



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

July 16, 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; Karen Puskas, Program Manager and seven(7) members of the general public.

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

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Rogan requested a spelling correction on **page #5, Old Business**, last sentence - **A Steering Committee “with” to “will”**

Upon motion by Mr. Rogan, seconded by Mr. Axthelm, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of June 18, 2012 were unanimously approved as amended.

2. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Mark Holod - Halfway House update - We were down at the site today and the building is substantially complete. It looks like the building will be open for business August 1<sup>st</sup> and the dedication ceremony will follow probably on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Johnson - In terms of any other updates from friends, Friends of Parks and Recreation is a 501c3 that was created to be an umbrella for different projects that people come up with that have a relationship to the Parks and Recreation. The Halfway House at Longshore was the first project. So any opportunities that people see for things like tennis courts, softball field or a skate park, etc. feel free to approach the Friends of Parks and Recreation. It's a great vehicle for getting projects done.

3. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to fee increases for the Youth Basketball program.

Ms. Puskas - We are looking for about \$15 - \$16,000 of increases for the Youth Basketball program. I am asking for a \$10.00 fee increase across the board. We haven't seen a price increase in about five years we have been operating pretty much above the red line. This year I see some need to make sure we stay that way.

Mr. Franciscovich - questioned the anticipated expense of \$156,990. Ms. Puskas - The \$156,990 is just a portion of the program. That is just for the four items I am asking an

increase for. There are other items in there that are for general staff, youth referees that I didn't put in there. So the \$156,990 is just a portion of the program.

Mr. Moss - Given the increase, what is the total profit or loss that you receive?

Ms. Puskas - I project that the program is going to cost totally \$163,071 and I projected taking in \$163,275 with the increases, that is my budget projection. When I do my actual budget I do my budget before the basketball season starts.

Mr. McCarthy - Take the \$163,170 expenses, add the \$15,000 in new expenses you come up with \$178,000 against the \$185,000 in revenue. So if all goes according to plan you will come out in the black by about \$7,000.

Mr. Axthelm asked if the Parks & Recreation did multiple child discounts. I am always concerned about the middle class family in Westport that has four kids, it is tough on them.

Mr. Moss - What percent do we give scholarships for the basketball program? Ms. Puskas - There were 42 kids this year (\$4,595.00). It runs between 40 and 50 every year.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen approval of the following fees for Youth Basketball:**

<b>Tot – Grade 1</b>	<b>\$ 70</b>
<b>Grades 2 and 3</b>	<b>\$ 90</b>
<b>Grades 4-12</b>	<b>\$135</b>

- To take such action as the meeting may determine to approve use of Luciano Park for the Westport Antique & Vintage Market presented by WAV Market Management and Homes with Hope.

Mr. Jeff Wieser - Homes with Hope the official non-profit applicant for this request and Deborah Press and Michael Press from Westport Antique & Vintage Market. Deborah had gone to the First Selectman to see if there was an opportunity to use the parking lot down on the north side of the Italian Festival for a Sunday antique market during the summertime. She had talked to a lot of the Saugatuck merchants and they had all expressed a great deal of interest in getting a lot of people down there. Gordon said the way the town works is that you need a non-profit organization to sponsor. Deborah came to me and asked if I wanted to be a sponsor. She had told me that the way she envisioned the market it would require a lot of people to help move the antiques around. This would be jobs for the various people that we have in the various shelters.

Deborah Press - I plan to start with a minimum of 40 dealers that are only antique and vintage. I have been a dealer for 25 years and all of the vendors and dealers that will be there will be hand picked by me. There are no outdoor antique markets in Fairfield County the closest one would be in New Milford. It is an attraction for weekenders it can bring business into Saugatuck. Also there will be no other things sold at the market other than water or ice cream. That will be represented by other non-profits. Every Saugatuck dealer in the area has been offered a free table so that there won't be a conflict. I spoke to all of the restaurants and

dealers and they love the idea and I have their support. It is a quiet area and it is very self contained. It will have valet parking.

Mr. Wieser - One reason why we are here is that originally we wanted to have this in the parking lot and room for parking. Initially we found out that there is an issue of having things other than parking in the parking lot and so it was recommended that we go where the Farmers Market is in town (Imperial Lot) or possibly Luciano Park. Deborah and Michael looked at those two locations and the Imperial lot size is just not big enough. Luciano Park is big enough for 60 dealers.

Mr. Rogan - It seems to me that there is a profit motive involved here and I don't understand.

Mr. Michael Press - Each vendor will be paying \$50.00 for the day to the manager of the market. The books will be open to the town, something that the BOS has asked us to do. The management fees, professional fees are taken out of that and what remains after that Deborah's fee will be taken out, and what remains after that weeks intake from the attendees paying their admission and the vendor paying their rental fee is then divided between Homes with Hope, and then to reimburse out of pocket expenses that happen each season, to advertise and to setup the accounting system, etc.

