



**Town of Westport  
Parks & Recreation**  
WESTPORT PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
Longshore Club Park, 260 South Compo Road  
Westport, CT 06880

April 23, 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; Steve Axthelm and Jennifer Johnson; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation; and six(6) of the general public.

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

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Franciscovich requested a spelling correction on page #2, second paragraph from the bottom “**residence**” to “**residents.**”

Upon motion by Franciscovich, seconded by Mr. Rogan, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of March 12, 2012 were unanimously approved as amended.

Ms. Johnson made suggestion to post on the Parks & Recreation website information as it relates to the marina. For example information about the Harbormaster and maybe more information about the waitlist and size of the boats might be helpful.

2. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to a request from the Westport Rotary Club to host a Community Lobster Festival at Compo Beach on September 22, 2012.

This item has been withdrawn from the agenda and is likely to be resubmitted for next month.

3. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Eileen Flug – Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation have broken into some committees. We have a Fundraising Committee and have a PR Committee. There is no formal budget for Friends but we are guessing that the group needs about \$3,000 - \$5,000 for administrative expenses. We are trying to come up with ideas for fundraisers or maybe have a major signature fundraising event that might raise a lot of money. There is link on the website that allows people to make a pay pal donations directly to Friends of Parks and Recreation. There is also a link for the 9-1/2 Hole Halfway House and a link for the Wakeman Town Farms those are the two projects that we have approved as going under our umbrella. We have been around for almost a year and a lot of people don't even know we exist so we are trying to think of ways to get the word out to people. We are working on a press release that would explain who we are.

Mr. Fred Hunter - After raising money for the Halfway House I would be a little concerned depending on how many fundraiser type projects that we have under Friends. If you have

specific projects that people can address, that is one thing but then to have a kind of general fund for friends, I don't know how many times you can ask people for money for Friends projects.

Mr. Flug - I think the idea is that if someone comes to the Friends for a particular project then they will have their own list of people that they are going to ask for donations. So it will be a different population for each project that comes about. The funds that the Friends is raising for itself, is really to cover administrative expenses.

Another idea for publicity is to do a park of the week which would have a photograph, description and have it posted on Westport Now and in the Westport News. There are many parks in Westport and most people don't know all of them.

Mr. Fred Hunter - Halfway House Update - foundation is in, plumbing is in and the backfill has been done and if the weather holds firm we should pour the slab by Wednesday. We are looking at maybe the first week of June or end of May for the grand opening.

4. Discussion of proposal for extending the beach operating season beyond October 1.

Mr. Moss indicated this was for discussion purposes only tonight and if the Commission thought it should be moved forward it would be returned in May for action.

Mr. Franciscovich - This is something that I have been mentioning for many years now. The month of October has been a month of nice weather. The beach sometimes is as crowded as it is during the summer. We think it would be sensible to extend the resident parking permits for the weekends through Columbus Day weekend. This would bring revenue in plus have staff to address any issues that may arise.

Mr. Moss asked if they gave any thought to extending the season to include both weekdays and weekends.

Mr. Franciscovich - I think that would be an unnecessary expense. I have mentioned this before to Stuart that I think having staff during the week after Labor Day is unnecessary. Staff is to collect revenue and the other is to provide service to the users of the beach and the town. I think if we have this kind of usage we should have staff down there.

Mr. McCarthy - Regular staff in September would be 3 attendants at the main gate. Inside the beach we have a 2 man cleanup crew and on the weekends we have a supervisor inside the beach. We do put a supervisor on in October to keep the dogs out of the playground area so we probably have someone working 4-6 hours a day on the weekend in October.

There were two staff comments we would ask you to consider: 1) From a consistency standpoint we would recommend that if you are to extend the beach season it should be 7 days a week not just on the weekend. The idea of not having people there during the week and then having staff on the weekend would cause some confusion. We would recommend that if you are going to extend that you would extend the whole beach season. 2) The other consideration is how to handle the dogs. If you are extending the beach season then our recommendation would be that you extend the rules that are in place during the beach season, which is dogs are not permitted in the beach during the beach season. Again, from a consistency standpoint we think that is the most consistent way to handle it.

Ms. Johnson - I personally think it's a great opportunity to remind people coming to the beach with their dog what our policies are. I think that there are a lot of people that don't pick up after their dog and a lot of people may not know where the end of the beach is because there are a lot of people that tend to walk their dog in the area where they are not suppose to bring their dog. So that is part of the benefit of this as we bridge into the new season and it's again a reminder of rules. A lot of people respect them but there are people that don't. It is unclear to me whether we need 3 people at the beach Monday thru Friday in the last week of September. I'm just trying to get the most amount of staff down there when we have the large number of people down there.

Ms. Eileen Flug - The revenue you would get for the stickers is all weather dependent. If you have a good weekend you will make a lot of revenue, if it is not good weather you won't make anything.

Don Bergmann - If there is no problem and there is nothing to be solved my sense is don't do anything just leave things the way they are.

Ms. Helen Garten - In terms of the revenue I don't think you are going to raise any revenue. Regarding dogs - as I was reminded recently we are in the field of providing services and there is one service that a lot of people in Westport really enjoy and that is on October 1<sup>st</sup> being able to take their dog to the beach. I feel leave it alone and don't take that away from them unless it's not working.

