



Town of Westport Parks & Recreation

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

March 12, 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; George Franciscovich, Stuart Rogan and Steve Axthelm; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation; Rick Giunta, Administrative Manager, and five (5) member(s) of the general public.

Absent: Jennifer Johnson, Commission Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Mr. Rogan, seconded by Mr. Franciscovich, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of February 13, 2012 were unanimously approved.

Mr. Moss changed the order of agenda items # 2 thru #5.

2. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Jeff Mayer - The ground breaking for the Golf Halfway House was last week.

With publicity from Dan Woog's blog "06880" mentioning the Friends there were some good comments and ideas. One that I would highlight is the renovation of the bathhouses at Compo Beach that have been in disrepair for a long time. There is some talk about tennis courts at the High School.

One other project in the works is we are accepting funds for the Wakeman Town Farms. When people don't want to give funds to the Town for the Wakeman Town Farms, they can send it to Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation. Some charitable foundations don't allow the contribution to the government, so we take the funds and then we can disburse them.

Friends has set up a sub committee which is looking at fundraising and creating some kind of annual fundraiser that can raise the visibility of the Friends to bring in some extra dollars so that when small projects arise it might be worthwhile.

There are no updates on future board members.

3. Discussion of overview of marina operations.

Mr. Rick Giunta presented an overview of the Marina operations and showed a layout of the two marinas on how the slips are assigned by category and where they are located within the marina.

The marinas are operated under two categories: Administrative and Operations

Operations - Dock Maintenance, Security, Dockmaster, Seasonal Staff who provide assistance to boaters; fuel, oil and ice sales; and vessel pump outs

Administrative - Provide waitlist management; Boat invoicing and collection of revenues

The wait list process - starts off with a boating application. A person would fill out an application for each boat size they are interested in and each application requires a \$50 deposit. If a spot becomes available you can accept or reject that offer. You get one deferral. If you choose to defer you will be asked again the following season if a slip becomes available. At this point you may accept or reject the offer. If you reject the offer you are removed from the waitlist and must start the process from the beginning forfeiting your deposit. This process would be for each application submitted. Boating assignments are for Westport residents only. The boat is to be registered to the Westport address and whoever filled out the boating application.

Mr. McCarthy - Wait List - A master copy of the boat waiting list is always available in our office for people to view.

Mr. Franciscovich - When was the policy established to have people sign up for multiple categories? Mr. McCarthy - That has been around a long time my guess is it was probably around when the Boating Advisory Committee was formed which was approximately in 1990. I think it was designed to give a true look at the wait list. By dividing it into categories we have a much better idea of where the demand is for individual spaces.

Mr. Moss asked for more visibility of the numbering of the slips.

Ms. Eileen Flug - How do the fees compare to other communities? Mr. McCarthy - We are in the ballpark. Fairfield is a little lower we are in the same ballpark with Stamford and Greenwich.

Mr. McCarthy - The moorings in the river are controlled by the State of Connecticut. The Harbor Master gives permits for those through the State of Connecticut. We have a license agreement with a launch service that runs out of Longshore and we charge him for keeping his boats in the marina. We don't charge him anything else and as a result we don't share liability. People contract with him and he provides ferry service out to their moorings. The concept of this was that the people who have their boats out there are Westport residents who are on the waiting list, and are trying to get into the marina, so we are going to help him provide a service that can service these people who can't get into our facilities.

4. New Business

Mr. McCarthy - We had our spring/summer program registration today. The program registration went live at 9:00 a.m. this is the fourth year with the automated online

registration. At 12 minutes after 9a.m. the Active Network server crashed and it was 1 hour and 40 minutes before it came back online.

I will start by saying what a tremendous job our staff did; it was all hands on deck answering the phones. We were about an hour into this and made the decision to suspend the registration. What was obvious was that people were in all different places in the registration process when the server went down. Finally we decided that we couldn't ask people to sit around and continue to wait. We began telling people on the phone that we cancelled for the day and that we would be rescheduling. We sent press releases out and contacted the Board of Education to send out through their list server.

