

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
January 10, 2024

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 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
.....Jackie Guzie (Zoom)
.....Andrew Joly (Zoom)
.....Stephen Marchillo
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Sam Lombardo
.....Anthony Migliozi
.....Christopher Parker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: Peter reviewed an email on behalf of the Segool family and many of the Bowling Buddies parents that was sent to Donna. This was to thank her for the work she does for the group and the holiday party. They also included a thank you to Peter, and Colin (1st Selectman). Peter said that he responded to the Segools and talked about the great work that Donna does and continues to do.

The Mack family sent a note of thanks with a very generous donation for the Bowling Buddies Program. The money will be well used.

The commission discussed how much work Donna does for this group and the department. She is a real asset to the department.

PROGRAM REPORTS: The Bowling Buddies Holiday Party has been held at Spare Time (where the bowling occurs) but they informed us, at the last minute, that they were increasing their fee by 150% for the use of their facility. We decided to host the party at the Senior Center – it was decorated; we had food and music. The event was a great time. Kevin Landolina donated his time as DJ and he has been doing this for many years.

Brian said he stopped by for a while and it was a great event. Colin (1st Selectman) was also there. Peter said the Suffield Rotary helped with some funding to make it a success.

Last year we had a Breakfast with Santa but this year the staff wanted a change so we made it a Pasta Dinner with Santa. We had 2 sold out dinners. It was a great success. Next year it will be either pizza with Santa or Tacos with Santa.

The last page of Donna's report shows that we are advertising for summer camp staff. A lot of staff from last year wants to return so it gives them a heads up.

Dan's report goes over basketball and a bus trip to NYC. Peter said Dan also helped with the Suffield Alight event.

Dan does a ½ day camp during Christmas week vacation for 1st and 2nd graders. The senior center programming is shut down that week so we can use the facility. Stephen said his son attended and he loved it.

OLD BUSINESS:

Bowling Buddies Party: This was discussed above in Program Reports.

Basketball Update: Bill had asked about parking on the cul de sac (on the grass); this happened on the first week of games. Peter said there were two vehicles parked on the grass. He made a note to send an email to not park on the grass; there is ample parking behind the building or the other side of the cul de sac. The truck that was on the grass really dug it up. Peter said he was there last Saturday and no one was parked on the grass.

The games are ongoing. For the 3rd and 4th grade games we have a paid adult official referee and it is going well. Stephen asked about having a youth referee with the adult but Peter said due to the budget we are not doing that. There was discussion on adult referees vs. youth referees and the differences in the game.

Peter said there was an issue with one of the score boards at the Middle School the first week of games but that has been fixed.

Brian said we have 4 older (boys) teams now in grades 5-8, and that is great. Peter said having games with teams from other towns has made a difference. Allowing the travel basketball kids to play Parks & Rec has increased the numbers and they know it is a 50% rule: the travel kids will have the same court time as the Parks & Rec kids. For those kids that are looking for extra court time it has been a success. Andy said it has paid off for the travel kids.

Brian asked about the older girls' team. Andy said many towns have low numbers when it comes to the girls' teams. The commission discussed some of the possible reasons the

girls' teams are low in numbers. Peter said he will try more advertising, mid-season, to encourage the 3rd /4th grade girls to sign up next season.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pop Up Ice Skating: This is an FYI. Art Christian, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, will have the ice checked at Sunrise Park, White's Pond, to see if it is thick enough to skate on. Hopefully the weather will cooperate and we can have an event. The park superintendent will clear off an area and it will be lighted. We will use the pavilion, have a fire going and have EMTs up there. Last year it got cold for a short while but then it warmed up.

Budget FY 25: Peter is currently working with the 1st selectman and finance department on the fiscal year '25 budget. The budget will be submitted next week as a rough budget and then we will fine tune it. If there is anything you would like to see give Peter a call and we can see if it can work. There is an increase this year due to minimum wage increase which means our returning employees get an increase – so they are not at the same wage as new employees. These increases will be added to program/camp fees. Bill said the minimum wage will increase yearly based on the percent of cost of living.

Stephen asked what line items are in the Parks and Rec budget. Peter reviewed some of the line items for Parks and Rec but said it is a little harder now since it is a Community Service Budget. He reviewed several of the line items that are included in the budget. Stephen asked about the capital budget and Peter said that goes through A.C.C.E. Some items will also go through DPW. Peter discussed A.C.C.E. and what would be included in the budget and what is coming up. There was a question on Sunrise Park and Peter said their budget is through Conservation Commission. We have helped with some items. The commission discussed the budget and what would be in the Community Services Budget and what goes to the A.C.C.E. budget. Peter reviewed improvements to the Senior Center for cost savings.

Summer Camps Announcement: We will be sending a notice to remind people of the summer camps and the next post will have dates. Signups will start around March 18 and we will put the sign board on the Green a week or two before. We will also send out eblasts. There will be plenty of notice.

Stephen asked about spring sports. Peter said we are working on them now. We just finalized the summer camp/program dates yesterday – we have to coordinate with coaches and some of the people we hire.

In regard to summer camp: July 4th is on a Thursday so that week camp will be Monday through Wednesday. We will have a separate program for Friday that parents can sign up for - just that day.

Dancing Suffield Stars Fundraiser: We have been working on this fundraiser for about a year. It will be for the Bowling Buddies group. We are working with the Fred Astair Studio and have finalized the date. Local celebrity people will have 10 lessons at the Studio with their professionals. There will be a dinner, we will have sponsors and the dancers will also raise money. One of the judges is a dancer from the TV show, another is a former Rockette and the third is to be announced. The commission discussed getting some coverage on TV.

The event will be held April 24th at the Fred Astaire Studio in the Suffield Village. We will be sending out formal notices soon. One of the dancers will be one of our own, Dan Leonard. Peter said Dan is a dancing machine.

Other: Brian reminded everyone that next month's meeting is February 21.

ADJOURNMENT: Stephen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting