

FINAL MINUTES



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

September 8, 2021

The Westport Parks and Recreation Commission held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, September 1, 2021 @7:38pm. 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; Edward Iannone; Kate Kirby; Alec Stevens

Also Present:

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

Charles Haberstroh stated there is only one agenda item for tonight's meeting and no other discussions will be allowed. The public will have three minutes to speak after the agenda item has been reviewed and the Commission has made their comments.

Jennifer Fava began by stating that the Planning & Zoning Regulation Subcommittee has asked for guidance in terms of a vision for the Baron's South property, including the possibility of rezoning a portion to include some active and/or organized recreation. At this time, the property is currently zoned as DOSRD#2 and is restricted to passive or non-organized recreation use.

The first conceptual draft exhibited was the 2021 Conceptual Design Study B. This plan meets the current passive zoning requirements. It includes the creation of a parking lot accessible from Compo Road South to make the upper portion of the park ADA accessible. Portions of the walking path will also become ADA accessible. The estimated cost for this draft concept is \$1.8 million.

The second conceptual draft exhibited was the 2021 Conceptual Design Study A. This plan requires changes to the current zoning requirements as it includes a small area for active recreation. This vision would allow for the installation of pickleball courts, a bocce court, as well as a large-scale chess board. It also includes the creation of a parking lot accessible from Compo Road South to make the upper portion of the park ADA accessible. Portions of the walking path will also become ADA accessible. The majority of the property would remain as open space and retain the DOSRD#2 zoning. The cost for this draft concept ranges from \$2.2 - \$2.3 million, depending on the type of surface used for the pickleball courts.

After the presentation of both drafts, the Commission spent time discussing and debating which draft vision would benefit the Town and Baron's South best. After much discussion, the public was invited for their feedback.

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Public Comment:

Danielle Dobin, Planning & Zoning Chairperson, 3 Yankee Hill stated that the P&Z Regulations Subcommittee requested that the Parks and Recreation Commission hold this meeting regarding the zoning of Baron's South. Ms. Dobin further explained the differences between both draft plans. She would like this space to be open, accessible and inviting to all Westporters.

Wendy Batteau, Environment Committee, 6 Arlen Road feels that this property should remain open space in perpetuity. It should remain DOSRD#2 and open to everyone and anyone.

Chris Tait, RTM District #1; RTM Parks and Recreation, 10 Buena Vista Drive, asked for clarification on the two draft concept plans. He would like the Commission to be mindful of the wording when they respond to Planning & Zoning.

Michael Cammeyer, P&Z Commission, 7 Breezy Knoll spoke about the increasing popularity of Pickleball, and that P&Z will do their best.

Sal Liccone, RTM District #9, 50 Church Lane stated that this property needs to be better maintained, as well as all the other parks.

Cathy Walsh, 6 Wilcox Lane said she would like to have a study done to identify other areas where pickleball courts could be placed. She has concerns about changing the zoning but would like to see steps put in to access the meadow for painting and music.

Helen Garten, Selectman's Real Property Committee (not a Westport Resident). Charles Haberstroh asked the Commission if they would allow her to speak. Edward Iannone stated he would like to hear from her. Ms. Garten is opposed to changing the zoning on Baron's South; however, she would like to see the buildings improved and the property better maintained.

Morley Boyd, 6 Violet Lane is concerned about the decaying of the buildings and road and feels that the structures should be preserved. He asked what happened to the 2017 draft plan.

Wendy Crowther, 38 East Main Street has the same mindset of Ms. Garten and Mr. Boyd. She feels that the 2017 draft plan proposes a better solution.

Jack Whittle, 26 Calumet Lane recognized Ms. Dobin's statement. He does not support any change in zoning at Baron's South. He would like other sites to be considered for pickleball. He feels that Baron's South has been neglected.

Jennifer Johnson, 28 Tamarac Road supports draft plan "A".

David Axelrod, Chair of the Racquets Advisory Committee, 12 Burr School Road supports draft plan "A".

Matthew Levine, 11 Danbury Road is concerned about changing the zoning, open space is important.

Lisa Podurgiel, 9 Violet Lane is opposed to rezoning Baron's South.

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Michael Kiselak, Planning & Zoning Department clarified the meaning of DOSRD#2 zoning.

John Suggs, 64 Center Street asked why the 2017 draft plan wasn't considered and that the buildings need to be included. Danielle Dobin answered Mr. Suggs questions.

Patti Brill, Racquets Advisory Committee, 8 Harbor Road supports draft plan "A".

Matthew Mandell, RTM P&Z Committee, 18 Ferry Lane East is concerned about changing the zoning at Baron's South and how it would impact future plans there. He would like to see more information to justify the change.

Jason Ross, 12 Bonnie Brook Road spoke about the poor condition of Baron's South. He supports draft plan "A".

Jay Walshon, 67 Roseville Road spoke about the need for more pickleball courts, but we also need to have a partnership with the community who want open space. Perhaps there is a better location for additional pickleball courts which could support bathrooms, lights, parking, viewing stands, etc.

Ward Doonan, Racquets Advisory Committee, 11 Quentin Road said its difficult to find space to add more pickleball courts but is open to options. He supports the pickleball growth.

Cathy Walsh, 6 Wilcox Lane said this property should remain open space in perpetuity.

Wendy Batteau, Environment Committee, 6 Arlen Road would like people to think about whether impervious surfaces should be created at Baron's South.

Wendy Crowther, 38 East Main Street said she didn't see the existing road that leads into Baron's South from South Compo Road. She would like to see it addressed.

Matthew Levine, 11 Danbury Road would like to see improved maintenance of the Baron's South property and would like to find educational ways to use the property.

Michael Cammeyer, P&Z Commission, 7 Breezy Knoll read an email from Matt Goldfarb, 4 Little Lane. Mr. Goldfarb is in favor of draft plan "A".

Tom Lowrie, 4 Gristmill Lane said he is pro pickleball, but is opposed to putting courts at Baron's South. He said he has located other locations where courts could be placed.

Public comment ended and Charles Haberstroh read a few emails.

Email from Kevin & Ryan Lafort, 8 Murvon Court are in support of draft plan "A".

Email from Amy Schafrann, 13 Beachside Commons is in support of draft plan "A".

Email from Judy Block, 25 River Lane is in support of draft plan "A".

At this point, the Commission continued with a thorough open dialogue amongst themselves reviewing and recapping everyone's views, including their own.

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Upon a motion by Edward Iannone, seconded by Charles Haberstroh, and passed unanimously 3-0-1 (1 abstain)

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends Conceptual Study A to the Planning and Zoning Commission, for consideration in subcommittee, as the preferred vision for the Baron's South property.

Upon a motion by Edward Iannone, seconded by Alec Stevens, the meeting adjourned at 10:38pm.

Respectfully,
Debbie Detmer, Recording Secretary