Ultimately the decision was that completed transactions in the system would be honored so that anybody who finished a transaction and had a receipt for that transaction we would honor that transaction and for everyone else we would restart registration on Thursday, 3/15 @ 9:00 a.m. Rick spent a great deal of time on the phone with the technical people at Active. They were responsive where they took responsibility, etc. My biggest question was, how did this happen? In essence we had overloaded the server capacity that was assigned to us. It took in my mind way too long to get back up and operating. My staff did a tremendous job and I think we made some good decisions along the way. I really didn't see an opportunity not to suspend the registration, again not knowing how long it was going to take. So in trying to maintain the fairness and integrity in our registration we made that decision to suspend.

In reviewing what had transpired up to when the system went off there was no closed programs. Most of the programs had less than 20% enrollment in them.

Mr. Rogan - What provisions have they made in a situation like this so this won't happen again?

Mr. McCarthy - I don't have that information. They need to come back to us and correct those issues.

Mr. Moss - Active Net needs to do that on our behalf and we should also have a disaster recovery plan in place should this happen.

Mr. Steve Axthelm - I was working with a group that was behind the issue of creating a new Staples Girls Varsity softball field. I approached Marty Lisevick about 18 months ago because the Staples Girls Softball has about the poorest facility of any of the varsity programs at the high school. There is no sense of school spirit behind the program because they play at Greens Farms School. I was hoping that the Staples JV field that borders the soccer field next to the Ginny Parker turf field could be turned into a nice complex that would intrude other soccer fields during the season.

There is no specific proposal and the group met with Pete Romano and walked the fields, and Pete felt that the drainage was not good and they abandoned this approach in that meeting and moved on to Wakeman C as the alternative. The group's dream is turning Wakeman C into something. My dream is to improve the girl's varsity softball field whatever it may be.

Mr. McCarthy - I received a call in January from John Friend relative to wanting to do some improvements of the softball field. He set up a meeting at Staples High School that I could not attend. I expressed to him we would be supportive of private opportunity to improve the athletic facilities. I spoke to him about my potential issues that need to be

addressed at Staples High School, most specifically that I didn't think in my experience that the field would fit at that location. There are three issues there: 1) Potential impact of the infield on the soccer field; 2) I do not believe that you can have a softball field in the configuration that they are looking for that doesn't infringe upon the baseball field. 3) Foul balls going into the lacrosse fields.

Relative to the Wakeman property - Is there sufficient room down the right hand line before you run into the fence that currently surrounds Wakeman Field B.

I think that for the purpose of this commission, this commission has not approved anything related to the facility. You will have an opportunity to do so when plans are available and they will be forwarded to you for comment. If the development is at Wakeman Park you will be the primary board to approve the project and move it through the process. If it is at Staples High School you will be secondary to the Board of Education.

5. Old Business

None

6. Commissioner's Reports

None

7. Administrative Update

Mr. McCarthy - The repair for the seawall at Longshore has started. A portion of the wall was outside of the DEP jurisdiction so they were going to move forward with beginning the construction.

Marina Projects - they have been submitted to go to the Board of Finance and will be on the April agenda for the Board of Finance. The Town's formal budget hearing is scheduled for March 27th.

Kate, the dog that chased the geese on the golf course was sick and had to be put down. We are being aggressive right now with noise makers and a laser @ dusk. We are looking potentially at buying a new dog.

Golf course greens fees and the beach parking regulations that you passed are on the Board of Selectmen agenda for this Wednesday, 3/14. If they are approved they go into effect on April 1st.

The Levitt Pavilion project is moving forward they received some positive news on the fundraising efforts and have asked us to move forward. We are potentially going out to bid as of the 19th of March for that project. The total project is in the \$6.5M range they are hoping to run a capital campaign to get \$7.5M - \$8M. They have gotten some substantial gifts and have not done any direct public fundraising. They may be going to the Town for funding in the next month or so.

The Athletic Field Lights are going to the P&Z Commission on Thursday night (3/15).

The golf course is open as of Saturday, 3/10.

We have been working with the Westport Police Dept., Westport Fire Dept. and the Saugatuck Power Squadron on a Boating Flare Day. It will take place on May 19 at Compo Beach. We will segregate off a portion of South Beach for the morning. They will be providing trained volunteers and inviting the public to bring their flares, expired flares and to learn how to use marine flares. They will dispose of expired flares or what they don't shoot off they will dispose of properly. The Fire Dept. at the same time will be providing a fire extinguisher training.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully,

Sheila Kavey
Recording Secretary