



Town of Westport Parks & Recreation

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

February 13, 2012

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 and Steve Axthelm; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation; Rick Giunta, Administrative Manager, Dan DeVito, Operations Supervisor and three(3) member(s) of the general public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Ms. Johnson made motion, seconded by Mr. Franciscovich and passed unanimously the following item was added to the agenda:

To take such action as the meeting may determine to recommend to the Board of Selectmen a fee for Parking Passes – Book of 10 for weekdays and weekends.

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine to recommend to the Board of Selectmen a fee for Parking passes – Book of 10 for weekdays and weekends.

Mr. McCarthy - The Commission had increased the daily parking fees at Compo Beach from \$20 and \$40 to \$30 and \$50. We sell a book of 10 passes that needs to be purchased in advance at a 15% discount that would put the price of those booklets at \$255 for weekdays and \$425 for weekends and holidays. We don't sell a lot of these (10 or under) and it came about when people would comment about the Parks & Recreation Department not giving any kind of waiver for the daily parking fee for their guests.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen approval of fees for Daily Parking – Book of 10 as proposed.

Weekdays – from \$170 to \$255

Weekends and Holidays – from \$340 to \$425

2. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Mr. Franciscovich, seconded by Ms. Johnson, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of January 23, 2012 were unanimously approved as amended.

3. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to changes in policies and procedures for the Longshore Golf Course.

Mr. McCarthy - These are relatively minor changes to the golf course reservation system that were proposed by the Golf Advisory Committee. Right now under the current policy tee times by phone are every morning @ 6:30 a.m. 5 days in advance. Then at 7:30 a.m. the on-line system goes into affect. The change would be to have the on-line starting time to be 15 minutes after the phone system. One of the reasons for this change is because we have had problems with the phone system on occasion. So this would allow if there was a problem with the phone system 15 minutes later the entire system will go on-line. One of the items we did consider was doing away with the phone system and having all tee times managed on-line. That was not recommended in the final analysis. Even the vendor was not comfortable given the amount of demand on the system all at one time. Whether or not their system was able to handle that kind of volume. The recommendation is to change the on-line starting time 15 minutes after by phone.

The second change is relative to non-resident tee times. Currently non-resident tee time reservations are available Monday thru Thursday only and up to 2 days in advance. The recommendation by the GAC is to make those tee times available 4 days in advance. This is an effort to a) continue to have the residents have first shot at the reservation system by moving the non-residents up to 4 days in advance and the idea is to generate more non-resident play in unused tee times. Most other courses in the area do have advanced reservations for non-residents some as much as seven days in advance.

Mr. Franciscovich asked why we were doing 5 days and not 7 days in advance? Mr. McCarthy - The reason is so that for people who regularly play golf on the same day every week, would be able to call for a tee time

Mr. Franciscovich - That is part of my concern, because there is a perception out there that certain people somehow get those same prime tee times. I know that may not be reality but that is perception and what that does is, some of the casual golfers will go some place else to golf rather than Longshore.

Mr. McCarthy - It is not the fact that the same people get the same tee times every week, whether it's the perception I'm not sure what we can do about that.

Mr. Franciscovich requested change of the wording that says **“Non-resident of Westport” to “Non-Handpass Holder.”**

Mr. Hunter - The change in 6:30 a.m. to 6:45 a.m. generally is an attempt to address the people being on the train. Generally in the first 7 or 8 minutes all of the tee times are gone. The computer can eat up tee times pretty quick when you have a number of people going on at the same time. In talking with Chelsea, part of the issue is also what you wind up with in some cases are some double bookings, where the phone calls and the computer comes in at the same time. That happens a couple of times a year and John Cooper fixes it. The idea is that in that first 7 or 8 minutes the tee times are gone, however within ten or fifteen minutes some of those tee times are cancelled. It is perception that the same people get the same tee time and it just comes from people knowing how to use the system. It is the fairest system around. For now the change in the tee times to four days is just Monday thru Thursday to encourage play during that time. We are not changing the advanced reservation for the weekend.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approve changes to the Golf Policies and Procedures as recommended by the Golf Advisory Committee.

4. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to approving fees for Longshore Golf Course.

Mr. McCarthy - The Commission back in November looked at various fees, and passed fee increases for boating and daily parking at the beach. We proposed some fee increases for the golf course at that time and the Commission elected to pass on those then for a variety of reasons including trying to clarify how the BOF is going to retain the money in the budget. This would be the first increase in four years.

