

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
March 8, 2023

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday March 8, 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
.....Sam Lombardo
.....Stephen Marchillo
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Andrew Joly
.....Anthony Migliozi

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director
.....Colin Moll, 1st Selectman
.....Jim Nason, representing Valley Wheel Baseball League and a Suffield resident

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:04 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. House Bill 6574
 - b. Summer Camp Registration Opens 3/15/23
 - c. Bridge Street Park
 - d. Other
- G. New Business
 - a. Vacancies
 - b. Youth Services Director
 - c. Summer Fair and Activities
 - d. Fishing Derby with Conservation Commission
 - e. Spring Flag Football
 - f. Other
- H. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

MINUTES: Stephen made a motion to accept the minutes. Dave seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Peter reviewed Dan's report in regard to the basketball program which was very successful. The focus will now be on next year's program and having a high school referee and a certified referee to mentor the youth referee in the 3rd & 4th grade league. The games are getting a little more competitive with the travel players joining our program. The commission discussed the program and the involvement of more competitive players and the need for enhancing the refereeing. Also discussed was how the program has improved and expanded.

Dan also reported on the 2nd Family Night program which has had a lot of positive feedback and the Esports Tournament.

Donna's report focuses on a couple of Bowling Buddies parties and her exercise programs.

Dan and Donna are also working on summer programs/camps along with running spring programs.

Brian asked about pickleball signups. Peter said that it is still very strong and he met with A.C.C.E. to request money to change the flooring in the exercise room at the Senior Center from tile to the flooring used at Spaulding gym and auditorium; rolled out synthetic with cushion. They said they approved and will send to finance board for approval. If approved we can install in the fall. Peter discussed the reasons why he felt it was important to change the flooring and that it will eventually pay for itself.

OLD BUSINESS: Bill made a motion to move to New Business, Other. Dave seconded and all voted yes.

Other: Peter introduced Jim Nason who runs Valley Wheel Baseball League. Jim's group is made up of adults from Suffield and surrounding towns and he is requesting to use our 90 ft. diamond for a few night games.

Peter said there were concerns from residents who wanted to play baseball last year but were not able to because of AAU teams that took over the fields. Valley Wheel was not involved in this and Peter has no issue with Valley Wheel using our field.

Jim described his league which is a 28 years and older league made up of residents from Suffield and various surrounding towns. There are no try outs, it is made up of all levels of skill. He said they draft pitchers and catchers to keep the teams even but the rest of the team is made up of good and not so good players. The season runs from the last Sunday

in April through July with play offs in August. The commission asked Jim questions about the team, how it works, recruitment, where they play, how often, etc. Jim would like to play 6 games in Suffield.

Peter would like to support this group by sending out an email blast about them.

Stephen asked if the nights Valley Wheel uses the field will be posted. This was discussed and Peter reviewed why he doesn't post this online. A small sign can be made to put on the side of the field. A permit is issued for the group to use the field.

Bill asked if there is a policy on using our fields. Peter said there is a policy on permitting the fields. The fields are public land and can't be restricted but the permit gives you access to the field at the time/date stated on the permit.

Bill made a motion to authorize a permit to Valley Wheel Baseball from the Parks & Recreation Department for 6 requested nights to use our fields. Dave seconded. All voted yes.

Peter has been working on sponsorships for some of our family programs and he has met and talked with Stephanie Salerno of Coldwell Banker's Real Estate. She would like to be more involved with the community and has generously offered to sponsor our movie nights on the green this summer. She will also be involved with helping to sponsor the Summer Fair.

Brian moved back to Old Business:

House Bill 6574: Peter reviewed the bill which was discussed in detail at last month's meeting. The bill came out of subcommittee with a change of language to the bill. It now has a Youth Advisory Council on Summer Camps which will meet, quarterly, with the commissioner. This council will be made up of 9 members. One member will be from CPRA and the rest will be from the private industry. The CRPA does not get to pick their own representative to the council. The commission discussed the representation on the council, how it will affect municipalities, and what this advisory council may advise. This hasn't been voted on as yet and the commission discussed who to contact with our concerns and what our representatives have relayed to us. There was also discussion on what will happen with municipal summer camps if this bill passes.

Summer Camp Registration Opens 3/15/23: Summer camp registration starts March 15 at 9 a.m. This is being advertised with e-blasts, and social media postings. The postings have descriptions of the camps with costs.

Bridge Street Park: There is a meeting with Atty. Beth Fanous at 2 p.m. tomorrow for an update on the status of the 501c3 application.

Colin Moll, 1st Selectman, said he presented to A.C.C.E. a request for \$600,000 which they put into their list which will be presented to the Board of Selectmen next

Wednesday. If this is approved it will then go to the Board of Finance and then town meeting for their approval.

Brian said that a new board of directors will be needed. It would be a good idea to have part of our commission on the board and asked the commission members if they would be interested. The board of directors can consist of 7 to 11 members. Bill will be one of the directors. We are looking for a diverse board of directors.

Colin said that possibly funds could come from the remaining ARPA funds instead of capital expenditure funds and that would be more comfortable for voters.

Stephen asked about the cost of the phases. Colin said that phase 1 cost will be \$250,000 and if we get the \$600,000, we could get through most of phase 1 and 2. Peter said that there are 3 different designs and this cost is for the lease expensive design. How to present the different designs to the public can be determined at the subcommittee meetings.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Vacancies: We have 2 vacancies on the commission. Stephanie and Jay have stepped off due to work and family obligations. Jay has been involved for several years and he has volunteered to help when needed.

Colin said that he will contact the political parties and get the ball rolling.

Youth Services Director: Kate Powers has moved on to a new position that works better for her and her family. Peter said they are sad to see her go but she has laid a good foundation for the next person. We are in the process of finding a replacement.

Summer Fair and Activities: The fair activities are being worked on and it will be held June 16, 17 and 18 between the Middle School and McAlister.

Bill said that one of the posts is missing at the tennis courts. Peter said he will contact the DPW and talk to them about it. Peter is under the assumption that the contractor is responsible until the project is complete.

There is another grant opportunity for funds to do blended lines for the courts. The courts will not be painted until weather temperatures improve.

The grand opening for the courts will be held during the summer fair.

Fishing Derby with Conservation Commission: Art Christian of the Conservation Commission wants to collaborate with us on the derby as we did last year. Last year's event was very successful. The pond will be restocked as we did last year. Non-

motorized boats will be allowed and this will be advertised. We are looking into purchasing a large fish, which will be tagged, and if someone catches that fish, they will receive a special prize.

Spring Flag Football: Peter thanked Stephen for his work with Dan on this program. Stephen said the registration is off to a good start with 29 kids signed up from Suffield. For the 4 and 5 age group we have 10 signed up so far. Stephen reviewed the breakdown of the program, teams, program content and when they play. The commission discussed the program. The program includes kids from East Granby and Granby. The fall will probably have a bigger signup.

Stephen suggested that we have a day trip to Copperstown, New York to the baseball museum. He has gone several times and described the events and the museum. The commission discussed the trip and that it probably will be very popular. Peter said that we are starting to do more trips through the Senior Center.

A day trip to Saratoga was also discussed.

ADJOURNMENT: Bill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting