



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

December 17, 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; and Stuart Rogan; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation; Dan DeVito, Operations Supervisor and sixty five(65) members of the general public.

Absent: Steve Axthelm, Commission Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 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 November 19, 2012 were unanimously approved.

2. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

None to report

3. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to approval of 2013 Charity Golf Tournaments at Longshore.

Mr. McCarthy - This is the annual request of approval for charity golf outings at Longshore. This year we have five groups returning and we have one new request from Staples High School Tuition Grants for an event this year. The Staples High School Tuition Grants did request a Friday date, we would not recommend that. We would be happy to have them host an event if it would be a Monday or a Wednesday, which are regular days for those events. Staff recommendation is to approve subject to dates being approved by the Parks and Recreation Director.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves the following charity golf-tennis outings at Longshore Club Park for the 2013 season subject to dates approved by the Parks and Recreation Director:

**Westport Professional Firefighter's Association
VFW Post 399
Westport Rotary Club
Westport Police Athletic League**

**Staples High School Gridiron Club
Staples High School Tuition Grants**

4. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to a request from Westport PAL to use Compo Beach for the 2013 Town fireworks.

Mr. McCarthy - This is the annual request from the Westport Police Athletic League to host the town's fireworks display. This is a significant fundraiser for the PAL. The permit would allow us to close the beach at 4pm and reopen only to vehicles with the fireworks vehicle pass. This request does include an increase in the fee from \$30.00 to \$35.00 per vehicle. In 2003 the Commission approved a late fee of \$30.00. The fee at that time was \$25.00 and the late fee was \$30.00. In 2009 that fee became \$30.00 with no late fee and this is the first increase request since 2009.

Mr. Harrison Valente - Why are you raising the rate?

Captain Sam Arciola - The beach can hold a capacity of 2,100 vehicles. As operating costs go up year-to-year, the costs of the fireworks, insurance and the tug costs and barge costs which is separate from purchasing the fireworks itself more or less turn this into an area where we are just breaking even without having any support from any donations from large donors like Melissa & Doug who last year stepped in and created a wonderful event for the Town of Westport. We have to remember that sponsorship is not guaranteed year-to-year. With that said we are just about breaking even if not in the red without this increase. This is not a money maker for the Westport PAL without the generosity of the residents of the Town of Westport.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission grants approval to the Westport Police Athletic League to host the 2013 Fireworks at Compo Beach on Wednesday, July 3rd, rain date Friday, July 5th. Compo Beach parking lots to close at 4 p.m. and reopen to only fireworks ticket holders. Ticket price approved at \$35 per vehicle.

5. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to approval of changes to Policies and Procedures for operation of Town of Westport tennis courts.

Mr. McCarthy - Staff reviewed our overall tennis court policies, as well as some of the additional policies that we have in place with tennis. Relative to the general policies the significant recommendations are:

- Move the reservations from 1 day in advance to 5 days in advance.
- Allow non-residents to play with reservations available for non pass holders 2 days in advance.
- Eliminate Open Doubles at Longshore.

We also looked at the policy for group play. We have recommended a few changes in that seasonal group policy. We created a policy distinction between open tennis groups and private tennis groups. In the case of the existing groups we would have the Westport Y's Men; Westport Tennis Association; Westport Y's Women those are established groups that have at least as a component of the program a social tennis component. The group's

themselves are generally open to have open enrollment, perhaps with restrictions based on age, etc. The distinction in the reservation policy those open groups would continue to have priority booking. They would be able to book their time for their groups through the Operations Supervisor and the available time would be open to the public groups.

The policy previously was silent to the WTA and the recommendation is to incorporate the WTA into this policy as an open tennis group with regard to their reserved play for reserved groups. Our recent review of the WTA also show that over a period of time through some changes that had taken place in that organization that they were in fact working more along the lines of providing set reserved tennis.

The policy allows the court to be booked by month or by season. We did incorporate a proposal of fees. There is a fee stated in the policy, the difference in the policy is now there would be a monthly fee or a seasonal fee. We have proposed a monthly fee of \$50 or \$200 per season. We have reduced the restrictions on when courts were available for advance reservations, with the exception of weekend mornings there is always an availability now for court reservations. There was a restriction on the number of courts that could be reserved at any time and that has been changed in this policy it allows up to seven courts to be reserved at any given time. This policy only applies to Longshore Tennis courts.

We did make some significant changes to the Private Tennis instruction policy. This allows tennis instructors to register with the Parks and Recreation Department pay a fee and then have the ability within the restrictions in this policy to teach private tennis lessons. The previous policy called for either the instructor or the student to be a Westport resident. The instructor does not have to live in town. It would allow us to control when those private lessons are being taught to make sure there is no more than one lesson being taught at any one time at the same place.

Mr. Alan Landis - 5 day advance notice, is there any penalty if you don't show up and/or you cancel at the last minute? Mr. McCarthy - There is not under this policy.

Ms. Susan Miller – Director of WTA spoke to the change in policy of how WTA is to be regarded (Document attached).

Ms. Daryl Halbrook - Did I hear it correctly that WTA can only have in an open group 2 courts per week? Mr. McCarthy - Two courts are always held for the public, so the most amount of courts that can be reserved at one time are 7 courts.

Mr. Otis Crawford - Y's Men - I would think that the mission of the Parks & Recreation Department would be is to have people stay active as long as they can. The average age of a member is 81 and the oldest player is 94 years old.

Ms. Eileen Hill - I run the women's doubles for the WTA. Is the reason why we are raising fees is that it is felt that the tennis courts should be self sustained, that the fees should cover the costs of the courts, is that correct?

Mr. McCarthy - That is the operating policy of the Parks Commission that recreation activities that serve largely adult population should work at a breakeven. That would be tennis, boating and golfing should work to cover the expenses with fees derived from revenues. The programs serving largely the youth population are subsidized.

Mr. Moss - The overriding direction on setting fees and general policy from the Board of Finance is for the Parks Commission and the Parks Department to generate fees, to cover expenses. Currently the town subsidizes 5% of the Parks Department budget, 95% is covered by user fees.

Mr. John Howell - I am curious as to why you would allow out of town instructors to access the courts and give instruction, is that a revenue driven issue.

Mr. McCarthy - No that is specifically not a revenue driven issue, it is a convenience to the resident.

Mr. Moss - 95% of the Parks Department budget is covered by user fees. If you want to come back to us with some recommendations and suggestions, I would look to you to do that and understand that we have to cover expenses. I would ask that you work together with Stuart and his staff.

Mr. Moss - The next step is to coordinate a future meeting with Stuart McCarthy and Dan DeVito and come back to the Parks & Recreation Commission with a joint recommendation that represents a fair and reasonable compromise which satisfies the budget parameters set by the BOF.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission tabled this item for further review by the Parks and Recreation staff.

6. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to recommendation of fee change related to Advance Group Tennis reservations.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission tabled this item for further review by the Parks and Recreation staff.

7. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to recommendation for increase to tennis instruction fees.

Mr. McCarthy - We had discussed this as part of our overall tennis review and two things came out of that. Our tennis fees that are significantly under priced compared to the surrounding market. We have an excellent youth and adult tennis program. What most of the surrounding communities have done is they have completely outsourced their tennis program to private operators. One of the things in reviewing our court usage and our court time is that we have a significant amount of court time and that there is no assessment going back to the tennis courts. The proposal before you is to increase the tennis fees as proposed and in addition to that \$5.00 from every tennis clinic registration would go toward the operation of the tennis courts.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen the following tennis fee increases:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Youth	\$8/hr	\$10/hr
Adult	\$10/hr	\$13/hr

8. Old Business
None
9. New Business
None
10. Commissioner's Reports
None
11. Administrative Update
None

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully,
Sheila Kavey
Recording Secretary