Mr. Axthelm asked how many people they thought this would draw? Ms. Press – It could be anywhere from 3,000 – 5,000.

Mr. Axthelm - It is impossible for the grass to recover in between events. I'm not in your corner on the location. I think the idea of this event is something that makes Westport potentially attractive. I would rather, if we were going to agree that it was a good idea I would go and make people jump through the hoops to figure how to put it in the parking lot.

Ms. Johnson - I would love to see this come to Westport and having recently gone through the process of trying to create the pop-up cafe's in Westport I totally appreciate the hurdles of making this happen.

Mr. McCarthy - The hope is to do this on a trial basis in the fall. It is a public park it was for years used by the Italian Festival for five days. There is a baseball backstop in the park, so there is limited softball use. It is not a standard little league field. It is generally used by younger kids so it is used during the spring baseball season. Saturdays and some week night practices during the week occasionally on Sundays for a rain out. During the fall season it is available for use by little league.

Relative to the impact on the condition of facility, certainly that is a concern it is really hard to judge what that is going to be. I do think looking at the condition of the park is something we need to keep in mind. I also think that after their five events in September and October we can look at the condition of the field, we can restore it at that time and determine whether or not we want to subject the field to that the next season.

The other comment is that you do this on a trial basis. To Mr. Rogan's point about the profit motive behind this etc., that is something to weigh in on, but I would also suggest that that is something that you would take to the Board of Selectmen. Regarding the vendors making money here, well almost anything you do at some public event somebody is making money.

Mr. John Polayes asked what type of merchandise are you calling antique. Ms. Press - It will be furniture, collectables. Mr. Polayes - My concern is moving furniture around on the field and the maintenance recovery and also had concern about stacking for tents. What size units are the vendors buying? Ms. Press - the units will be 10' x 25' and I have spoken to the dealers regarding tents. Nobody stakes tents anymore because they can't put them into the ground. What they do is they put cinder block and a belgian block on top so nothing is going to be staked.

Mr. Polayes - Where is the benefit to the Parks & Recreation Commission other than exposure to Westport? Mr. Moss - Our role is to help manage and facilitate the use of Parks and Recreation facilities around town.

Mr. Wieser - I see three profitabilities. In terms of the vendors they are there for profit. The people who run it want to get paid for their services such as they are capped for how much they are getting paid for their services. The town may benefit a lot just by all of the Saugatuck merchants very interested in the activity down there. It brings a lot of people down to Saugatuck. But in terms of the profit motive, the one that was most spoken of was the benefit to the organizers of WAV.

Ms. Johnson - If the businesses are supportive of it and the residents are supportive of it, and we have a field to me from a trial basis it's kind of a win-win as a way to generating revenue for something like Homes with Hope. I recommend that we move forward with the understanding that it is on a trial basis. I also recommend that maybe spend some time to think about whether there is a surcharge you want to charge for the parks.

Mr. Franciscovich asked how this fits into our Field Use Policy. Mr. McCarthy - It is not an athletic use of the facility. If you were sitting next year and had 15 antique market vendors wanting your space then you would have to revise that policy on how you would choose WAV Management vs. Joe's antique market to use that facility. I think what you need to decide that it is a valuable use of the facility then you can get into that agreement. Mr. Franciscovich - I am concerned about setting precedent if another group comes in.

Mr. Rogan - My biggest concern is that it comes back at least in the same condition that it was taken over and that if there are additional expenses that they are taken care of.

Mr. McCarthy - I would suggest that from my standpoint with a trial of six events spaced two weeks apart that you could feel comfortable approving this knowing that there are a lot of pairs of eyes on it.

Mr. Franciscovich - After going through all of this, I was really on the fence and it's the connection with Homes with Hope and having the residents of the center to be able to participate as part of it.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen approval of the request to use Luciano Park for the Westport Antique and Vintage Market to benefit Homes with Hope for the fall 2012 dates requested subject to the following conditions:**

- **Market responsible for cost of trash collection and portable toilets.**
- **Market will be responsible for any required restoration of the lawn area or additional maintenance costs resulting from the market and recommend the Board of Selectman establish a bond for this purpose.**
- **This approval is for fall 2012 only and any 2013 request will require full review and approval.**

5. Old Business

Mr. McCarthy reported on the following:

Joe Romeo's agreements we all endorsed by the Board of Finance and will be going to the Board of Selectmen this Wednesday. There was language inserted into the agreement that clarified what he could sell, including needing to submit to us a list of non-food items to be sold for review.

Levitt Pavilion - Went to the Board of Finance it was on the agenda not as an action item but as a discussion item. By the time they were finished discussing they were in favor of the project. A straw vote of the meeting was they were in support. The Board of Finance will approve the project on August 1<sup>st</sup> and will go to the RTM on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

The Board of Selectmen at their meeting Wednesday evening will take up the acceptance of the gift from Levitt Pavilion - \$3M+ dollar gift. An operating agreement between the Friends and Levitt Pavilion.

