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

April 23, 2021

The Westport Parks and Recreation Commission held a meeting on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 @7:34pm. Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order No. 7B, there was no physical location for this meeting. It was held electronically and recorded via Zoom.

Members Present:

Charles Haberstroh, Chairman, Alec Stevens, Stephen Axthelm, Edward Iannone

Absent:

Kate Kirby

Also Present:

Jennifer Fava, Director of Parks and Recreation; Rick Giunta, Deputy Director; Peter Ratkiewich, DPW Director; along with members of the public.

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Edward Iannone, seconded by Alec Stevens, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting of February 10, 2021 were approved 3-0-1 (one abstains, one absent).

Upon a motion by Alec Stevens, seconded by Stephen Axthelm, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting of March 17, 2021 were approved 4-0 (one absent).

2. Public Comment:

Tom Lowrey, 4 Gristmill Lane requested an agenda item be added to next month's Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. He would like the Commissioners to discuss the future of the skate park, as well as adding 2 more pickleball courts at Compo Beach.

Reports of:

Boating Advisory Committee – Jennifer Fava Reported

- There have not been any meetings, due to lack of members.
- People have been bringing in their boats since April 1st.
- May 1st, both marinas will be fully operational.
- Longshore marina launch ramp has been repaired and resurfaced.

Golf Advisory Committee – Jennifer Fava Reported

- The Golf Advisory Committee met on April 12.
- 260 rounds of golf were recorded for the month of March, a first since 2016.
- Overseeding, bunker repair, the leveling out of low spots are all being worked on. Aeration of the fairways has also taken place.
- The new golf carts arrived on Monday. They were delayed due to COVID supply chain issues.
- 17th Practice area and the 14th bunker repair were delayed due to health emergency. Anticipated to start around May 10.

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- As of May 1, masks will no longer be required for two people using a cart, per CSGA.
- Ball washers are being placed on the course.
- Golf handpasses have increased over 700%.

Parks Advisory Committee – Reported by David Floyd

- The Parks Advisory Committee met on April 5.
- April 24, 2021 is “Clean Up Westport Day. The Parks Advisory Committee will be focusing their efforts at Riverside Park and Grace Salmon Park.
- Numerous groups of people and organizations will also be participating in the clean up throughout town.
- Parks and Recreation has offered 6 free garbage bags to participating groups and will be picking up the filled trash bags.

Racquets Advisory Committee – Reported by Jennifer Fava.

- Working to open Longshore tennis courts earlier this year, hopefully by early May.
- Staples and Town Farms tennis courts are open. There are repairs to be made at Town Farms.
- Doubleday will not open until repairs are made to the courts. Repairs are weather dependent.

Levitt Pavilion Sub-Committee – Reported by Charles Haberstroh

- The committee is scheduled to meet on April 29, 2021.

4. To take such action as the meeting may determine regarding a fence along the Jesup Green seawall.

Jennifer Fava stated that the construction of a fence has been brought up numerous times in the past and it is becoming a continuous issue. As this area is being used by a greater number of people and to prevent further accidents, there is a recommendation to install a fence along the top of the seawall. DPW is currently repairing the seawall where work is needed. This would be a suitable time to address the fence issue.

Jennifer Fava introduced Peter Ratkiewich, DPW Director to present this project.

Peter Ratkiewich reviewed the history and the current condition of the seawall. He also discussed in-depth the need for the railing, as well as the type of railing to be installed and he provided the Commissioners with pictures of the style/type of railing to be installed, along with a map depicting the location and length of the railing. DPW is seeking support from the Parks and Recreation Commission before moving on to the Village District Committee.

Peter Ratkiewich answered the various questions by the Commissioners. He discussed in length the material to be used and stated that this fence meets the Pedestrian Protection Code, however it is not a guardrail and as such, does not meet the guardrail code.

There was no public comment.

Upon a motion by Alec Stevens, seconded by Steve Axthelm, and passed unanimously 4-0 (1 absent)

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission supports the installation of a fence as described in the proposal along the Jesup Green seawall.

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5. Riverside Park Project Update (Discussion Only).

Jennifer Fava stated that through the Town's selection process, SLR International Corporation (formerly Milone & MacBroom) had been selected and retained by the Parks and Recreation Department to provide design services for Riverside Park. So far, they have participated in two Parks Advisory Committee Meetings and will be meeting again on Monday, 4/26.

Jennifer Fava asked David Floyd, Chair of the Parks Advisory to discuss the Riverside Park Project.

David Floyd said that the Parks Advisory Committee felt that the Riverside Park was not being fully utilized by people as much as it could be. Last year, the park had a lot of overgrown trees (blocking views), unkempt bushes and large boulders and it also lacked accessibility to the river. A major clean-up took place, removing selected trees and eliminating non-essential bushes and boulders. A large area was leveled out and seeded, creating a larger lawn area.

This spring, SLR went to Riverside Park to review it and create a plan. They presented their findings to the Parks Advisory Committee on April 5 with their preliminary thoughts on how to improve the park. The Parks Advisory Committee is meeting again on April 26, where SLR will present more concrete plans. Ultimately, these plans will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission for their review.

There was no public comment.

6. Parks Advisory Committee – Proposed Website Enhancements (Discussion Only).

Jennifer Fava said that the Parks Advisory Committee has been discussing how to make the Parks website more engaging to the public. Potentially using drone footage, enhanced mapping, higher resolution pictures, etc.

David Floyd, Chair of the Parks Advisory Committee reviewed with the Commissioners the enhancement ideas on how the PAC envisions the parks webpage in the future. Nat Brogadir and Rob Feakins (PAC members), along with a member from Parks and Recreation have been working with Darrell DeMakes, e-Government Coordinator to learn how they can revamp the webpages. This is an ongoing project.

There was no public comment.

8. Commissioners Report – None

9. Administrative Report: Jennifer Fava

- Reviewed the Governor's announcement regarding the wearing of masks. Waiting to hear back from the State on guidance moving forward.
- Seasonal staff is being hired and contracts are going out.
- Parking emblems sold through April 15: 6,734 equaling to \$510,115.
- Popular programs this spring/summer are: Adult/Youth tennis, adult pickleball, youth golf.
- The waitlist numbers for beach lockers have been reduced due to turnover.
- Plans are to open the Longshore pool this summer, with limited capacity. As of now, there will be a reservation system in place and no chairs or showers allowed.
- The fitness court project at Compo Beach will not be moving forward.
- The parking system at Compo Beach is moving forward. There was a slight delay due to COVID supply chain issues.
- The Compo Beach parking lot will open to full capacity, starting May 1.
- This year, daily passes will be available for purchase.
- The selling of non-resident passes is still on hold.

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- Preparing for the Memorial Day parade. It may look different this year, with less participants, more social distancing.
- Waiting for more guidance from the State regarding the July 4th fireworks. A decision will be made soon.
- RECing crew will be held at Coleytown Middle School and Camp Compo will be held at Long Lots to meet State COVID requirements.
- Tomorrow night the Parks and Recreation Department will go before the RTM Parks and Recreation Committee and Finance Committee regarding the budget and then the full RTM budget vote is on May 3.
- There were 45 slip turnovers at Compo and 14 at Longshore, vs. 58 and 16 the previous year.
- Kayak turnover was 45 at Compo and 2 at Longshore, vs. 56 and 1 the previous year.
- The marina will be at 100% capacity this year.

Upon a motion by Alec Stevens, seconded by Steve Axthelm, the meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.

Respectfully,
Debbie Detmer, Recording Secretary