We have come back to you with a new fee proposal on the golf course and I think I presented you with information at the last meeting the golf course and the challenges we are facing financially on the golf course. Current analysis with the increased percent of employee benefits incorporated into the golf course expenses the golf course shows a significant operating subsidy. I would suggest a dollar per round increase in the current year and then perhaps look at another increase next year.

Mr. Franciscovich - My thoughts are where I was last time, especially not knowing what is going to happen at the Board of Finance workshop and especially here to start increasing fees into the declining market.

Mr. Moss - Having had conversations with the Board of Finance I am comfortable that they are going to assess us on a net basis.

Mr. Axhelm - If golf is in the decline what are we doing to increase our enrollment?

Mr. Hunter - If you look at revenue for the year, just greens fees alone we were about \$80,000 short. This year for the first time senior play on the weekends went up 18 – 20%. But likewise adult play on the weekends was down about 17% and there is no difference in the rate for the adult handpass and the senior on the weekends. I think that is an indication we have an aging population in Westport. The seniors play a second largest number of rounds and they get the single largest discount on the golf course so at some point that is something you may want to take a look at. In terms of junior golf, John Cooper runs a great junior program.

Mr. Hunter suggested when putting the budget together to put a line item in the golf budget for advertising. This could be used for some advertising in the newspapers to compete with some of the other area golf courses.

Mr. Moss - We want to optimize to a point that there is a residence convenience thing also.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommend to the Board of Selectmen changes to the Longshore Golf fees for the 2012 golf season as proposed.

	Current Fee	Proposed 2012 Fee
<u>Weekday 18 holes</u>		
Adult Handpass	\$ 23.00	\$ 24.00
Sr. Citizen	\$ 18.00	\$ 19.00
Jr. Handpass	\$ 18.00	\$ 19.00
Adult Guest	\$ 45.00	\$ 46.00
Jr. Guest	\$ 29.00	\$ 30.00
<u>Weekday 9 holes</u>		
Adult Handpass	\$ 20.00	\$ 21.00
Sr. Citizen	\$ 16.00	\$ 17.00
Jr. Handpass	\$ 16.00	\$ 17.00
Adult Guest	\$ 33.00	\$ 34.00
Jr. Guest	\$ 24.00	\$ 25.00
<u>Weekend 18 holes</u>		
Adult Handpass	\$ 25.00	\$ 26.00
Sr. Citizen	\$ 25.00	\$ 26.00
Jr. Handpass	\$ 20.00	\$ 21.00
Adult Guest	\$ 51.00	\$ 52.00
Jr. Guest	\$ 34.00	\$ 35.00
<u>Twilight</u>	\$18.00	\$ 20.00
<u>Winter Rounds</u>		
Winter Rate	\$ 7.00	\$7.00
Guests	\$ 12.00 (delete)	

- To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to proposed improvements at Ned Dimes Marina.

Mr. McCarthy - We provided you with some information this is a long planned capital improvement project for the Ned Dimes Marina that we are planning on moving forward with. There are three projects. The first two are being lumped together and that is the replacement of the T-Heads and replacement of the boarding fingers at Compo basin and replacement of the boarding fingers. We are still working on the costs estimates and it appears that the costs may be as much as 15% or 20% below the last estimates I gave you. We have some new numbers from the vendor that suggest that the cost on the T-head project is considerably less than what is estimated. The funds are there based on the fee increase you implemented.

The combined project cost of \$500,000 will create an annual debt service payment over 10 years.

The second project is the Shore Stabilization project. On this project we are asking for design fees. We need to get engineers in to give some options to try and determine what are the best long term and most cost effective method of stabilizing that shore. This project has been held

for several years and those boats in that area of the marina really can't get in and out of the marina at low tide.

The action for the Commission on this is to endorse these projects and recommend that they be submitted for funding.

Mr. Franciscovich requested a presentation of what is going on at the Marina's at a future Parks & Recreation Commission meeting.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission endorses the Ned Dimes Marina capital maintenance projects as discussed and recommends to the First Selectman submission of the request(s) for funding.

6. To take such action as the meeting may determine to increase fines for illegal parking in the beach area.

Mr. McCarthy - The Commission made the increase to the daily parking at Compo Beach on the weekends/holidays to \$50.00 and at the time requested the parking fine be raised to \$75.00 from \$50.00 for illegal parking in the parking lots. This does take a specific action by the Commission, and then it will go to the Board of Selectmen.

