

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
February 21, 2024

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held a special meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 in the second-floor 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
.....Stephen Marchillo (Zoom)
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Sam Lombardo
.....Jackie Guzie
.....Andrew Joly
.....Anthony Migliozzi
.....Christopher Parker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director

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. Bridge Street Park
 - b. Dancing Stars of Suffield event update
 - c. Budget Process
- G. New Business
 - a. Summer Event Dates
 - i. Camp Start Dates
 - ii. 2024 Suffield Night at the Yard Goats
 - 1. 2024 Award Recipients
 - iii. Babb's Beach Opening
 - iv. Suffield Summer Fair
 - v. Concerts on the Green
 - vi. Outdoor Movie Nights
 - b. Spring Happenings

H. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: Last month a parent wrote an email thanking Donna and the department for their work with the Bowling Buddies group and this month Donna received a letter of thanks from Maureen Bentley for the Standout Small Business Branding On A Budget - Social Media Branding program which was a big help to her. The program was well attended and feedback was good. This was an outside the box program. Peter said that we have programs that are not just exercise and sports.

PROGRAM REPORTS: On Donna's report: we have had good success and feedback partnering with Stephanie Dolan (former commission member) and Donna Calabrese on cardio and fitness programs. We could not use Stephanie's expertise when she was a commission member due to conflict-of-interest issues. We try to support as many local businesses as we can.

We are working on summer staff – counselors, lifeguards, park attendants, etc. The summer is 95% planned out. Registrations start next month. Spring is kind of forgotten about because once January arrives, we start thinking about summer.

Under Dan's program report you will find information on the basketball program which continues for another week. Things have been going well for the program. We did have an incident with one of the athletes but it has been taken care of. We have adult officials for the 3rd and 4th and 5th and 6th grade games and that is making a difference. The commission discussed referring; different situations that have occurred, how they are handled and the difference between adult referees and youth referees who are still learning. The question was asked about mentoring programs for the youth referees. Peter said that takes extra money and we have already increased the fees due to hiring the certified officials. He will review the program and costs and see if it would be possible to institute a program for next year.

A multi-generation program – A Magic Night - was held at the Senior Center with about 75 people attending. The magician was a person that Peter saw at the CRPA conference Entertainment Showcase.

Dan is also working on summer hiring, spring flag football and some other sports.

The commission discussed officiating and referees regarding youth and adults and the complexity of the job.

OLD BUSINESS:

Bridge Street Park: Brian said that he and Peter met with Colin Moll (1st Selectman) and Chris Childs, Board of Finance, on the 12th to discuss the Bridge Street Park. Colin gave an encouraging response and said that there are still funds available. But, we need

to pare the project down: landscaping, a pavilion, 2 playgrounds and a walking path. Brian felt the public would endorse this concept. We need to reduce the cost. Colin asked that the commission take a leadership role in the planning.

Peter said that he looked at the scaled down version of the original three plans to see if he could reduce it and still make it an attractive park. He did not have much success. The site prep alone is expensive. He is still working on how to shave it down and still have it something we can be proud of. If we are not able to get enough funding then maybe a phased in approach is the way to go. Peter will send the plans with pricing to the commission members who were involved with the project and asked them to review and give him feedback and their opinions.

Bill commented on the board or finance and 1st selectman and his feelings on their commitment to the project. He feels that until we get a commitment from them, he does not feel we should be putting work into this. Brian said that we may be able to get some in-kind services from the public works department. Peter said if we can get these services, we might be able to get certain work done at a reduced cost. Peter will contact the public works department about this. The commission discussed what we need in the park to make it worthwhile. Also discussed was costs and the fact that each year the cost goes up since construction costs are increasing. The money that was allocated was discussed along with the town's financial status. Some of the money was used for new playgrounds at the schools. The new playground will finish off the Family Athletic Complex at the middle school.

Dancing Stars of Suffield event update: This event will be held April 24th and it is a fundraiser for the Bowling Buddies group. The participants have started training and donations will close on April 22. The participants have given great feedback and everyone is exciting to participate. Our own Dan Leonard is one of the dancers and he has reached his fundraising goal already. We are working with the Hartford Foundation Public Giving and we have a very generous donation from them. We are still working on sponsors. If anyone wants to be there for dinner the tickets are \$100. Peter talked about the judges and MC.

Budget Process: There is a budget meeting taking place downstairs now. Peter said he has talked with the finance director and 1st selectman regarding what we want to do and what our goals are. It looks like we are set to go but it is up to the 1st selectman to put everything in order. Once we get the final budget it will go to a town vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Summer Event Dates:

- i. Camp Start Dates. Summer staff training will start June 17th. The summer camps will start June 24th. The camps are 2 for 1 (at Middle School), Kid's Korner (at Spaulding), Sunrise and Adventure Camps (at Sunrise Park). Art Christian, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, is happy to have us back at Sunrise Park. Peter listed the various camps that are in addition to our

day camps: horseback riding, tennis, golf, lacrosse, cheerleading, musical theater camp, field hockey, baseball, basketball, soccer, and volleyball. These camps will be held various weeks through August. Peter is working on finalizing an elite basketball clinic with Lou Roe.

- ii. 2024 Suffield Night at the Yard Goats. The event will be held on July 12th. Award presentations will start at 6:30 p.m.
 1. 2024 Award Recipients. Peter is accepting nominations. He reviewed the awards and what they represent.
- iii. Babb's Beach Opening. The beach will open June 29th. We will not be open on Memorial Day weekend since we do not have lifeguards. The beach will be open from June 29 through mid-August seven days a week, weather permitting.
- iv. Suffield Summer Fair. In the past the fair was held on Father's Day weekend but this year it will be June 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. The fireworks will be Saturday not Friday night. Bill asked about a rain date for fireworks. Peter said we will reschedule since the fair ends at 5 p.m. on Sunday.
- v. Concerts on the Green.
- vi. Outdoor Movie Nights. Movies will start July 13th. Bill asked if there would be any movies at Babbs. Peter said not this year.

Spring Happenings: We will have the March Madness program again. This is a month-long program with a trip, at the end, to the Basketball Hall of Fame. Other programs are pickle ball, exercise classes, outdoor walking group, flag football, martial arts, tee ball, afterschool programs and others.

ADJOURNMENT: Dave made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Stephen seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting