general consensus that the Commission was in favor of raising the rates but determined not to do so at that time because of the uncertainty of the budget.

Ms. Collins - We had some public comments over the summer that it would be important to the community that we consider this increase.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommend to the Board of Selectmen an increase for daily, weekend and holiday parking at Compo Beach. In addition the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that the parking fine be raised to \$75.00 as proposed.**

	<u>Current Fee</u>	<u>Proposed Fee</u>
<b><u>Compo Beach</u></b>		
Weekday	\$ 20.00	\$ 30.00
Weekends & Holidays	\$ 40.00	\$ 50.00
<b>Parking Fine</b>	<b>\$ 50.00</b>	<b>\$ 75.00</b>

The Commission came to a consensus that the rest of the department fee increases still need to be evaluated for the season but to do that in the context of the budget discussion.

Ms. Johnson - At one point we had discussed extending the beach season for weekends through October because we had a lot of non-residents use our beach in October.

Mr. McCarthy suggested that this could be addressed at any time.

#### 6. Stipulation and Settlement Agreement – Athletic Field Lights

Ms. Collins - This has been a long process this originally started around 1978, it was passed approximately 3 years ago it was very restricted but the neighbors objected. The neighbors have now signed this agreement, the Board of Education has approved it, and the P&Z Commission has approved it subject the Parks & Recreation Commission’s approval.

Some of the key points are to allow 8 Westport Athletic Special events, FCIAC Championships are outside of those 8 special events and their associated practices. In addition, we got two Saturday events as a part of the special events until 8:00 p.m. The Board of Education will be the entity that will designate who uses those Saturday events. The technology changed a lot in the last few years since we have gone through this. We were going to have two different levels of lights and we found we no longer have to do that. There will be one level of lights and we will meet the neighbors lighting concerns. This agreement is specific to permanent lighting. A Review Committee will be responsible for enforcing the lighting regulations.

Mr. Moss - Overall this is a plus for the Town. This puts the regulation in place that the town can now have lights. The next step is the site plan. We did most of the footwork already. Since the BOE manages the field, it's appropriate for them to take the lead in securing the site plan. Gridiron Club will privately fundraise for these lights with P.A.L.'s help.

**Upon motion by Mr. Moss, seconded by Ms. Collins and passed unanimously, it was**

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission supports the "Stipulated Settlement Agreement" as presented.**

7. Old Business  
None

8. New Business  
None

9. Commissioner's Reports

Farewell to Ms. Collins –

Mr. Moss said it has been a pleasure to work with Ms. Collins on this Commission and wishes her good luck in her next endeavor.

Ms. Eileen Flug - Wanted to congratulate Janis on all of her accomplishments. Being such a strong advocate for the meetings of the P&R budget and also for creating Friends of Parks & Recreation which is outstanding.

Mr. Franciscovich - It has been a joy and honor to work with you. You have really accomplished a lot during your tenure. Halfway House; Friends of Parks & Recreation; Permanent Lights/temporary lights. It will be nice having someone on the Board of Finance that understands our issues. Also getting the RTM to do anything is quite an accomplishment.

Mr. Rogan - I have only been on this Commission a short time but I would like to say that it has been a pleasure and I could only hope you find great success in your new venture.

Ms. Johnson - If Eileen Flug had not recommended me to this Commission I would not have had the opportunity to work with you, I wish you great success.

Ms. Collins - This is an amazing Commission and it has been great fun and I love everybody.

10. Administrative Update

Mr. McCarthy - I suggest that in the context of fees, etc. that we do consider adding user fees for the sports organizations as we discussed when we did the "Field Use Policy." We will take this up at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned @ 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully,  
Sheila Kavey  
Recording Secretary