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

February 17, 2022

The Westport Parks and Recreation Commission held a Meeting on Wednesday, February 16, 2022 @7:30pm. 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:

David Floyd, Chairman; Elaine Whitney, Alec Stevens, Kate Kirby, Matthew Haynes

Also Present:

Gary Sorge, Vice President for Community Development and Practice Lead for Landscape Architecture Stantec; Travis Ewan, Stantec; Jennifer Fava, Director of Parks and Recreation; Rick Giunta, Deputy Director; along with members of the public.

David Floyd, newly appointed chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2022. He also welcomed the two new members, Elaine Whitney and Matthew Haynes, as well as returning members, Alec Stevens and Kate Kirby.

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Kate Kirby, seconded by Alec Stevens, the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting held on October 20, 2021, were approved 2-0-3

2. Public Comment

Jay Walshon, 67 Roseville Road had suggestions as to how the Commission should record, review and correct draft Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes and how the public should be involved. Mr. Walshon also thanked Parks and Recreation for its willingness to include pickleball in the Longshore Capital Improvement Plan.

3. Reports of:

Golf Advisory Committee: Jane Dally, Chair of the GAC reported:

- Two meetings have already been held this year, January 10 and February 7.
- The Longshore Men's golf league has a new President, Ryan Smith and he has submitted their schedule to Jon Janik for approval.
- Marie Gross is the new President of the Longshore Women's 18-hole golf league. They have over 60 members signed up for this season and have submitted their schedule to Jon Janik for approval.
- Anne Haymon is the President of the Longshore Women's 9-hole golf league. They are going to cap their membership at 120, which would give more women a chance to play, as tee times are so limited.

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- It was reiterated that dogs are not allowed on the golf course. The Parks and Recreation department sent out an email blast reminding residents of this rule.
- Removal of phragmites has begun on several holes.
- Winter maintenance is in full swing and new staff is being hired.
- It appears the golf course has not had any major damage due to weather this winter and the course should kick off nicely in the spring.
- Jon Janik said supply chain issues continue for certain merchandise for the pro shop and he is looking into it. His staff will be returning this year.
- The golf course was rerated last year by the Metropolitan Golf Association for the white, yellow and orange tees, which resulted in new slope ratings.

Parks Advisory Committee: David Floyd, former Chair of the PAC reported:

- The PAC met on January 24 and Jennifer Fava presented an administrative update regarding Riverside Park. Improvement/work drawings are being drafted and after the bidding process, work is expected to begin sometime this summer.
- Also, hearings and meetings around the Longshore Capital Improvement plan will begin in the next couple of months.
- In addition, mitigation of invasive phragmites at Riverside Park will begin in the Spring/Summer of 2022. This is typically an approach to be taken over the course of a few years to fully eradicate.
- The PAC selected April 9, 2022, as this year's "clean-up" date. Focus will be on Riverside Park and Grace Salmon Park, as well as other locations around town.

Racquets Advisory Committee: David Acselrod, Chair of the RAC reported:

- The RAC met in November 2021 and will be meet again in early March.
- Pickleball, paddle and tennis usage are up significantly, and the RAC feels they don't have the facilities to meet the demand. In 2018, the P&R Commission approved adding two paddle tennis courts and a warming hut at Longshore and those facilities are desperately needed.
- The RAC would like to see additional pickleball courts installed in lot "F" at Longshore. They acknowledge that a request for additional pickleball courts has been added to the Longshore Capital Improvement Plan.
- The RAC would like to see better lighting installed at the tennis courts at Longshore. They are requesting LED lights to be installed.
- The RAC is asking the Commission to move these items forward.

Levitt Pavilion Sub-Committee: no report

4. **To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to a request from the Westport Weston Chamber of Commerce regarding the 2022 Dog Festival.**

David Floyd introduced Matthew Mandel, Executive Director & President – Westport Weston Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Mandel gave the Commission a brief history of the Dog Festival which debuted in 2016. At that time, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved hanging one banner on the stonewall at the crossroads of Compo Road North and the Post Road. In 2021, Mr. Mandel displayed two banners for the Dog Festival, one at the crossroads and another by the playhouse entrance. Parks and Recreation received complaints about the additional signage, and Mr. Mandell was

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asked to take down one banner, which he did. The Parks and Recreation policy states that one banner can be hung for a maximum of seven days, Monday to Monday, and may include one weekend only. Mr. Mandel is requesting permission to hang two banners for this year's event for two weeks. Placement of the banners would be at the crossroads of Compo Road North and the Post Road and by the entrance to the Playhouse. He said these banners are used to advertise the event, along with parking information.

