

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
March 9, 2022

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 in the conference room, Town Hall, 83 Mountain Rd., Suffield, CT. Zoom was also available for those who wished not to attend in person.

ATTENDANCE:Brian Casinghino, Chairman
.....Jay Bombard
.....Stephen Marchillo (via Zoom)
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Bill Boucher, Vice Chairman
.....Stephanie Dolan
.....Andrew Joly
.....Sam Lombardo
.....Anthony Migliozi

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 Report
- F. Old Business
 - a. Update on Tennis/Basketball Court project
 - b. US Tennis Association Grant for courts
 - c. Update on Community Services
 - d. Day of Service with Rotary on 4/9/22
 - e. Bridge Street Park
 - f. Other
- G. New Business
 - a. Youth Sports Subcommittee update
 - b. Fishing Derby with Conservation Commission
 - c. Community Award presented to Eric Hamylak
 - d. Suffield Carnival in June
 - e. Road Race Update
 - f. Other
- H. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

MINUTES: Dave made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular February 9 meeting and the special meeting March 1. Jay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Peter highlighted a few programs. Programs are full everywhere and the adult fitness programs have been very successful. We use different vendors and instructors for these programs. He reviewed the Total Transformation program run by Joseph Hicks.

Donna is advertising for spring, planning for spring and getting ready to do programs. She is interviewing potential staff, purchasing supplies and working with the schools to secure the appropriate facilities for the summer programs. The younger camps will not be held at Spaulding this year due to renovations. Kids Korner and Morning Munchkins will be held at McAlister and we have held the programs there in the past and it worked well.

Dan's report is a recap of the basketball season that just finished. This program has been expanded to start in December and ends in March. The mini travel program was again successful. New uniforms were purchased and we allowed travel basketball players to play with our Parks & Rec players. The communication with the other towns was great. The other towns are in the same boat as us – very low enrollment in the upper grade kids. The commission discussed this program, how it has worked and Peter will get feedback from the other towns.

The March Madness program is coming up and it will bridge the gap between basketball and spring sports. Peter reviewed how the program is conducted. He also elaborated on Dan's sculpting class and what a great job he is doing.

The babysitting safety courses and STEM programs were reviewed. Peter reviewed Kate Powers' (Youth Services) involvement with some of the programs and how well it is going.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on Tennis/Basketball Court project: At the special meeting on the tennis/basketball courts it was recommended to stay with 2 basketball courts, 6 pickleball courts and 3 tennis courts. This was relayed to the landscape architect firm and the invitation to bid has been sent out. Bids are due back by the end of the month.

There is a pre-bid meeting next week for any questions. We would like to get the project on this year's construction schedule.

On the selection of colors for the basketball courts, we would like to send the decision out to the schools – limiting it to 3 colors. As long as we have the choice within a 2-month time period of construction we are o.k. The tennis courts will be green and blue, U.S. Open colors, and reverse for pickleball.

US Tennis Association Grant for courts: Since we have the final design the grant process can be completed. With sublines of different colors and ADA access we are able to reach the requirements of the grant. The grant maximum is up to \$20,000 for 3 courts and with the improvements to the courts and USTA New England's letter of endorsement we have a good chance of being awarded the grant.

Update on Community Services: We presented the budget to the Board of Finance Monday night. Even though it was a budget meeting they asked to see the presentation and had some questions. Their response was positive.

We reviewed the differences in the number of programs we do now and the increase in revenue as opposed to past programs/revenues. Peter reviewed some numbers and improvements in revenue and participation of the residents. We have the same number of staff as we did in the past but have increased programs and revenue. There were questions from the board in regard to Babbs and Peter reviewed the reasons why he reduced the number of staffed days. We can move forward once the Town vote has happened. Peter thanked the commission for their support.

Day of Service with Rotary on 4/9/22: Brian reviewed the Day of Service coming up on 4/9 and asked who would be able to participate in the event. Dave said he was not sure as yet if he would be available. Jay said he would attend. Peter has another commitment on that day but will try to attend at some time during the day. Brian said that he thought Sam was available. Stephen said he is not sure yet what his schedule for that day will be. He will attend if possible. Brian said we should have 4 or 5 members that can attend. Peter will relay the Rotary contact information to Brian who will contact them.

Bridge Street Park: Peter has had some casual conversations with the 1st selectman in regard to moving the project forward. The 1st selectman is open to doing some fundraising through a capital campaign to help make it more palatable. A 501c3 was discussed which might get people to be more comfortable donating. Peter asked Brian if the 501c3 for the Bridge Street Community project was still active. Brian said that it is not and discussed the logistics and difficulty in creating one. The commission discussed the project and funding.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Youth Sports Subcommittee update: There wasn't a quorum so the meeting has been rescheduled to 4/13/22 with the same agenda.

Fishing Derby with Conservation Commission: The Conservation Commission has asked for help with this event which will be held May 14 in the morning. We are working on stocking the pond with fish, age groups, prizes, advertising, etc. Dave asked who stocks the pond with fish. Peter said that there is a fishery that stocks the pond. Fish are very expensive and cost is based on the size of the fish. The pond will be restocked this summer if needed.

Community Award presented to Eric Hamylak: Peter was approached by the Springfield Thunderbirds about an award they present at games. The award is to acknowledge people who have contributed to the community. Eric's name popped up right away. He is the National Honor Society sponsor at the high school. He helps us get volunteers for our programs, has helped with programs and is always going above and beyond to help. He was presented with the award at the game last Friday night. There were 2 rows of Suffield families at the game so Eric asked the kids to come up with him and it was put on the jumbotron.

Suffield Carnival in June: The 1st selectman wants to resurrect something similar to the fireman's carnival and asked for our help along with a group of townspeople. We have picked a date, June 17 to 19, at Bruce Park. The event will have amusement rides (from the Big E contractor), food (Big E vendor), vendors, music, games, and spaces for local business and community groups to represent. Friday night will have fireworks with a rain date of Saturday. Shuttle service will be provided from the Middle school and parking at the high school will allow people easy access. We have had 2 meetings so far and it is still in the planning stages. We need community events, especially coming off Covid.

Road Race Update: The standard meeting is the last Thursday of the month. There was a meeting last month and the website is linked to a separate road race site. The basic information is there, but it isn't finished. Registration will open in May. Peter asked Stephen to review the site and get back to him with feedback. We have the same sponsors as last year.

Brian asked about the change to the 5K course. Peter said that we are trying to get the 5K certified so that it will go up to Russell and back down, they run past Suffield on the Green twice. Since the race starts later, we should not have any problems on High Street with vehicles or vendors moving their wares.

Peter contacted the State Police to see if they have a group of runners that would participate in our race. Hopefully they can attend.

Other: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Jay made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting