

Town of West Hartford Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

November 18, 2019 5:30 – 6:40

West Hartford Town Hall Room 217

Meeting began at 5:32PM.

In attendance: Brian Clifford, Robin Collins, Kim Evans, Shawna Kitzman, Tanja Low, Sarah Needham, Terry Schmitt

Missing: John Minze, Greg Shimer

Staff: Helen Rubino-Turco, Director

Minutes of the last meeting were approved unanimously: Robin moved, Brian seconded.

1. Advisory Board membership needed to be updated for the coming year. We also need one new person to apply to join the committee, with the approval of the Town Council.

- Appointment, terms: John Minze has agreed to serve as the chair
 - Shawna will stay on as a member (but no longer chair)
 - Greg and Robin will also renew their membership
 - Sarah will continue until a replacement is found
- John Minze was voted in as new chair by a unanimous vote:
 - Robin moved, Brian seconded.
- Our Meeting Schedule was announced. Basically it is every other month, with the exception that the "July" meeting is pushed back to June.
- The dates are as follows:
 - 1/21, 3/16, 5/18, 6/15, 9/21, 11/16

2. The "Ten minute walk" promotion had a nice press conference. Mayor Cantor read a proclamation.

- Our Town Parks Bingo game wrapped up. People reported that they enjoyed the card. 53 entries were turned in. The winner received new sneakers from Fleet Feet, and 10 runners-up got 10-ticket books for swims at the outdoor pools for summer 2020.

3. The increase in the minimum wage is likely to have a real impact on summer park programs, notably, some increases between 4%-5%. Staff is still developing a proposal, so no data as yet provided. Lifeguards are especially critical to find. We have to pay at least minimum wage, and often a little above the minimum, in order to compete in the summer marketplace for employees.

4, Zoning

- Public hearing regarding Sponsorship signage in public parks was delayed to Town Council meeting January 28.
- A temporary dog park at Beachland Park was approved, with some folks supporting it, and some people protesting it. The "temporary" park will be from December 15 to March 15, depending on weather. The Dog Park Coalition will pay for temporary fencing. The

town will plow pathway and pick up garbage. Helen requested that committee members visit every once in a while to let her know what is going on and how the situation is working out for the neighbors and the participants.

- The Outdoor Classroom for Westmoor Park was approved. Tom Daly from Milone and MacBroom volunteered to do research, design and documentation to prepare for Zoning. Chuck Coursey also donated his services to do community outreach. (He also will donate to the dog park coalition if they need it).
- Wolcott Park staff has begun fundraising. Looking for funding through "Sustainable CT" — which will match funds donated to the cause. Probable cost is \$200K. She is looking for a prefab building made offsite to be erected onsite. There are good ones available that feature a somewhat rustic look.

5. Capital improvements:

- Planning starts now for next year, but it is a 12-year plan, in all.
- Sterling Field is getting finishing touches done.
- The field is named for Gordon Sterling, first person from WH to die in WWII
 - he died at Pearl Harbor as a plane pilot
- Restroom at Eisenhower Park will be replaced and made handicap accessible.
- The roof on the pool house building at Fernridge Park needs replacement; it will be out to bid (again) soon. The Town's insurance carrier vetoed a metal roof, so plans now call for shingles.
- Wolcott Park is undergoing a multi-phased renovation. Post-tension concrete tennis and basketball has been completed. The lighting infrastructure project is nearly done. Next is an effort to reconfigure the Western parking lot. The town is also looking into redoing the restroom building to make it ADA compliant. Also, the splashpad is old and needs to be replaced. Funding is coming from a \$750K grant from the state bonding commission. The town contributed \$500K, and additional funding will come from CDBG for accessibility portion.
- Kennedy Park is next on the planning schedule. The town will do significant community outreach as part of the planning.

6. Robin discussed a project at Elmwood community center, working with Hartt School to produce a senior choir, as well as other arts offerings involving seniors. Also youth orchestra came to play at the senior center, for a dress rehearsal experience for attendees. The Hartford Courant picked up on this effort and did a story on it.

- Tues. January 21 (note date) is the next meeting.
- The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.