Jennifer Fava reviewed with the Commission the current approved policy for hanging banners, which states a banner can be hung for a maximum of seven days, Monday to Monday, and may include one weekend only. Ms. Fava also stated that if there was a rain date a week later, the banner would remain displayed for an additional week. This is the staff recommendation; however, the Commission is welcome to discuss and should an exception to this policy be voted on, it would be followed.

The Commissioners held an exhaustive discussion regarding the current banner policy, expectations, along with Mr. Mandel's request, this included a question if other large events requested additional display time for their banners. Ms. Fava stated that no other large events have requested additional display time.

Public Comment:

Jay Walshon, 67 Roseville Road said he is in support of Mr. Mandel's request.

Commissioners Comment:

Elaine Whitney would like to explore the policy more and would ask Mr. Mandell back next year to review this year's event with the Commissioners.

Alec Stevens stated since no other large events held in Town request additional display time for their banners, and as the Dog Festival is advertised heavily, he is not in favor of making an exception.

After continued discussion, it was decided that an exception would be made for this year, with the requirement that Mr. Mandell come back before the Commission next year to review this year's event and report if any complaints had been made about the additional banner.

Upon a motion by David Floyd, seconded by Kate Kirby, and passed 4-1

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission approves the request from the Westport Weston Chamber of Commerce regarding the 2022 Dog Festival including the hanging of two (2) banners at Winslow Park for a period not to exceed 10 days, unless event is postponed to rain date.

5. Longshore Capital Improvement Plan Update (Discussion only).

David Floyd asked Jennifer Fava to open the discussion regarding the Longshore Capital Improvement Plan and explained that this discussion will be solely centered around the process outlined by Ms. Fava and there will not be any discussions about elements to be included in the plan.

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Jennifer Fava spoke about the purpose of tonight's discussion and reviewed the general outline of Stantec's scope of work and expected timeline. She spoke about plans to schedule several meetings with stakeholders. Ms. Fava said a survey will be crafted and sent out community wide. Also, a website will be established to provide the public with information related to the plan and its progress. Ms. Fava introduced Mr. Gary Sorge, Vice President for Community Development and Practice Lead for Landscape Architecture. Mr. Sorge's colleague, Travis Ewan was also in attendance.

Mr. Sorge shared his PowerPoint presentation which addressed the anticipated timeline, key tasks, and Park Improvement Considerations (Preliminary).

After the presentation, Jennifer Fava said invitations will be going out to participate in the planning process to the various stakeholders which will provide the feedback needed to go out to the larger public. Whenever there are public meetings, the public is always welcome to attend, and these meetings will be posted. Once the website is ready, a press release will be sent out letting the public know about the kickoff and where to find information, along with upcoming work on this project, etc.

Commissioner Comments:

David Floyd asked if the website will be accessible through the Town website. Jennifer Fava said that Stantec will be monitoring/maintaining the website and there will be a link posted on the Parks and Recreation Department's website.

Public Comment: None

6. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to approval of the 2022 Charity Golf Tournaments at Longshore.

Jennifer Fava let the new Commissioners know, that annually, up to a maximum of eight (8) charity golf events take place at Longshore. Each year, those organizations come before the Commission to review their past financial results and provide a financial proposal and date for their next year's event. Ms. Fava stressed that all proposed event dates will need to be approved with Jon Janik and herself, and once confirmed the organizations will be informed. Ms. Fava also reviewed the fees for a morning shotgun start and a morning & afternoon shotgun start.

The following organizations reviewed their past financials, as well as their proposed financials and event date:

- Westport Professional Firefighter's Association – Anthony Maisano
- Staples High School Gridiron Club – Joel Beck and Matt Keefe
- VFW Post 399 – Phil Delgato
- Westport Police Athletic League – Craig Bergamo
- Longshore Men's Golf Association – Skip Lane
- Staples Lacrosse Association – Edward Iannone
- Children's Community Development Center – Ted Balagtas
- Learning Community Day School – Laura Gitto and Kerry Griffin

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Upon a motion by Kate Kirby, seconded by Elaine Whitney, and passed unanimously 5-0

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission approves the following charity golf outings at Longshore Club Park for the 2022 season subject to dates approved by the Parks and Recreation Director:

Westport Professional Firefighter's Association
 Staples High School Gridiron Club
 VFW Post 399
 Westport Police Athletic League
 Longshore Men's Golf Association
 Staples Lacrosse Association
 Children's Community Development Center
 Learning Community Day School

The Parks and Recreation Commission approves waiving the golf cart fees and greens fees for the Longshore Men's Golf Association's charity golf tournament (Club House Cup) for 2022.

7. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to a request from Westport P.A.L. to use Compo Beach for the 2022 town fireworks.

Jennifer Fava introduced Craig Bergamo, President, Westport Police Athletic League. Mr. Bergamo requested Thursday, June 30th for the 2022 fireworks, with a rain date of Friday, July 1st. 1,800 tickets will be available for sale. Also, shuttle buses from Longshore to Compo Beach will be in operation, if needed. Compo Beach parking lots are to close at 4pm and reopen to only fireworks ticket holders. Entry fee per car is \$40.

Commissioner Comments:

Elaine Whitney asked for clarification on the number of tickets sold.

Public Comment: None

Upon a motion by David Floyd, seconded by Matthew Haynes, and passed unanimously 5-0

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission grants approval to the Westport Police Athletic League to host the 2022 Fireworks at Compo Beach on Thursday, June 30th, rain date Friday, July 1st. Compo Beach parking lots to close at 4pm and reopen to only fireworks ticket holders. Additionally, entry fee per car is approved at \$40.

8. To take such action as the meeting may determine relative to recommended proposed fee changes for Parks & Rec programs.

Jennifer Fava referenced the memo from Cyndi Palaia, Program Manager which describes the three requested fee changes and the reasoning behind the request.

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Cyndi Palaia, Program Manager reviewed with the Commissioners the following proposed fee changes and the rationale for the increase.

1. Pickleball (weekday and weekend instruction). The increase would cover more instructional time with 15 hours in a 5-week session. The proposed fee would also cover increased operational costs, offer smaller class sizes, as well as being affordable for seniors.
2. Comp Compo. This fee was last changed in 2020. The new proposed fee would accommodate an increase in salary wages due to the increase in minimum wage, as well as increased operational costs.
3. RECing Crew. This fee was last changed in 2020. The new proposed fee would accommodate an increase in salary wages due to the increase in minimum wage, as well as increased operational costs.

Commissioner Comments:

There was a discussion around fees, when or if they will be changed, along with timing of approvals. Jennifer Fava spoke about the newly adopted Financial Sustainability Policy and she will be reaching out to the Commissioners to review this policy.

Public Comment:

Jay Walshon, 67 Roseville Road requested clarity regarding the increase in the operational costs for pickleball. Cyndi Palaia answered that the increase covers the purchasing of new equipment to facilitate instruction, such as new nets, balls, paddles, etc., as well as the instruction itself. Jennifer Fava said that the increase covers indirect costs as well direct costs, which in the past had not been factored in. Mr. Walshon would like to see a senior discount implemented, noting the pickleball sport is growing fast with younger players, as well as older players.

Upon a motion by Kate Kirby, seconded by Alec Stevens, and passed unanimously 5-0

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectwomen approval of Parks and Recreation Department fees as proposed.

9. Commissioner's Comments:

Elaine Whitney said she is honored to continue her service to the Town and is looking forward to working with everyone on the Commission. Ms. Whitney also thanked Ms. Fava and Mr. Giunta for their participation in the Board of Finance Hearing process meeting last night with their presentation of the Parks and Recreation programs and budget. Ms. Whitney is also interested in reviewing additional forms of data, such as longer historical lookbacks and utilization rates and how this information can relate to the Financial Sustainability Policy.

10. Administrative Report.

Jennifer Fava reported:

- The Longshore Golf Course ended the year with 38,107 rounds, the most since 2004.

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- The Parks & Rec staff are getting ready for spring & summer. The boating and kayak invoices have been mailed out and we are far ahead in returns compared to this time last year by about 79 payments equating to approximately \$100,000.
- The sale of beach emblems will begin in early March. They will be required on May 1st.
- Program registration will begin online at 9am on March 2nd except for RECing Crew, Camp Compo and Pickleball, due to the fee approval process. In-person registration begins on March 7th.
- The first Board of Finance informal workshop for the budget was held last night. The Finance Department has started using new software and some features need to be worked out.
- The First Selectwoman's presentation to the Board of Finance is scheduled for March 2nd.
- The Parks and Recreation Department has proposed an expense budget of \$7,247,353, which reflects an increase of 7.2%. The proposed revenue is \$6,324,966, which is up 2.5%. The budget is posted on the town's website.
- Bid documents for Riverside Park are estimated to go out in the next couple of weeks with construction to begin in the spring.
- Clean-up Day is scheduled for April 9th. Information will be sent out to past participants through our data base.
- The basketball program is currently in progress, with a break next week for spring break, then March Madness begins. This program is showing good enrollment.
- Our Ice-Skating Program was very popular this year.

Upon a motion by Kate Kirby, seconded by David Floyd, the meeting adjourned at 9:57pm.

Respectfully,
Debbie Detmer, Recording Secretary