

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting
March 18, 2019, 5:30-6:45
Town Hall, Room 407

Members in attendance: Shawna Kitzman, Brian Clifford, Robin Collins, John Minze, Kim Evans, Terry Schmitt

Members absent: Sarah Needham, Greg Shimer

Non-Members in attendance: Marc Blanchard

1. Parks Update

a. Park Improvements

- i. Phase I of Wolcott's six pickleball courts are nearing completion, with ribbon-cutting ceremony planned for the Spring. Clean-up and seating installation are the final touches. The post-tension concrete courts will be better able to withstand weather. Phase II, which is not yet fully funded, includes removal of the snack bar and bathroom and storage facility updates, lighting and pathway improvements.
- ii. Sterling Field: First phase of improvements will begin soon, and Phase II is scheduled for the fall. The project includes irrigation, seeding, and drainage improvements. Sport leagues including softball, rugby, and football will be relocated to other town fields.
- iii. Whiting Lane: Irrigation plans for the lower fields are on hold. Although partially-funded by Field of Dreams and Town capital, bids came in too high.

b. Rick DiBella Retirement

- i. Longtime Town Grounds Manager is retiring, with a celebration planned. Mr. DiBella fostered a collaborative and engaging environment, and his leadership set the bar. His replacement will be announced within two weeks.

c. Sponsorship of signage in public parks

- i. On hold following the Town Planning & Zoning (TPZ) committee not in favor.

d. Ten Minute Walk Plans

- i. Kim Evans, Marc Blanchard, and Helen Rubino-Turco met to discuss ideas to highlight Earth Day (4/24/19) followed by a series of monthly events highlighting the factor of "10". A primary effort is the promotion of 10-minute walks to the Town's public open spaces. The effort is anticipated to conclude on 10/10/19.
- ii. Partners suggested include Girl and Boy Scouts, Friends of Fern, and the local Gardening Club.
- iii. Committee iterated the importance of branding and communications to promote and unify the message.
- iv. Kim to follow up with Helen regarding plan specifics.

2. Recreation Update

a. Summer Programs

- i. As of 3/19/19, the catalogue is distributed and many of the Town's summer programs are open for registration.

- ii. The Town is adjusting timing and programming for certain programs to add value for families. For example, they're adjusting the window of drop off/pick up for no additional cost, as well as more family-friendly drop-off policies.
 - iii. New vendor Ariel's Gymnastics (based in Newington) will run gymnastics summer programs.
 - iv. Swim lessons will be held during the morning at three Town pools (Fern, Beachland, Kennedy). Eisenhower will be open to the public earlier than the others, and will offer p.m. lessons.
 - v. Swim team will remain as a centralized, town-wide team hosted at Cornerstone. This model worked best for the entire community, granting broader public access after work hours. However, some families do not support.
 - vi. Town pools will continue to use the punch-card system. Cornerstone members will continue a complementary access to all town pools, indicated with a membership card sticker.
- b. RecWare
- i. The Town is moving from RecTrak software to RecWare with an August/September roll-out. The customer-centric software is being piloted at Cornerstone. There is no seamless transition from the old to new databases, and residents will be required to re-enter their information in the new database. The Town will begin marketing this change at Celebrate West Hartford.
 - ii. Leisure Services is evaluating update of their website for improved interface, function, and design for residents.