



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

April 29, 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 and Steve Axthelm Commission Members; Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and Recreation; and eleven(11) members of the general public.

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Mr. Rogan, seconded by Mr. Franciscovich, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of February 25, 2013 were unanimously approved.

2. Update from Friends of Westport Parks and Recreation.

There was nothing new to report.

3. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to a request from the Westport Rotary Club to host a Community Lobster Festival at Compo Beach on September 21, 2013.

Mr. Rick Benson (President of Westport Rotary) - We had a wonderful event in September 2012 and actually exceeded our expectations. We ended having a little over 1,000 people including kids and volunteers. The weather and the logistics worked out great in cooperation with Westport Parks and Recreation and we would like to have another event this year. We ended up having about 40% of the tickets being sold online and a lot of those were in the last three days before the event.

Mr. Rogan asked if all of the organizations participated evenly in the net revenue distribution and what is the criteria? Mr. Benson - We have several fundraisers so we have several sources of revenue that we allocate. Some get as little as \$1,000 and some of them get \$3,000 – \$5,000. The criteria are on a need basis and have to have some kind of rotary connection. Somebody has to be involved in the organization, they fill out an application and we have a committee that reviews the applications. All of the recipients are not from Westport. Our theory is that at least half of them are Westport but we also support regional programs in Norwalk, Bridgeport and surrounding areas and about 25% of our total allocations are international projects.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approve the use of Compo Beach for the 2013 Westport Rotary Club Community Lobster Fest subject to conditions of the Parks and Recreation Director.**

**The Parks and Recreation Commission designates the Westport Rotary Community Lobster Fest as an annual event and authorizes the Parks and Recreation Department to issue administrative approvals for future events.**

4. 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 – This is a follow-up to an agenda item of a couple of months ago where there was a lot of public discussion to three policies that were developed by staff. One is the Policies and Procedures related to use of the Town tennis courts as well as the Policy on Private Instruction and the Policy on Seasonal Group Reservation. The only issue raised in discussion of the proposed policies was related to the Policy for Seasonal group tennis reservation. (Staff recommended eliminating the exception granted the original policy exempting WTA from the fees associated with the advanced court reservations) Staff has had subsequent discussions to that meeting and has not resolved the issue.

There are two issues outstanding related to the Policy for Seasonal Group tennis reservations. One was the fee from \$50 to \$200 and there was concern that this was a big jump all at once. The second was the issue of the WTA being exempt from that fee and we had proposed not having them exempt from that fee. We did have follow-up meetings and staff did agree that it was a big jump in one year so we came back with a proposal for a \$100 fee per season and \$25 fee per month. This is a one time fee that allows a group of people to reserve a tennis court for the entire season at the same time of the week.

Mr. Franciscovich - With the implementation of this, some of the deadlines have passed how would it work for this season if we were to implement this?

Mr. McCarthy - Relative to the reservations, they aren't really substantial changes so Dan DeVito has been proceeding reserving courts. If this is approved, and a fee is approved and the group decides not to pay the fee then they will be eliminated from the reservations.

Ms. Eileen Hill - Does this mean that WTA doesn't have to submit things to the town for approval such as the bylaws?

Mr. McCarthy - Mrs. Hill came to us and said that they were having issues within the WTA and one of their proposals was to split the WTA in two and we told them WTA is the entity that we have a relationship with so by all means go back and work it out with the WTA, but that the tennis time that is currently on the record belongs to the WTA and if you go and split the group you don't necessarily have that time.

Steve Turango - I was always under the impression that WTA was a quasi city organization and it always was. You live in Westport and you join the WTA and now you can't do that anymore. The fee has destroyed it, and has destroyed something nice in Westport.

Mr. Moss - WTA is free to operate and it has nothing to do with the Town. It is my knowledge WTA is not a quasi public entity. The challenge for the department is to efficiently operate in a way so that it can handle its resources effectively.

Ms. Fran Raxin - Was there any consideration for raising the fees across the board, raising fees on clinics, etc.?

Mr. McCarthy - We have raised program fees several times since this fee was raised.

Mr. Moss - Last time you were here and the fee was a controversial issue, I asked that the tennis community come back with a proposal that recognized that the Board of Finance asks this body to have user fees cover the majority of our budget, and rather than telling us that you are not interested in paying any fee, I asked then that you come back with a proposal that said here is how you are willing to contribute. The reality is, the only thing that is an issue here is the opportunity to reserve for a long period of time. We have looked at individual fees and they have gone up at some point in the last couple of years, we have done program reviews and those have been adjusted periodically, this particular fee has not been touched in some time.

