

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
April 13, 2022

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, April 13, 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
.....Bill Boucher, Vice Chairman
.....Jay Bombard
.....Stephen Marchillo
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Stephanie Dolan
.....Andrew Joly
.....Sam Lombardo
.....Anthony Migliozi

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:07 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
 - a. Update on Tennis/Basketball Court Project
 - b. Rotary Day of Service at Sunrise Park
 - c. Fishing Derby May 14th (15th rain date)
 - d. Bridge Street Park
 - e. Other
- G. New Business
 - a. Parks and Recreation Community Awards
 - b. Suffield Night at the Hartford Yard Goats
 - c. Suffield Summer Fair
 - d. Summer Events
 - e. Other

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

MINUTES: Brian asked that under Old Business, Bridge Street Park section, the last sentence be amended to read: Brian said that he believes that public funding would be appropriate and he is in support of it as a partial way of funding the project. Dave made a motion to accept the minutes as amended above. Jay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Peter highlighted Dan's report in regard to the March Madness Program. This program was initiated last year due to Covid. It was successful and brought back this year. The program is run like a skills and drills clinic. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Peter elaborated on the different facets of the program and Dan's involvement with this program and others. Stephen said that Dan has done a great job and we are lucky to have him. The commission agreed with this.

We do a lot of collaborative programming with Youth Services and one of the seniors, Gary Bowden, at the Senior Center, is an expert billiard player. He instructed some middle schoolers on how to play. The youth enjoyed the instruction and Peter wanted to thank Gary for his patience. The kids really appreciated it.

Healthy Relationships is a program that helps youth with socialization. This is a much-needed skill with the 2 years of Covid restrictions we have gone through.

Brian brought up the Flag Football program and Peter said we are full with both programs. Evaluation day is to make teams as even as possible. Stephen said that creating teams with the goal of a balanced team is very important. His son is in the Windsor program and they have some teams that are stacked. This causes frustration for the kids since one team loses by a large margin due to the unbalanced teams. Suffield's program is based on an age grouping of 6- to 9-year-olds. If the groupings could be broken down it would help. Peter asked Stephen to talk with Dan regarding the program. Stephen discussed the differences between the Suffield program and the Windsor program and what he felt would enhance the program.

Donna's report covers some fun events for the Bowling Buddies: St. Patrick's Day and End of Winter Celebrations. She is still doing a Zoom program for the group.

Lunchtime Walkers is a successful program. Some of the walkers are socializing and some are intent on getting their exercise.

Some of the fun names for adult fitness programs are Happy Hour-Meet Me at the Barre Sampler and What are You Weighting For.

Another new program is Sunrise Park Spring Hiking Workshop. Matt Joven and Donna's husband teach different levels of hiking and they also take the group hiking.

Peter wanted to mention that last month, March, was the busiest month for registration and revenue income. There was a lot of work done and we have added value to our programs. Brian asked if the 1st selectman and Board of Finance are aware of this. Peter said that he brought this to their attention at the meetings he had with them. The commission discussed the increase in registration and income and how impressive it is.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on Tennis/Basketball Court Project: The bids had to be modified and were sent out and are due back on the 22nd. The problem is the construction schedules and companies being concerned that they won't be able to get the project done on time. Peter reviewed the timeline for construction of the courts. Also discussed were how the courts should be constructed so we don't have the same problems as in the past. An alternate bid was requested for the cost of using post tension concrete which is longer lasting but cost more. We can present a bid for post tension concrete which lasts x number of years versus tar courts which last x number of years and the Board of Finance can decide which one they want.

Students voted on the colors for the basketball courts. Some of the student's that voted on the colors will attend next month's meeting to reveal the color choices.

Rotary Day of Service at Sunrise Park: The event was last Saturday and Brian, Jay, Sam, Peter, Chris Lambert and the 1st selectman worked in the town hut sanding and sealing. It was a great turnout for a not very nice day and a lot was accomplished. The town's state representative was also there. Everyone's projects got done by noontime. The park looks great.

Fishing Derby May 14th (15th rain date): This is a collaboration with the Conservation Commission. They wanted to run a Fishing Derby and asked for our help. We will get prizes and contributed money toward purchasing fish for the pond. The Derby is a memorial to Tom's (park superintendent) wife. It is for kids only but adults can come up and fish. It is not catch and release – the fish will be taken home. The pond is not big enough to sustain a large number of fish. The commission discussed how the park and pond came about.

Bridge Street Park: Brian said that he felt there is strong support for the project by the commission. He discussed sitting down with 1st Selectman Moll and conveying our opinion on the importance of the project. The project is pretty modest in cost for what it will give to the town permanently. The commission discussed the importance of having this park in the town center and the road blocks that keep popping up in regard to it. Bill talked about state bonding and how towns are getting funding for projects and we should be doing the same. Bill suggested having someone attend a board of selectmen meeting to bring this topic up. Brian said he will contact 1st Selectman Moll to set up a meeting with him to review this issue and express our complete support for the project.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:**Parks and Recreation Community Awards: Suffield Night at the Hartford Yard**

Goats: These 2 items go together. Peter said that the awards we have are: Youth Leadership Award; Service Award; Lou Casinghino 10 Year and Over Service Award; Youth Coach Award and a new one this year Military Family Award. He did not want to mention the names of recipients as he is still waiting to here from some of the award recipients.

The recipient chosen for the Service Award does not want to be publicly recognized for the work they are doing but it's an appreciation award so they are thinking about it.

The awards will be presented at the July 16th "Yard Goats game. The game starts at 6 p.m. and the awards start around 5:30 p.m. The commission discussed the 2019 awards night at the Yard Goats game and how great it was. Tickets are available on our website and there is a new tee shirt they can purchase.

Suffield Summer Fair: The fair will be held on Father's Day weekend with food vendors and amusement ride vendors from the Big E. Music has been booked with Suffield Music providing the sound equipment. Fireworks will be Friday night with a rain date of Saturday.

The location will be the Middle School with parking available at Sullivan Field, the school, town center and possibly Fflyer Place.

Requests have been coming in from local vendors for tent space, similar to Suffield on the Green. Bill asked if there was a fee, Peter said it was nominal – we just want people there. The Park and Rec tents (2) have arrived. They are heavy duty steel construction 10' x 15'. The canvas has our seal on the back and top. The Zak Foundation and Hartford Foundation are on the canvas on the side.

The sponsors are People'sBank, Windsor Federal Bank and Suffield Academy.

Summer Events: Movie nights and concerts again. More details will be available as it gets closer. The job description for the gate attendants have changed to include covering the special events. Our staff has a full schedule without the special events. Bill asked about the other group that did the concerts last year. Peter said that the gentleman provided the concerts as a give back to the town and will not be doing any this year. He will be helping out with sound and lighting for the Summer Fair.

Brian asked if the concert with car show will be done again. Peter said that it is being worked on. Justin Nelson has the connections to provide the cars and Peter will be reaching out to him to get the car show part of the event done.

Other: The Observer has an article that Peter wrote about the staff. The commission discussed the value of good staff and how they enhance our department. We are fortunate to have good people working for the department.

The intern who worked for us in 2019 and put the Yard Goats event together is now working for the Tampa Bay Rays and sent a picture of himself on opening day at Tropicana Field. He thanked Peter for all the help he gave him. Peter talked about how he mentored him and that they stay in touch.

ADJOURNMENT: Dave made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting