

**Said SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
December 9, 2020**

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 via video Zoom meeting.

ATTENDANCE:Brian Casinghino, Chairman
.....Bill Boucher, Vice Chairman
.....Stephanie Dolan
.....Sam Lombardo
.....Stephen Marchillo
.....Anthony Miglioizzi
.....David Rusnock

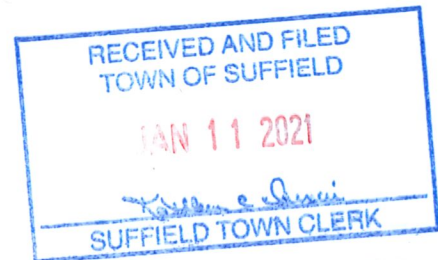
ABSENT:.....Jay Bombard
.....Andrew Joly

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:.....Peter Leclerc, Director

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Brian asked Peter to read the agenda into the minutes:

- A. Call to Order
- B. Public Input
- C. Review of Minutes
- D. Correspondence
- E. Program Reports
- F. Old Business
 - 1. Sub-Committees for new members
 - 2. Basketball in the Spring
 - 3. Bridge Street School
- G. New Business
 - 1. Collaboration with SHS and Sports Council
 - 2. Sunrise Park
 - 3. Holiday Event 12/12/20
 - 4. Meeting dates for 2021
- H. Adjournment



PUBLIC INPUT: Dave said that he has some public input from his wife. She wanted to let the commission and Peter know what a great hit the wreath making class was. Peter said that he received a lot of positive reviews and not just for the wreath making class. People are realizing what the department is doing and what it takes to keep things safe.

MINUTES: Dave made a motion to accept the minutes. Bill seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Peter gave a short synopsis of the reports focusing on soccer and field hockey which went well. In regard to the coaches, they had to be assigned per cohorts. We could not cross cohorts. Good responses from coaches. Photos were also done for soccer with the individual photos grouped together so team photos could be had.

Basketball has been postponed indefinitely. We did have some clinics set to go but the day we were ready to advertise the governor suspended all team sports until mid-January.

The “Home Alone” program is very popular and fills up quickly. Anthony said his daughter did the program and said it was awesome.

Another partnership we have is with the North Pole. The elves received some training and called to talk with the kids. There are around 100 kids signed up. It is a successful program and will probably be offered next year.

Donna has been doing a lot of out reach to keep the bowling buddies connected. She is also working on outdoor programs for exercise.

Brian submitted a piece for this month’s Observer and it is published. The article is about the hard work the staff is doing to make the best of the situation. Right next to Brian’s article is one written by an Observer staff member on our enrichment program.

OLD BUSINESS:

Sub-Committees for new members: Brian reviewed the subcommittees which have 4 members on each committee. Commission members can be on more than 1 subcommittee. Brian asked Anthony and Stephen if they had decided which committee they would like to be on. Anthony said he would go wherever he was needed.

Long Term Planning and Programs: *Bill, Chairman*; Steve, Anthony, Jay
Major Events: *Sam, Chairman*; Bill, Dave, Anthony
Communications: *Stephanie, Chairman*; Andy, Steve, Sam
Youth Sports: *Jay, Chairman*; Andy, Dave, Stephanie

Bill said we should think about scheduling subcommittee meetings when we set up our regular commission meeting dates.

Peter would like to set up a meeting for the ad hoc road race committee after the 1st of the year. There are several people he would like to involve; one of them being involved with the Hartford Marathon and another who is involved with the Boston Marathon. Hopefully we will be able to run in September 2021.

Basketball in the Spring: Just a recap, basketball has been postponed for the winter but we hope to run it in the spring. A Springfield College senior will be starting January 5 as our intern and one of his tasks will be working on the spring basketball program. He was highly recommended by the college department chair and had a very good interview.

He has background in Special Olympic work, will be helping Donna and working on summer programs too.

Advertising for the spring basketball program will start after the governor opens up more areas; probably January and Peter doesn't think February would be too late.

Bridge Street School: Everyone's input is requested on this subject. Abatement is being done and the building will come down soon. Peter did go through the building to see if anything could be salvaged.