Mr. Steve Turango - Suggestion - your function is to get the money in from the tennis so why doesn't the Parks and Recreation run the WTA? It is to your benefit and the town's benefit to have the program and more people will buy the permits.

Mr. Moss suggested a one(1) year exemption for the WTA from the season court reservation fee.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approve the following policies as submitted:**

- **Policies and Procedures for use of Town Tennis Courts**
  - **Policy for Private Instruction on Town Tennis Courts**
  - **Policy for Seasonal Group Tennis Reservations**
  - **WTA shall be exempt from the season court reservation fee for the 2013 season.**
5. To take such action as the meeting may determine related to fees for season reservations for Longshore Tennis courts.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommend to the Board of Selectmen a change in the advance tennis reservation fee:**

**Current:       \$50 per season**

**Proposed Fee: \$25 per month or \$100 per season**

6. Discussion relative to issuing a Request for Proposal related to the maintenance of the Longshore Golf Course.

Mr. McCarthy - This is the final product and we are ready to send this out May 1. We are optimistic that we will get some good proposals. There are a couple of objectives in this: 1)

To get the best golf course maintenance we can for the most effective financial arrangement;  
 2) Some long term cost certainty with regard to the golf course operation. We are optimistic that we will get some good competitive proposals. One of the things that are important in any review of contract services is to make sure that you have multiple legitimate vendors available to you. If you only get one decent proposal I think you need to think long and hard about entering into a contract with a single vendor when you don't have backup. Because if that one proposal goes bad you can't turn around and call the next guy on the list. I think this is a very deliberate process that we are going through we have been working very hard on it and we recommend that we move forward with this.

Mr. Moss - I am very please with the conversations associated with this. The discussions that I have been involved with everybody has shown that whatever we do people get treated with the ultimate respect and fairness and whatever negotiations happen and if we go forward that that becomes a real part of the conversation.

Mr. Axthelm - Is the goal here to compare the presentations to what we currently have or is the goal here to select somebody to outsource this work to?

Mr. McCarthy - The first option which is looking at the proposals and determining whether they provide us with value. The benchmark right now is the product we have now. The issue becomes, is a private vendor able to come in and do the job as well or better, for the same for less money and that is both the short and long term issues. If we are not happy with the proposals it will be business as usual. There is no mandate here to select one of these companies.

Mr. Axthelm - What leads you to believe that this is likely to be a better solution?

Mr. McCarthy - We had several informal meetings with vendors to talk to us on how they go about doing this and why they are able to do it more efficiently than we are and what expertise they bring to the table.

Mr. Fred Hunter - In all instances the quality of the golf course went up and costs went down. It varied depending upon the course and the size and the footprint. In general quality went up and costs went down. The real objective is to improve the quality on the golf course. This is a major process throughout the country in terms of maintaining golf courses.

Mr. Rogan - Is this just for the supervisor and they utilize the labor force that we have or do they bring in their own laborer?

Mr. McCarthy - There is provision in the document that requires them to interview our current employees. If they find them to be suitable we encourage them to make an offer to hire them.

Mr. Franciscovich - One of the things I would suggest adding to this where you are asking for their references is also a list of any contracts that were terminated or not renewed so that you don't just get the positive references.

Mr. Franciscovich - What happens if there is storm damage?

Mr. McCarthy - The way that these contracts would be structured is that there would be a base contract amount for maintenance of the facility in accordance with these. That would

not be the only golf course budget for the town the town would then have a \$100,000 budget that would be earmarked for tree work, landscaping, etc. In part of the negotiation there will be issues such as storm response and participation in the town's emergency services.

7. Discussion relative to developing a Master Plan for Compo Beach.

Mr. Moss - Last summer we had this conversation and decided it had been years since a design of Compo Beach had been looked at and in that time usage patterns have changed quite a bit, traffic outside Compo have backed up quite a bit, and have become a management concern issue, usage patterns inside Compo the way people use the beach has changed. So we had discussion last year and decided to form a Committee. The people involved are: George Franciscovich, Jennifer Johnson, Skip Lane, Chris Urist, myself, Steve Edwards and Stuart McCarthy as staff members. and myself.

Mr. McCarthy - First Selectman will appoint this Committee so that the meetings are public meetings. We are working on an RFP and hoping it will be ready in the next week or two to be reviewed by the Committee.

At the last Board of Finance meeting, the Board of Finance members were strongly encouraging us to move forward with this.

Mr. Jim Marpe - I have been talking with a lot of people around town and have been getting a lot of feedback on the conditions at Compo Beach on how it might be improved and I think this is a great idea.

8. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to change in rules and regulations related to issuance of daily launch permits at Compo Beach.

Mr. McCarthy - Currently if you have a parking emblem you can come to the gate and purchase a daily launch pass. If you do not have a parking emblem and you want to pay the daily parking fee you are not able to purchase a daily launch pass. This goes back to when windsurfing was all the rage that's when these regulations were put into effect and we wanted not to have Compo Beach become the regional wind surfing capital of Fairfield County. Currently we do have quite a few people who come in looking to launch a Kayak or a canoe, etc. We don't think the volume at this point is going to affect us, certainly both a revenue source.

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

**RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen approval of the following change to the Parks and Recreation Rules and Rules and Regulations.**

**CURRENT**

**Rule: VIII-32** – All watercraft entering in or on the roof of a vehicle (i.e., windsurfer, jet-ski, sunfish or small sailboat) must purchase an annual launch permit or pay the daily launch fee. The annual launch permit and /or the daily launch pass is available to any person with a Westport beach emblem.

**PROPOSED**

**Rule: VIII-32** – All watercraft entering in or on the roof of a vehicle (i.e., windsurfer, jet-ski, sunfish or small sailboat) must purchase an annual launch permit or pay the daily launch fee. The annual launch permit and/or the daily launch pass is available to any person with a Westport beach emblem **(Add) or a daily guest parking pass.**

## 9. Old Business

Mr. Moss asked if there was an update on the Westport Youth Sports Council. Mr. McCarthy - I have had discussions with Karen on the subject and we will circle back to Steve. Karen has had some significant conversations with NAYS which is the umbrella organization that we do our coaches training through. They are also including “concussion” training as a module so part of it may go to revamping our training. Given that emphasis we had some additional thoughts on both the short and long term goals.

Mr. Franciscovich asked for an update on the Levitt Pavilion. Mr. McCarthy - They have received their funds. They are going to the Board of Selectmen on Wednesday with their proposal to host the summer season at Jesup Green. If that happens hopefully we can start construction on May 15.

Mr. Franciscovich asked what was happening with the plant sale that was approved. Mr. McCarthy - The plant sale will not take place at Winslow Park it will take place at Saugatuck Church this year but might need to use Winslow Park next year.

Mr. Axthelm - Plaque 2011 NAYS Award - We had art work done on this and I am looking at a plaque that would be mounted on various facilities. I showed Karen Puskas and she was please with this.

Mr. Moss - This is just and FYI, I am also on the Youth Commission we are looking at various ways to make that more efficient. One of the ideas was to have each youth member of the commission participate in various town bodies. The Youth Commission is an advocacy on behalf of youth in town.

Mr. Axthelm - The GOT Field project is moving along. They have the foundation for the dugouts and started framing today. They are hoping to get in for the last game or two for the end of the season.

## 10. New Business

Mr. Axthelm - We had the first ever challenger softball game in town on Saturday. This is for youth who have disabilities and there is a league that has existed in Fairfield County for some time and we never had a team and we now do.

Mr. Axthelm - At an RTM P&R Committee meeting and a point was brought up, and Stuart affirmed, that we don't publicize or advocate that active military would receive free admission to our town's facilities.

Mr. McCarthy - Currently our staff does allow active military with credentials into the facilities. The question was that's fine except if you are not publicizing it then what good is it. If you would like to we can bring it back to amend the policy. We would add it as a formal item. Many of those exemptions are not necessarily publicized.

## 11. Commissioner's Reports

None

## 12. Administrative Update

Mr. McCarthy reported the following:

We continue to work very hard in getting the beach back into shape. A couple of items still outstanding as we get close to May 1<sup>st</sup> the low bidder on the boardwalk replacement withdrew their bid after several weeks of trying to get insurance. A new contractor is hopefully starting by the end of this week.

Kowalski Brothers started at the end of last week with the re-grading of the sand on the beach.

Wall down @ bathhouse - We have a fence contractor coming to put in aluminum fence.

I have been spending a lot of time with FEMA trying to go over all of our submissions on reports and getting the most reimbursement that we can.

The T-Heads are completed. We have some storm related repairs at Longshore Marina that are outstanding. There are probably about 6-8 boaters that are unable to go into their slips right now. We do have places to accommodate them until their slip is repaired.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully,

Sheila Kavey  
Recording Secretary