

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
January 11, 2023

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 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
.....Andrew Joly (Zoom)
.....Sam Lombardo
.....Stephen Marchillo (Zoom)
.....Anthony Migliozi (Zoom)
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Jay Bombard
.....Stephanie Dolan

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:08 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. Basketball Update
 - b. Middle School Court Project Update
 - c. Family Nights
 - d. Bridge Street Park
 - e. Other
- G. New Business
 - a. Lou Casinghino Service Award – Bernice Hollander, 2022
 - b. Outdoor Ice Skating Returns
 - c. Summer Staffing
 - d. Budget FY24
 - e. Other
- H. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: Peter said he received 2 separate donations and a copy of the letters are included in the commissioners' packets.

The Bombard family donated \$500 to our youth basketball program. The money will be used for training and other expenses. The Bombard family has been donating to our youth basketball program for many years and their donations have helped us make improvements to the program. Peter said he will contact Jay and also send a thank you letter.

The other donation is from the Mack family. This very generous donation is for the Special Needs program in recognition of the amazing job Donna does for this community.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Dan's report starts with youth basketball. The program is in full swing and so far, it is going very well. He lists the number of teams for the older grades. Peter said that it's nice to have the number of teams we have for the older boys and part of this is due to Travel players who are also playing rec basketball. This has worked out well, everyone gets to play and the players who are also on Travel know that this is rec basketball. Hopefully the girls' teams will fill up once they know that Travel players can also play for rec basketball. The older grades do some travel to play against other teams.

A Winter Break Camp was held at the Senior Center for school vacation for 1st and 2nd graders. It was a small program because we have limited space but successful. The kids had fun.

Peter reviewed some of the other programs held. Breakfast with Santa was a fundraiser collaboration between the Senior Center and us. It generated funds for the Senior Center Kitchen Fund and our department.

Peter gave Bill a special thanks for attending some of the special needs events that Donna has put on. Bill attended the Bowling Buddies Holiday party and it meant a great deal to the staff and people attending. Bill said that Donna does a great job and everyone had a fun time.

Feedback that Peter has received on some of the afterschool programs has been very good. We provide a quality program and the kids have something nice to bring home.

Andrew said that he is very impressed with the basketball program. Peter asked how Andrew's kids were enjoying the program and Andrew said they were having a good time and went into detail about the program and different aspects of it. Peter said that the way the program is set up everyone gets playing time and learns skills which makes it more enjoyable. The commission discussed the program, how it is beneficial to kids and has improved and how to encourage more girls to register.

OLD BUSINESS:

Basketball Update: See Program Reports above.

Middle School Court Project Update: The paving has been done, small and large fencing has been installed. Once the temperatures stay at or above 50 degrees during the day and at night, the lines can be painted. ADA requirements are done and the sidewalk is also complete.

Once the courts are complete, probably around May, we will have a grand opening. We will have tennis, pickleball and basketball with some music.

Bill said he has been at the courts and they look good. Peter described how the courts are located and that there is an alleyway between pickleball and basketball which could be used by spectators and for picnicking. Bill asked if the lights need to be moved since the court's perimeters are slightly changed. Peter said the lights are older and not as focused so it should be fine and we can adjust if needed.

Family Nights: These are multi-generational programs are a collaboration between the Senior Center, Youth Services and Parks & Rec. The feedback was very positive and the program promoted socialization which is what we wanted.

This program was a hit so we are planning on holding these the 1st Friday of the month for the next few months. Some of the ARPA funding is being used to help fund the program.

We had an inflatable obstacle course/slide from Suffield Gymnastics that needed to be returned Saturday morning. Peter said he asked for some help, it is extremely heavy, and Dave and Ryan Levis came by to help. JR, Chris Matejek, and Danny Sheridan from the highway department, knew how heavy it was and showed up on their own to help.

Bridge Street Park: Brian discussed the evolution of the property/projects. Last Thursday there was a meeting, organized by Bill, regarding the Bridge Street Park project and Colin Moll (1st selectman) attended. Bill said that Colin was able to fill them in on some items that they didn't have info on. The meeting consensus was that it would be helpful for us to really formalize our position. Brian said he would like to see a formal vote on where we stand concerning Bridge Street Park. Brian's view is that building a park at Bridge Street would be extremely helpful in supporting the businesses at Suffield Village and getting people to the town center. A playground, a pavilion, a multi-use field would provide a place for young families to go. If we have a consensus, it would be helpful for the board of selectmen and board of finance, to see that we are committed to this project. And, we would support a fundraising action and the multi-phase construction of the project.

Bill said that one point that came out of the meeting was that we need to reorganize the charity fund that we have with the IRS. Bill and Peter will meet with the attorney, Beth, (501c3 fundraising application) in the next few weeks. We should also create a fundraising arm that will supplement the town funding.

Peter said he spoke with the principle of the firm to have them breakdown the cost for each of the phases: 1st phase (site work), 2nd phase (amenities, walkways, pavilion) and 3rd phase (multi-

use field, money from fundraising not town). Colin is hoping to start phase 1 this spring. Bill said that once something gets started it will help to get the townspeople behind the project. It will also help with fundraising.

Bill made a motion that we, as the Parks and Recreation Commission, support the idea of a phased-in approach for construction of Bridge Street Park and that we reestablish the 501c3 charitable fund to raise money with the goal to supplement the funds that the town is using to construct the phases of the park.

Dave seconded the motion and all votes yes.

Other:

Brian had to leave and asked Bill to take the chair.

NEW BUSINESS:

Lou Casinghino Service Award – Bernice Hollander, 2022: Bill said we have been trying to present the award to Bernice. Peter said that Bernice has had some health issues and intended to be here tonight but was unable to attend. Bernice has been a 15-year volunteer at the Bowling Buddies, checking people in and helping out wherever she can. Her help has been appreciated. Peter said he will get the award to her.

Outdoor Ice Skating Returns: Peter said we are waiting for the temperatures to get cold enough to create enough ice to skate on. Peter is in touch with the park superintendent at Sunrise Park and if it gets cold enough, we will have a Pop-up Ice Skating event. We will advertise through e-blast and other social media if we get the ice.

Summer Staffing: We are interviewing returning summer staff and we are advertising for staff and interns.

Budget FY24: The budget is 95% done. Peter discussed the wage increases relevant to minimum wage increases and that these increases are covered by increased fees for camp.

Other:

ADJOURNMENT: Dave made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sam 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