The bids were received on the project. They were in the \$6M range, which is the range of their cost estimates. We are meeting with the three low bidders tomorrow to review bid qualifications and make some recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

Land swap at Longshore - this item is on the P&Z agenda for this Thursday. This is really important and is an even swap of land between the homeowner and the town.

Mr. McCarthy handed out Preliminary Revenue figures for the last fiscal year. We will have a more detailed report at your next meeting.

Mr. McCarthy handed out a Daily Parking Summary that shows month by month this year vs. last year.

Custodial Functions - We had considerable discussions about our custodial functions, etc. and I wanted to let you know some of things we have taken in the last six weeks. There is a sign in every one of our restroom facilities, saying if the facility requires attention please call and there is a direct number to call. In addition, we have instructions for the staff on duty, so that when the call comes in they know who to call and what order starting with the custodian on duty that has a dedicated cell phone. If there is no custodian on duty, it's the supervisor on duty followed by the maintenance supervisor or the Forman. Finally, we issued a memorandum to all of our staff clarifying the responsibilities for monitoring the restrooms. In essence making it everyone's responsibility.

Lights @ Staples High School have been installed and the review committee has been established.

Fireworks - We had a very successful fireworks evening from our standpoint and had a relatively incident free evening. We had excellent cooperation from the Police Department. Overall it was a nice night.

Mr. Franciscovich asked if the department approved the Melissa & Doug sponsorship sign, at the intersection of Hillspoint Road. Mr. McCarthy - Yes the signs that went up on Memorial Day +/- June 1<sup>st</sup> and the additional signs on the day of the fireworks were approved to go up.

Ms. Johnson asked if maybe next year the Commission could have a chance to comment on the sponsorships. Mr. McCarthy suggested contacting Deputy Chief Arciola because I am sure they are working on the sponsorship agreements for next year.

Mr. Franciscovich - I am going to have lots of questions next year because of the past situation with Lydian, I thought we had an understanding. This year there was a lot more signage that I have ever seen and much more prominent. It looked like the Melissa & Doug fireworks not the Westport PAL fireworks.

## 6. New Business

Mr. Axthelm is seeking Commission support for the establishment of a Westport Youth Sports Council. The Council would be made up of all youth sports providers who provide programs for Westport youth on both the recreation and travel levels. The group would look to meet a couple times a year to discuss current issues and trends in youth sports and how they affect the children in Westport as well as begin to create better communication amongst the groups in terms of participants, coaches, facility usage and so forth. One of the ongoing issues is that many young athletes in Town seek to play two sports at once and the coordination of this amongst the providers should be looked at more.

Ms. Puskas - I have spoken to Steve on several occasions about this. It is a good idea to sit down with all of the groups and talk about certain issues as a good starting point, not to essentially create policy but talk about what is going on and how we can try to work together and help each other.

Mr. Franciscovich asked Mr. Axthelm what role does he see the P&R Commission playing. Mr. Axthelm - Advise and consent.

Mr. Franciscovich - My concern is that if it becomes something that comes under the auspices of the Commission. All of a sudden you get Freedom of Information Requirements, quorums, notice of meetings.

Mr. McCarthy - If the Parks & Recreation department is participating, but to the extent that recommendations from this Council impacted policy, they would have to come to this Commission.

Mr. Axthelm - The initial goal is to have a preliminary meeting in the fall, and a meeting in the Spring. It will not be a monthly meeting.

Mr. Moss - It is the sense of the Commission, that this is a reasonable idea to pursue but we would like to see a little more thought on strategy as to how you will proceed.

The Commission asked Karen and Steve to work together on putting together a strategy on approaching the youth sports providers with the idea and the purpose of the council and get their feedback and report back to the Commission.

Mr. John Polayes had the following concerns and suggestions about the lockers at Compo Beach:

The department should go through the lockers before the start of the season and check that every locker works. I would recommend to the Commission that you go back to old procedures of controlling the lockers. Don't use plastic twist ties, the kids go around and cut them. I know there is a date that the lockers should have their lock secured on the locker, and that there is a waiting list of people. I took a walkthrough today and there were probably 20-22 lockers with no locks on them.

Mr. McCarthy - People are assigned a number and it is up to them to go down and put a lock on. We are looking at plans for rebuilding lockers and we will be looking at the hardware and mechanisms for those. In my mind the redesign of the lockers would include having the lockers segregated from the restrooms so that only locker holders would have access into the locker facility.

Ms Johnson - Why can't we just go through and lock the lockers that are unlocked and if people have problems then they can call the P&R office.

Mr. Polayes made suggestion to have bigger signage at the beach that says "No Biking, No Rollerblading and No Skateboarding on the boardwalk."

7. Commissioner's Reports  
None
8. Administrative Update  
None

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully,

Sheila Kavey  
Recording Secretary