



January 24, 2022

TO: Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
FROM: Shawna Kitzman, Chairperson
SUBJECT: Meeting - Monday, January 24, 2022

Minutes

1. Roll Call – Shawna Kitzman, Greg Shimer, Tanja Low, Robin Collins, August Melita, Kate Eikel, Steve Garneau (audio), Anna Park, Steve Kutcher, Helen Rubino-Turco
2. Approval of November 15, 2021 meeting minutes. Unanimously accepted.
3. Old Business:
 - Mayflower Property Update
 - 12 firms proposed for the Feasibility Study (programmatic and facility use)
 - Five companies were shortlisted
 - The selected firm will conduct community outreach
 - An Advisory Committee membership is under consideration by the Town Committee. The Committee would like broad representation of the town population and special interest groups, including the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.
 - Monthly or on an as-needed basis
 - Greg volunteered to represent the Committee; Helen confirmed that Anna Park had previously been appointed as the lead with Robin Collins as an alternate representative.
 - Capital Improvements Update
 - Eisenhower Pool – conducted an RFP for pool replacement. Selected Northeast Collaborative Architects (NCA) from Middletown, CT
 - NCA has begun the design process
 - Town staff will visit the Simsbury town pool and has conducted prelim site work
 - Timeframe - Designs anticipated April 2022; Award by end of May, June 1, 2022 start for the full year to complete by May 15-June 1, 2023 season
 - Town Council approved funding via bond commission of \$2.5M, which will cover design and any overage. Design is approximately \$149,000; cost to build the pool is about \$2-2.2M.
 - Hunter House rehabilitation at Westmoor Park hit a small weather delay. Funded by CDBG funding and Westmoor funding.
 - Eisenhower Park bath house feasibility study received; will go out to bid for a contractor to manage the renovations, after the 2022 pool season. Slated for funding by CDBG.

- Either complete or underway at Kennedy Park – field irrigation and post tension concrete at basketball court.
- Tennis court conversion to pickleball court at Buena Vista on Cornerstone Road. There are four courts presently. With funding in place, including ARPA funds, the Town plans to renovate into two tennis and four-six pickleball court. Pickleball is growing in popularity, alongside national trends. The cost is higher than anticipated due to supply costs.
- American Rescue Plan Act – Projects slated to be funded by ARPA are expected to be approved the evening of January 25, 2022. Projects include:
 - Pond dredging projects - priority is dredging of the irrigation pond at Rockledge Golf Course
 - Bridge work and accessibility path at Spicebush Swamp
 - Pedestrian bridge replacements at Miracle League and Fernridge Park
 - Bleachers at Cornerstone Aquatics Center
 - Sewer work at Kennedy Park
 - Improvements to Blanchfield Park in Elmwood (corner of New Britain Ave and S Quaker Lane)
 - Completed include Veterans Skating Rink upgrades, including Southwood Park fence
 - The Town is excited to increase accessibility and facility improvements
- Urban Tree Program
 - Tree Action Group (TAG) is the advocacy group. Uncertain if this will be a town-appointed board, or will be a subsidiary of this P&R group or Friends of Parks. No formal meeting has been held yet.
 - ARPA funding anticipated for tree canopy study, which will confirm which parts of town need more trees. Community education campaign would accompany the canopy study to raise awareness of the importance and role of trees.
 - Applying for small groups to purchase and plant trees. Ted and Caroline Goerner have organized seedling procurement. Planted 1,000 seedlings around Arbor Day 2021 and will do so again in 2022.
 - All interested are welcome to join.

4. New Business

- 2022 Fee Changes Approved
 - Early January 2022 fee changes approved for Leisure Services activities. Most fees are governed by the Town Council. Must track with increase in minimum wage and remain competitive with operations.
 - Some programs are within the Enterprise Fund, which is akin to a business.
 - Highlights include a \$1 increase per round of golf at both courses, and commensurate increases to season passes as well. Admission to Town outdoor pools also increased by \$1 for all users.
- Winter Programs
 - Omicron variant has impacted our region but seems to be receding.
 - No major disruptions to date. Some cancellations have occurred.

- Spring/Summer/Camp Programming Overview
 - The new combined program guide is posted online to the Leisure Services website.
 - Town will print 3,000 hard copy brochures (saving money on mailing and production), which will be available at all Leisure Services facilities, public libraries, and elementary schools. The digital brochure is flexible, dynamic and timely.
 - Registration begins Tuesday, February 1 at noon.
 - Residents can make changes to medical or family profiles now.
 - Winter programming remains online.
 - Department seeks part-time workers to staff programs (lifeguards, camp counselors, cashiers). This is often a first job, and it's rewarding. July 1, 2022 will increase to \$14/hour. Those 16+ are encouraged to apply via the Leisure Services website or at facilities.
 - West Hartford native and former Leisure Services employee Michael Schur (of Parks & Recreation fame) wrote a great book regarding modern ethics, [How to be Perfect](#).
 - The town has a new section of the website with pictures of distinct camps.
 - Helen will continue working with the Friends of West Hartford Parks to populate more information about parks, and the FoWHP program, via Leisure Services website.
- Report from Friends of West Hartford Parks
 - Steve Kutcher reintroduced the group. The organization has evolved from Friends of Fernridge Park, and have adopted a new charter. Will begin fundraising to invest in all West Hartford parks this month. Will seek matching funds that would otherwise be available to non-profits only. Seeking ways to increase awareness of funding.
 - The model is designed to foster local stewardship.

5. Public Comment - none

Next meeting – March 21, 2022 at 5:30 PM; WebEx

CC: Matt Hart, Town Manager
 Helen Rubino-Turco, Director, Leisure Services & Social Services
 Essie S. Labrot, Town Clerk
 Marc Blanchard, Leisure Services Manager

"ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING SHOULD CONTACT SUZANNE OSLANDER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, 860-561-7580 SEVEN DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING."