



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

January 28, 2013

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; Steve Axthelm; and Stuart Rogan; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation; Rick Giunta Administrative Manager and four(4) members of the general public.

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

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Mr. Franciscovich, seconded by Mr. Rogan, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of December 17, 2012 were unanimously approved.

2. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

There is nothing new to report with the exception that there is a board meeting scheduled for February 11th.

3. To take such action as the meeting may determine to approve a request by the Westport Garden Club to use a portion of Winslow Park for their annual plant sale.

Ms. Ellen Greenberg (Chair of Plant sale) - This annual fundraiser has been going on for many years at the Saugatuck Congregational Church. Due to renovations going on at the Church the Garden Club needs to find an alternate location to hold the plant sale. We are looking to use Winslow Park because it is flat and close to the Church. The playhouse has given us permission to use their parking lot. The Fire and Police have also signed off on the location. The sale is scheduled for Friday, May 10th and we would need to begin setup on Thursday, May 9th. On the day of the sale we would need access to the location from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mr. Franciscovich asked how the parking would work at the playhouse.

Mr. McCarthy - There will be signs as well as a volunteer or a Parks & Recreation staff member at the parking lot to direct people.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approve the use of Winslow Park on May 9-10, 2013 by the Westport Garden Club for their annual plant sale subject to conditions of the Parks and Recreation Director.

4. Discussion relative to the Parks and Recreation 2013/14 budget.

Mr. McCarthy - We have presented to you a budget that has been submitted to the First Selectman for consideration and submission to the Board of Finance. The budget instructions to the department heads were to make an even budget in the upcoming budget year. We have proposed a 2.8% increase in the Operating budget. The main increases are in the capital expenditures throughout the budget. Over the last couple of years when the budgets have been tight we have held back on some equipment replacement. This budget does have a vehicle and a large mower for replacement. I will note there is no new equipment requested these are all replacements.

One of the concerns with this budget is the lack of growth in revenue. This budget reflects a slight decrease in revenue less than 1%. A slight decrease in revenue as we have discussed downgraded our revenue projections in handpasses and parking permits.

The parking permit is worth keeping a close eye on. When the fees were increased last year we projected a 10% decrease in daily passes sold, we recognized last summer almost a 25% decrease in daily passes sold.

Mr. David Levin - I attended a Golf Advisory Committee meeting recently and there were statistics provided on declining sales in handpasses and changes in patterns in usage of the golf course. It was rather apparent that there was a shift from peak usage periods to the twilight periods where a non-resident can come in and play at a very low rate. So I think you need to consider that you are not optimizing the use of those facilities.

Mr. McCarthy - Note from Mr. Bill Meyer (attached to minutes) stating he is in favor of the budget.

Mr. McCarthy - We have also increased some of the Fees & Services accounts that allow us to continue to expand our use of subcontract services. In the Athletic Fields operating budget we have added \$8,000 to the Fees & Services account which would allow us to do some in season renovations on the turf athletic fields. Currently it is very difficult to do field renovations at any times other than during the summer. While the summer is not the optimum time to do those renovations because of the weather, we also lack manpower during the summer in peak season. So this will allow us to expand the use of contract services.

List of Capital Projects

- Staples H.S. tennis courts (confirmation from the BOE has the tennis courts in for next year).
- Replace Paddle Tennis courts at Longshore
- Compo Beach Bathhouse renovations/replacements

Mr. Axthelm - Daily Parking - What's our motivation, do we want more daily people to come or do we not want more people to come?

Mr. McCarthy - The revenue in July was down it went from \$141,000 to \$88,000. August we were up slightly and down in September. In June and August we were up slightly in revenue and down significantly in sales. Total sales for the year were down 36%, total revenue was down 13%. This estimate projects the rebound to get back up to \$350,000.

Mr. Stewart Reifler (Minuteman Yacht Club Commodore) - Is there anything in the budget the boater's should know regarding any changes with the marina.

Mr. McCarthy - We did have a fee increase at the marina last year and we are using that money for the capital projects that are underway. The marina is the one place where we do not have these variables in demand. We have 100% occupancy and have a significant waiting list that suggests we will continue to have 100% occupancy.

Mr. Hunter - What frustrates me is that the Commission and the Department are responsible for more activities in this town than any other section of the town. I think it is an abomination that this town doesn't support your group far better than they do. The recreational facilities here in town are one of the prime reasons that people move to this town. The town has neglected anything that you people want.

Mr. Moss - I think we need to be more aggressive and be more specific.

5. Old Business

Mr. McCarthy reported on the following:

Bathhouse project has been turned over to Public Site and Building. We did have a recommendation to go and do a RFP to hire an architect. They did choose to do some engineering investigation first. We are going to have to make some decisions on how we are going to present the bathhouse during the next season.

Storm repairs – We are still making progress on storm repairs. I spoke to the Public Works department today they are sending a bid out on the restoration of the seawall at Burying Hill Beach. That is going to be tight having it completed by Memorial Day.

Marina Project - The project (T-heads and bulkheads) at Compo Marina was scheduled to start today and the contractor who was the low bidder withdrew from the project.

6. New Business

Mr. David Levin - I would like to ask if there was any way to do daily updates for the golf course conditions through the internet.

Mr. Moss - I met with Keith Stein, and there are three people in town parents of athletes pushing for concussion training awareness on the high school level. I suggested that he speak with Karen Puskas, since she is already coordinating coaching certification. We should support the people that are driving this.

Mr. Moss also asked Mr. Axthelm to follow-up with Keith Stein.

7. Commissioner's Reports

None

8. Administrative Update

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully,
Sheila Kavey
Recording Secretary