



**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2022
Elmwood Community Center**

1. Roll Call – Present: Anna Park, Tanja Low, Steve Kutcher, Steve Garneau, Shawna Kitzman;
Absent: Robin Collins, Greg Shimer, Kate Eikel, August Melita
Staff: Marc Blanchard, Leisure Services Manager
2. Adoption of March 21, 2022 meeting minutes – adopted unanimously
3. Old Business:
 - Mayflower Property Update
 - New ECC Advisory Committee members approved
 - Tecton Architects hired to conduct Feasibility Study and programmatic options
 - Tecton will lead stakeholder outreach; siphon down to 1-2 options
 - 4-5 years process
 - Capital Improvements Update
 - Wolcott Park
 - Soliciting bids to replace existing restroom building
 - WH Youth Baseball League is soliciting bids for new, energy efficient LED lights. WHYBL is raising funds for the league-funded project. Since it's a single use field, difficult to justify town expense. Town upgraded lighting infrastructure and will make field improvements.
 - Eisenhower Park
 - Design team is preparing bids for new pool and pool house construction.
 - Hope to start construction mid- to late-summer; will continue through 2022-23 and hope to open for summer 2023
 - Sand volleyball court is under construction – hope to open around Memorial Day with a small celebration, potentially with the Mayor
 - Westmoor Park
 - New stairs and ramp up to ADA standards have been installed
 - Kennedy Park
 - The new post-tension courts are nearly done; awaiting top coat. Hinges on temperature.
 - Pool house renovation to add more family friendly changing rooms, update to ADA standards, and bring in more natural light to the facility.

4. New Business

- Celebrate West Hartford
 - June 11-12 (Sat 10am-6pm, Sun noon-6pm)
 - Town had some challenges securing the carnival and tent purveyors; previous vendors are no longer operating. Have secured vendors, but there may be some issues to smooth out since this is the first year working together.
 - Celebrate WH Committee is evaluating purchase of numerous tents
 - Committee members are encouraged to volunteer
- Staff Training
 - Town is hiring 155 seasonal staff (parks maintenance, life guards, cashiers, camp counselors); each site has specific training.
 - Town has requested some innovation in the All-Staff Training (blood born pathogens, safety, etc). This year the training is online (video then test); time is paid.
 - Town is implementing new protocols in terms of social and emotional state of youth in a pandemic world, organizational training/culture/mission in mid-June. Planning to secure a speaker on gender inclusion; if town cannot find a speaker they will at the least, provide resources.
 - Town has adequate Camp staff and cashiers. Need more life guards (age 15 minimum – typically work as subs). Counselors can be 17 and up. Some are hired when they go through the CIT program.
 - Town is paying for life guard training to build talent pipeline. Have begun implementing training to ensure diversity and inclusion. End of May and early June training. Entry level is \$14.25. Park supervisors needed, i.e. ambassadors with some safety perspective.
 - There is a WHPS pipeline of talent for Town staff.
- Camps
 - Very popular; enrollment exceeds previous years
 - There should be need-based seats, especially for the more popular camps
 - Town has scholarship funds for low-income families; scholarship program is cumbersome for the Town, end user. Community Partnerships and Leisure Services; each child gets up to \$600 worth of benefit, up to 4 camps. 75% off camp; family must pay the 25% up front. Lots of details.
 - Hillcrest Camp – Town covers 100%; partners with Suzanne Oslander; buses 35 kids from HANOC to Kennedy Park for 8 weeks (four 2-week). Swim lesson, lunch, swimming, games, arts & crafts, etc. Afternoon programming.
 - Dynamic online program guide provides more flexibility. Some more popular programs are not even in the brochure because demand is so high. Town is saving approximately \$40k by not printing/ mailing to all addresses. Department prints a small number and distributes them from Town facilities and public libraries.

5. Report from Friends of West Hartford Parks

- Committee has two new co-chairs: Lisa Karam and Christine O'Rourke; David Sayet as VP – developing leadership framework
- Determining interest and if this is the right year to start participating in Celebrate WH

6. Miscellaneous

- Rockledge held Spring clinics to focus on different facets of the game, called Swing Doctors. Very popular. They may host again in Fall.

7. Public Comment

Next meeting – June 20, 2022 at 5:30 PM; location Elmwood Community Center – Shawna to check with Helen since it's Juneteenth, an observed holiday for some.

CC: Rick Ledwith, 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."