The 1st selectman asked Peter to explore putting a park in the area. An RFP will be going out to landscape architects to see what could go there, including community input, and costs. The commission's input is also important for ideas that we can request the architects to explore. Peter discussed what could be put in an area and the costs associated. Once the RFP is returned there will be a public meeting to review what has been suggested.

The commission discussed the size of the area, the topography and that a sewer line runs across the property. Also discussed where the need for a playground, athletic fields, passive park area and how much space the parking area will take. The location of the property to the center of town and how this can bring people to the area was discussed. Different ideas on how to pay tribute to Bridge Street School were reviewed.

Brian reviewed the history of Bridge Street School and the referendum. He would like to have commission members walk the property. And suggested that this be done before the next meeting. We want this property to be functional, be beneficial to the town and look good.

Peter said that because of the Covid19 restrictions, Bruce Park Pavilion (which is covered) has been used extensively. A 3-season pavilion would be very helpful and a nice addition to the center of town. This will be put into the RFP.

The commission discussed how the Bridge Street School property was used in the past, how the above suggestions would really benefit the community and how to commemorate the school.

The RFP will be put together, reviewed by the town attorney, and sent to several landscape architects. When the RFPs are returned, they will be reviewed, and the selected architects will be interviewed. Once the architect is picked there will be meetings for public input and then a final plan will be made and presented to the town.

Stephanie asked if there was a budget. Peter said there isn't, waiting to see what architects' construction estimates are. Once we have that we will go from there.

NEW BUSINESS:

Collaboration with SHS and Sports Council: There was a collaboration, last week, with Suffield Public Schools/Suffield High School to have Charlie Sullivan, head volleyball coach at Springfield College, give a presentation on core values and how he structured his programs. Charlie is an international college coach and was an Olympic coach for volleyball but never played the game himself. He is very successful and his framework works for all areas. Steve said he was very impressed with his presentation and how successful he is without having a sports background. Very unique and incredible.

Peter said he will work with Jim Blaine to develop some core values and put signs around the athletic fields. This information will help coaches with tips and information on how to help youth with teamwork, motivation and commitment.

The commission discussed commitment and the values Charlie discussed in his presentation.

Sunrise Park: Sunrise Park was awarded "Park of Merit" by CRPA (Connecticut Recreation and Park Association) for the project we did there. The presentation was made at the Mohegan Sun Convention Center. Brian attended along with Gail Demko, Rotary Club representative, and Doug Knotts, of the design firm. Brian said he was very impressed with the presentation and the group. Peter was told by the head of the organization that this project is something that could be up for a national award.

Peter will present an award plaque to the Conservation Commission once they start meeting in person again.

Holiday Event 12/12/20: No tree lighting this year which is disappointing since last year was so successful. The 1st selectman's office put together an event that is a self-guided walking tour of main street. They encouraged homeowners to decorate their houses. We will have the ice sculptor on the green again along with some things for the kids to do. There will be a horse drawn carriage but no rides for the public. It will bring Santa up and down Main Street. The event is this Saturday, 5 to 7 p.m., with a rain date of Sunday. The event is called Suffield Alight.

Meeting dates for 2021: This is just for the regular commission meetings. We can adjust meetings as necessary after we have posted them.

Brian discussed meeting at Bridge Street School on January 13 before the meeting. Peter said he thought the restriction on in person meetings is still in place. He can take groups of 3 to walk the property. Brian said he would like commission members to walk the grounds before the January 13 commission meeting.

Sam made a motion to set the regular meeting dates on the 2nd Wednesday of the month for the Parks and Recreation Commission as follows with amendments if needed:

January 13; February 10; March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10, and December 8, 2021.

Stephanie seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Brian said it's been a unique year, very challenging for people, and our department and commission members have done an outstanding job. A thank you to all. We are doing a lot of good things for our town. The effort our department is making has made things better for our townspeople. This year has highlighted the need for what we offer.

Brian wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday and new year. Peter said he appreciated everyone's input and effort. The commission thanked Peter for the work he has done this year and Peter reminded everyone that we have a great staff who have done great work.

ADJOURNMENT: Dave made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Stephanie Dolan, Interim Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting