



# Town of Westport Parks & Recreation

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

December 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 Andy Moss, Chairman; Jennifer Johnson, George Franciscovich, Stuart Rogan; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation and eight(8) member(s) of the general public.

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

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Mr. Franciscovich, seconded by Mr. Rogan, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of November 14, 2011 were unanimously approved.

### 2. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to approving fees for the Longshore Sailing School for the 2011 season.

Mr. McCarthy - This is a request from the Longshore Sailing School for fees. Their contract does call for these fees to be reviewed and approved by the Commission, although the language in the contract specifically states that the approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed. The pertinent information is that these fees have not been changed since 2008.

Mr. Moss - Key point is that these are not fees for the Town; because of their contract with the property they can't charge exorbitant rates to the Town residents.

Ms. Johnson - I just wanted to say that this program is great. You mentioned that the increases are due to the damage from the hurricane. Are you going to be able to get FEMA funds and how much of the loss did you sustain?

Mr. Kantor - The seawall is gone which is being fixed by the Town. We lost virtually all of the boat racks and a lot of the docks (either totally destroyed or heavily damaged). We have no other source of revenues other than the fees. I don't think we would have come to you at all for any increase if it hadn't been for the storm.

Ms. Johnson - What is the ratio of Westport to non-Westport participants? Mr. Kantor - Junior program is about 55% for Westport residents and 40% non-resident. Adult programs are a little less than that.

Mr. Franciscovich asked if they were able to resolve the insurance issues they were having last year.

Mr. Kantor - We went to Hartford to appeal our case and won so therefore we did not institute the fees that were approved last year.

Ms. Johnson asked what the status was for the wall repair. Mr. McCarthy - The Public Works Dept. is executing this I would anticipate moving into that work this spring.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves the 2012 fee schedule for the Longshore Sailing School as submitted.**

3. Report from the Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Moss - One of the things I have asked for going forward, which I think would be very helpful for the Commission, I would like Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation to be part of our monthly meetings.

Mr. Jeff Mayer - Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation is coming up on its first anniversary. We got our 501(c) 3 from the IRS in March or April. We started working with and raising funds right away with Fred Hunter and Mark Holod on the 9<sup>th</sup> ½ Hole Committee. There is a website you can go to and make a contribution by pay pal or you can send a check to the Parks & Recreation Office.

We have raised a total of \$79,000 that is on hand with another pledge from an anonymous donor for an additional \$100,000. Also we are expecting that Mark Holod and Fred Hunter will be successful in organizing some in-kind gifts that will bring us up to what we estimate will be constructions costs of about \$225,000. We are probably within \$20,000 of our fundraising goal.

Mr. Fred Hunter - We have two things that are still needing some decisions on. 1) Parking Lot and sidewalk areas around the outside of the building originally designed about 7,000 – 8,000 sq ft of pavers with the estimated cost of \$16,000 - \$18,000. We are looking at some other alternatives to reduce that cost. Also our agreement with the Town is that we are not going to put a shovel in the ground until all funds are in the bank. 2) Kitchen - Mark Holod and I met with Joe Romeo who runs the beach concession, he does not have a contract for this particular project at the present time so he is a consultant to us. We have great support from suppliers in Town.

Mr. McCarthy - Once the project is established the concessionaire is responsible for meeting the health codes. Although we don't have a contract with Joe Romeo we do have a decision to make of ultimately what is, or is not going to be supplied in the building vs. what is going to be supplied by the concessionaire. Once we define those two items then we can go ahead and negotiate the contract with the concessionaire. The goal would be for the Town to provide as much equipment as possible. Depending on what their budget is, they are able to provide more or less.

Ms. Johnson asked when they thought this project would start. Mr. Hunter - Hopefully in the spring and they are saying it would take about 6 – 7 weeks to complete.

Mr. Jeff Mayer - Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation have also been enlisted as a backup funding facility for the Wakeman Town Farm. The Wakeman Town Farm is taking contributions through the Town of Westport but there are some foundations and individuals who may prefer to make their contribution to a 501(c) 3 instead of the Town because they may have restrictions in their policies for it.

I met with Andy Moss, and Andy really inspired a lot of creative thinking about how we can be successful going forward. As you may recall we started out with the idea of raising funds for projects and programs that the Town of Westport might not have the capability to fund. We will meet in January and discuss some ideas of how. For example if we model ourselves more closely like the Friends of the Library maybe we can have an annual event similar to the event that the Library sponsors in which we can raise funds, not only for specific projects, but for the Friends itself so that funds are there when somebody proposes doing a project. This is so that we don't have to wait for a fundraising process. Another objective which Andy and I share is to expand the board. I have reached out to a number of people of several generations and it's our thought that we should bring people in starting in their 20's living in Westport, using the parks facilities through the twilight years where they can be represented. We will definitely start adding to the board members and I would welcome any suggestions you have of people that might be of interest.

4. Report on the role of the Parks and Recreation Department related to the administration of the Wakeman Town Farm.

Mr. McCarthy - A not for profit organization called the GVI came to the Town and entered into a lease agreement for the property to start a demonstration farm and through some issues that program fell apart. GVI gave the lease back to the Town of Westport and the Town determined that they wanted to continue the farm in that location and established a Committee to operate the farm.

The First Selectman established a WTF Committee to oversee the operation of WTF and has asked the Parks and Recreation Department to provide administrative support to the Committee. The Parks and Recreation Department will assist the Committee in developing policies as well as interfacing with the town regarding purchasing and payroll functions. Also the Parks and Recreation Department will assist the WTF with program registration and promotion including a presence on the Town of Westport and Parks and Recreation Department websites and access to the program offerings through the Parks and Recreation Department ActiveNet registration software.

The WTF Committee will have its own stand alone budget (not part of the Parks & Recreation Department budget). They anticipate that their budget will be a combination of donated and fundraised revenues as well as program fees (educational programs they will run for the farm) will offset the costs. So we will assist them in interfacing with the Town's financial system.

We will incorporate the Wakeman Town Farm into our website so that people can utilize our online registration capabilities for WTF. It will be a separate entity.

Ms. Johnson asked that the Commission get periodic updates of how the WTF is doing.

## 5. Old Business

Mr. Moss asked the Commission that whether it is before the agenda is received or after it is received, if they had questions/concerns, that they should email Stuart with a copy to Andy, this way Stuart can be more prepared in advance of the meeting.

## 6. New Business

Mr. Rogan - I was at the Golf Advisory Committee meeting and they made mention of a piece of property behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole of the golf course that is having some issues and I was wondering what was happening with that property.

Mr. McCarthy - This item will be put on an agenda at some point with the actual details. There is a property behind the second green their property line comes out to about 8ft off of the right back of the 2<sup>nd</sup> green at Longshore. The house is a long way away there is a lot of woods back there and we maintain the golf course at the woods line. So there is a portion of their property that's part of the play of the golf course. The Town Attorney was approached several months ago they may want to sell the property at some point in the future and wanted to get this cleared up.

We are looking at a land swap giving them a piece of contiguous property to their property that has less impact on the golf course, so that if the new owners wanted to put up a fence up they could do that. This would have no impact on the golf course.

Mr. Moss would like each Commission member to have an area of responsibility. I have some thoughts and feel free to confirm with me by e-mail if this is acceptable.

Jenny Johnson - Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation  
 Stuart Rogan - Budget  
 George Franciscovich - Board of Education

Mr. Stuart Rogan - I would like to see something done about Weston residents getting handpasses to be able to play golf. My thinking was maybe doubling the price of the hand pass for people in Weston and then allowing them to play golf at a little better rate.

Mr. Moss - Weston has a special relationship with Westport I think it is reasonable to look at other opportunities for that and as we go through the budget process and get clarification on revenue and expenses how they are going to be imposed. So when we revisit fees I think there is an opportunity to look at that. So lets look at it in the context of our overall budget what principals that we have in that budget and how we deal with Weston in general.

Ms. Pippa Bell-Ader - Skate Park - My son uses the skate park and the equipment is not in perfect condition and that could be a liability.

## 7. Commissioner's Reports

Mr. Moss - I have had brief conversations with some members of the Board of Finance and it was a positive impression that members of the Board of Finance recognize that this department is a little different and that it makes sense to look at the net rather than simply expenses. Michael Rea of the Board of Finance would be the point person.

8. Administrative Update

None

The meeting adjourned @ 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully,  
Sheila Kavey  
Recording Secretary