I am requesting specific action in amending the Rules and Regulations in **Section IV. Parking & Traffic** where there are four references to a \$50.00 parking ticket per day related to parking at Old Mill Beach, Longshore Club Park, Compo Beach and trailer parking, and Sherwood Mill Pond Preserve. At the same time we do this we will have a joint request by myself and the Police Dept. to increase the road parking fines in the beach area to \$75.00 as well.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen to approve change to the parking fines in the beach area referenced in:

Sec IV 4b., Sec IV 5, Sec IV 6 and Sec IV 10 from \$50.00 to \$75.00

The Parks and Recreation Commission also supports to jointly go with the Police force to raise the road parking fine in the beach area to \$75.00.

7. Discussion relative to policies and fees related to the use of Town of Westport athletic fields.

Mr. Moss - When we approved the Policy on Use of Westport Athletic Fields last spring we left a place open with the possibility of charging a fee. Stuart has asked us to consider what policy should support that fee if we should have one and under what conditions would we charge a fee so this is open for discussion.

Mr. McCarthy - When we went through this we did talk about potentially having general fees for all using a facility. We also talked specifically about fees for some of the adult activities

that are allowed under the policy but for below some of the standards for resident activities. It was recognized when we did this, that adult activities if you had a strict residency requirement you wouldn't have any adult athletic activities because adults don't socialize and participate in sports in the same fashion that the kids do. Adult activities are either based on where they live or where they work or where their friends are. We have extended a definition of a "resident" so resident then includes people who work in town, Staples HS graduates. Then the question is because they are not residence should you in fact now be charging them for the privilege. Specifically some of our in-house leagues already have fees (softball, volleyball). We have an adult baseball program and we have three adult soccer teams.

Second part of the discussion is whether or not we should be charging a field use fee for anyone who is using the facility, including all of the various youth sports teams, etc.

Mr. Moss - My thoughts were to have a sub group gather some thoughts, review with Mr. McCarthy and then come back to the Commission for discussion.

Mr. Stuart Rogan - What expenses do we have with the fields? Mr. McCarthy - There are really no incremental expenses; our fields are prepared for the weekend.

Ms. Johnson - Not keeping the fields booked all of the time and having the fields open so that someone can use it without any scheduled planning, I think is important.

Mr. Rogan - When I played ball I never remember having to pay to play and I hate to see us not allow these people to play. You want to charge them a small fee for maintenance I can understand that but to tell them they have to pay to play, really goes against my feelings. I played on three softball teams at one time and we played in three different towns and didn't pay anything.

Mr. Axthelm - I think there are a lot of sides and I think are influenced and need to be explored. I would like to volunteer to be a part of exploring that. I think we have to weigh a lot of things one against the other and I don't want to discourage athletes anywhere. I totally agree that you want to have field space available and we are not looking to maximize our inventory every minute of every day.

Mr. Franciscovich asked how it works with the regular softball leagues that play down at Compo Beach. Mr. McCarthy - A current softball league either a Westport company has to sponsor the team or the team has Westport residents that work there. For our adult standard of a resident they either live, work in Westport or are a Staples HS graduate.

8. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Johnson - The monies raised for the Halfway House is at \$195,000. In general for the Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation we will be doing more marketing. We are going to have a newsletter and are looking for ways in which we can have some kind of advertising out there and bring people more connected.

Mr. McCarthy - The approval for the project is that I need to sign off on the project and the Public Site and Building Commission needs to sign off on it. We both have signed off on it and I got a copy of their resolution today and it will be forwarded on to Mr. Mayer who will then transfer the funds into a separate account at which time the 9 ½ Hole Committee would

be authorized to begin construction of the Golf Halfway House. They are waiting for their final permits from the various departments.

9. Old Business

Mr. Franciscovich - Ms. Johnson and I will have something for the Commission on extending the beach season into October soon.

10. New Business

Mr. Axthelm - Does the lights scenario at Staples H.S. incorporate any other moratoriums on other things going on at the school? There is a rumor right now that they are trying to build a girls varsity field. Mr. McCarthy - I'm aware of this and I don't believe they are going to be able to do that at Staples H.S. given the site restrictions.

11. Commissioner's Reports

None

12. Administrative Update

None

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully,

Sheila Kavey
Recording Secretary