



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

February 25, 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; and Stuart Rogan; Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation; and eleven(11) 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 January 28, 2013 were unanimously approved.

2. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

There was nothing new to report. The meeting that was scheduled for February 11th was postponed and rescheduled for the end of March.

3. To take such action as the meeting may determine to permit installation of a free standing message board at Winslow Park to be provided and managed by Westport Animal Shelter Advocates.

Mr. McCarthy - WASA would like to put an informational board up at Winslow Park to let people know of their activities. WASA has been instrumental in working with the town in regards to the Animal Shelter. I suggested that they include a public bulletin board as part of that to reduce the number of notices that are often put on trees and fences. The WASA portion of the bulletin board will be under lock and key they will have their information up there and then there will be an open public board.

Mr. Franciscovich did raise some issues about ownership. Mr. McCarthy - WASA would provide the bulletin board and the Parks and Recreation department would install it and WASA would own the board.

Ms. Julie Loparo (WASA President) – Westport Animal Shelter is a 501c3 organization and our primary goal is dedicated to take care and the advocacy of homeless dogs in Fairfield County, CT. WASA would purchase the message board with a donation made by Choice Pet Supply. Choice Pet Supply originally approached Officer D’Amico of Westport Animal Control they wanted to do something for the community and thought this would be a good

match. This will be a one time donation from Choice Pet Supply. The message board would also be used by the public for notices.

Mr. Franciscovich - I had spoken with Stuart about concerns about signage on public property and to make sure the town attorney signed off on that.

Ms. Loparo - We are thinking that at the top of the bulletin board we would have a banner made with the logo of Choice Pet Supply (sample attached).

Mr. Franciscovich - I am concerned about commercialization have we done that with any other boards? Mr. McCarthy – Most boards we haven't but something of that scope I don't think is of concern. We have an ad on the score card for the golf course.

Mr. Bill Meyer asked how many people are in WASA. Ms. Loparo - The core group is about 6 to 10 people.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves the request from WASA to install and maintain a sign board at Winslow Park.

4. To take such action as the meeting may determine to approve a request from Fitness Works for the use of Winslow Park for a cross country race on Sunday, May 19, 2013 to benefit Project Return of Westport.

Mr. McCarthy - This is a request to use Winslow Park for a Run/Walk charity event. We don't do a lot of activities at Winslow Park because of limited parking and unless they can make arrangements with surrounding property owners for parking there is not much use in that regard. The sponsor of this event is Fitness Works which is located in the Playhouse Square. The beneficiary is Project Return of Westport. Fitness Works has indicated it has gotten permission from the Playhouse Square landlord of the property to host the event on the sidewalk and the parking lot. It is a Sunday morning event, all of the activities other than the race itself will be held off-site on the Playhouse Square parking lot. Staff recommendation is to approve the event and to have volunteers posted both at the park entrance as well as the Westport Country Playhouse entrance to direct people to Playhouse Square for parking.

Mr. Shaun Harrington (represent Project Return and Fitness Works) - I have put on a lot of these events in Boston and Connecticut. Project Return asked me to host this first year event, Run/Walk. This is not a competitive event at all and we are going to cap the event in terms of how many participants. We will have volunteers throughout the park with different color shirts making sure they are telling the public who are coming in to visit the park other than for the race and explain where the runners/walkers will be. We will be using the perimeter of the park and not use the fields in the middle. All of the registration will take place at Fitness Works. We will be having some food after the Run/Walk that will take place at Fitness Works.

Mr. Harrington asked if he could put a sign on the corner of Winslow Park and Post Road about the event. Mr. McCarthy - The day of the event you can do whatever you want.

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

RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves the use of Winslow Park on May 19, 2013 for a Run/Walk to benefit Project Return.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

None

7. Commissioner's Reports

None

8. Administrative Update

Mr. McCarthy reported the following:

The preliminary budget hearing before the Board of Finance went well. The Selectman presents his budget on March 6th and the formal hearing is on March 19. As of now I have not heard much to be concerned with.

Storm Repairs are ongoing throughout the park system. Tim Burke has Sylvia Erskine coming down to take a look at some of the landscape areas around the beach and to figure out how we want to address the large grass island between the softball field and the cannons which has a couple of feet of sand on it.

Compo Beach Bathhouses - There is a meeting tomorrow. There was an RFP done for an architect to help us with that job. So we are hoping by your next meeting we will have some information for you.

Mr. Franciscovich asked if the report from the engineer was received yet. Mr. McCarthy - I just received the report today but have not looked at it yet. We had an engineer review the structure itself.

Contract Services - Over the last couple of years we have had discussions of how the Town provides services, use of contract services, etc. We have been focusing on how we provide our services on the golf course, particularly the maintenance services on the golf course. Fred Hunter has done a lot of work on this subject. About 1-1/2 years ago Fred was in touch with several companies that do contract maintenance services for golf courses we had some preliminary discussions with those companies. We renewed those conversations this fall. Mr. Moss has been involved in these conversations along with Janice Collins representing the Board of Finance, Gary Conrad, Finance Director and we have been doing some due diligence and exploration into this area.

We decided to do a more formal exploration of this concept. A few weeks ago we met with the attorneys and employees representing our labor unions for Superintendent and

Supervisors Unions and the Maintenance Union. We met with them and had a very productive conversation and coming out of that meeting we decided to go ahead and explore this option.

I have been working on a RFP (Request for Proposal) that we hope to have out in the next couple of weeks. There is no commitment on behalf of the Town of Westport at this time. It is simply an exploration of this concept.

The proposal is for the maintenance of the golf course only. The advantage of some of these national companies is that besides your on course personnel (they will maintain a Class A superintendent) in addition to that they bring in resources in the way of technical expertise. I think that is a potentially significant advantage for the Town of Westport. In addition, they make their efficiencies by their buying power and their management practices. From my standpoint once you get out of the golf course maintenance business it's hard to believe the town's going to get back into it quickly. As a result, one of the things I would urge everyone considering this is whether or not you have one viable proposal, make sure you have 2 or 3 viable proposals. Take the best one and use the others as insurance should that decision not work out. With the work that Fred has done I do think that there are some viable options out there for us.

Mr. Moss - There are 2 primary objects, one is to improve maintenance and the other is long term cost efficiencies.

Mr. McCarthy - Cost certainty is probably even more important than cost efficiency. Because having both our short and long terms costs defined is probably a great advantage to the town.

Mr. Rogan asked what happens to the staff. Mr. McCarthy - That is all up for discussion. We have five regular employees that would be impacted by this and that is to be determined. I will tell you that we will treat those employees fairly. There are a number of options.

Mr. McCarthy - This is an information item for you so that when the town does post an RFP you know what it's all about. We really don't know where this is going but it will be going public once a RFP is sent out.

Mr. David Levin – I am 100% behind what you are trying to do. My suggestion is to also include in the RFP the operation of the golf course, not just the maintenance of the golf course.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm

Respectfully,

Sheila Kavey
Recording Secretary