Mr. Rogan - I don't see any income coming in at all but I do see expenses going out. I don't believe we can run this situation without having maintenance staff and the supervisor to watch what is going on. The money will be insignificant.

Mr. Franciscovich - That last thing that was intended with this proposal was to open up the dog issue.

The consensus of the meeting was to leave the policy as is.

## 5. Old Business

Mr. McCarthy - As a follow-up to the last item. Mr. Franciscovich asked for information on staffing on the beach, services, etc. we will have that information for you at the next meeting. Mr. Moss asked to include revenue numbers for weekends, staffing, etc.

Mr. Franciscovich asked regarding the "Facility Request Form" in what instance do we give 15 parking waivers.

Mr. McCarthy - The parking waivers for beach emblems are for Westport businesses, civic groups. Once a year they can make an application for an event Monday thru Friday only and can request 15 waivers. This does not apply for individuals.

Mr. Steve Axthelm - I know this Commission recently approved the "Field Use Policy" and there was a lot of consideration given to it, I think it is worthy of revisiting. Also I would like to combine it with another idea which is to pursue forming a youth sports council that would work with the youth sports providers in Westport on such items as scheduling of facilities, training of coaches and development of communication between each organization that centers around children playing multiple sports and travel and/or elite programs.

I would like to propose that I explore and make a presentation or proposal to the Commission about how to consider this.

## 6. New Business

Mr. Moss - There are a couple of things on the long term horizon. One is the master plan for Longshore the other is improvements/master plan for the Compo area. After lengthy discussions between Stuart and I we decided not to look at Longshore right now, Longshore has had a fair number of improvements over the last few years and it would be more appropriate at this time to turn some attention to the Compo area. We looked at a blueprint and brainstormed on all of the various possibilities. I open this up with discussions tonight to see if there is interest in pursuing a master plan for the Compo Beach area.

Mr. McCarthy - We have had in the town's financial forecast for several years improvements to Compo Beach, very specifically improvements to the pedestrian and traffic patterns within Compo Beach.

One element would be to improve the beach entrance. That would entail a review of the gate operations, having multiple lanes for entry into the beach so that you could separate seasonal pass from daily pass to keep traffic flowing to eliminate the current backup on Compo Beach Road, and finally to allow a beach entry that would allow some type of improvement in processing cars. The easy pass technology or something along those lines that may allow us to reduce staff, and more efficiently move traffic.

Second element would be related to safety and pedestrian traffic movement inside the beach. Compo Beach hasn't changed an awful lot in a long time. The way people use the beach has changed significantly. People use the beach as an exercise destination whether they are living in the area and running there or in fact driving their car there to begin their exercise routine from that location. It occurs to me that having a professional design firm take a look at these issues with some significant traffic engineering experience to figure out the best way to utilize the space that we have at Compo Beach.

The advantage of doing a master plan is that you put nearly everything on the table. The exceptions would be the orientation of the marina facility and the location of the concession/bathhouse there really are not a lot of real physical features of the beach that would impact more significant items.

As you start looking at a master plan then you also start including Soundview Drive and some way to incorporate the Soundview parking.

The marina buildings, probably the bathhouse building and the main marina clubhouse you would probably want to remain intact. The small marina building where the marine police and staff are would certainly be candidate for improvement. The marine police would love to have a second story so that they can see the water. The boat storage is an area of consideration.

Some other areas to consider:

- Skate park as far as the size, location and shape should be on the table
- Interior parking flow

- Fishing Pier
- Beach School building that could be a space potentially for rental when beach school is not using it. (beach camp during the week and be a revenue generator on the weekends)

Mr. Moss - This could be a huge benefit to the town, the time is right to begin the planning for this type of effort.

Mr. McCarthy - The process is: the first step of the process is to form a working committee to work with this, and that would be something Andy and the First Selectman would put together. You would probably want 7 – 11 committee members with a project of this nature to work through this. That committee would then develop an RFP for the professional design services. A firm on gathering community input would be important, whether it would be focus groups, surveys. But that would be an important question to ask anyone who would come to the table and again their expertise specifically in this case in making sure they have traffic engineering as part of their experience. Once you have done that the next step would be to request design funding. Once that appropriation is in place then you enter into the contract with the design firm and begin the design development which is going to include all of the input and then return back to this commission for a design approval.

Mr. Moss - While there is nothing to vote on regarding this discussion, it would be helpful to get a sense of the commission for proceeding. From all your reactions and head nodding, I'll take that as a positive signal to proceed.

7. Commissioner's Reports

None

8. Administrative Update

Mr. McCarthy - Kowalsky will start re-grading the beach tomorrow. Golf course will start aerating the greens tomorrow. We had a very good month of March on the golf course, so far a good month of April.

Tennis Courts are ready to go and will open on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Construction of the wall behind Longshore is suppose to be done by Friday, 4/27.

The repairs in the parking lot at Burying Hill Beach are supposed to start in the next few days.

We have submitted all of our final information to FEMA for reimbursements for all of those projects.

The Board of Finance did approve the marina improvements, we have an RTM Committee meeting tomorrow evening and then the RTM meeting is on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully,

Sheila Kavey  
Recording Secretary