

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
June 12, 2024

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 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
.....Sam Lombardo
.....Andrew Joly
.....Christopher Parker
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Jackie Guzie
.....Stephen Marchillo
.....Anthony Migliozi

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director; Matt Nemergut, Sports and Operations Intern

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:02 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. Award Recipients
 - b. Dancing Stars of Suffield recap
 - c. Summer Camp Registration Opened 3/18/24-record registrations
 - d. Bridge Street Park
 - e. Other
- G. New Business
 - a. Summer Camps and Staff
 - b. Babb's Beach Opening Date June 22
 - c. Event on August 14th with P&R Commission
 - d. Other
- H. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

MINUTES: Dave made a motion to accept the March 13, 2024 minutes. Sam seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE: Peter received a thank you note from the family of Bill Cortright. Bill helped with our programs and has sadly passed away. The thank you note was a response to the donation we made to the scholarship fund for the family.

The second thank you note is from the Driving for a Cure Organization. We donated 2 raffle prizes for their fundraiser.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Peter highlighted Donna's Bowling Buddies Luau and Awards Banquet at Sunrise Park. The DJ donates his time, twice a year, for these events and has been for years.

Peter read through some of the new programs. We are partnering with Stephen Dolan, former commission member, on a new fitness program.

Dan's report covers the wrap up of programs that have or will be finishing including pickleball.

Dan and Donna have been working hard to get ready for summer camp and preparing the training course for our staff.

Peter reviewed the number of staff and many are returning employees. We have more junior counselors than in the past. Training for staff will start next week. This year all staff including gate attendants will be included in our training program.

OLD BUSINESS:

Award Recipients: Peter introduced Matt Nemergut who will be our sports and operations intern for the summer. Matt introduced himself and said that he graduated from UMass and is in grad school at UMass Isenberg studying Data Analytics. He is home for the summer and doing his work online. He felt he could put his foot in the door by working locally and it has been a great experience.

He is in charge of the Suffield Night at the Yard Goats event and reviewed the program for the night. Youth Services is sponsoring the event which will take place on July 12th and the gates open at 5:30 p.m. The awards ceremony will be held around 6:30 p.m. with everyone on the field. Tickets are \$15.00 but we are supplementing them, through Youth Services, so they cost residents \$5.00. This is to promote the community getting together.

This is the 4th year we have held this event and it gives us a chance to recognize people who have given back to the community. It is a fun event.

Brian asked how the event is being marketed. Matt said we are advertising on our website, social media, and a board on the green.

Peter said that Matt is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the event, it is a lot of work and he is doing a good job.

Dancing Stars of Suffield recap: The event was very successful and it was full. One of the judges was a 2-time winner of the TV show. He lives in the Fairfield area and came up to our event to judge. He said they do this type of event all over the country and ours was the best – just up a level.

We had sponsors, PeoplesBank, Suffield Pizza and private donors. We raised a lot of money for the Bowling Buddies program.

Summer Camp Registration Opened 3/18/24 – record registrations: Camp registration opened in mid-March and we had a record registration for March. We were up 20% over last year for this timeframe. We are still getting registrations and we are almost full on our major camps.

Registration can be expanded for some camps if we have space and staff. Some programs are restricted by available space, staff and the quality of the program provided.

The commission discussed the different camps. Peter reviewed how the dates for the camps' fall; when the camps will be held and why we schedule them so that there will be activities from start of summer to mid-August. He also reviewed concerts on the green and movie nights.

Sam asked about the Summer Fair. Peter said that it will be June 21, 22 and 23rd. There will be vendors, rides, music, and fireworks. Bill asked if volunteers are needed and Peter said yes.

The parking areas have changed and where the new parking areas will, was reviewed.

Bridge Street Park: Peter reviewed the 3 plans he sent to commissioners via email. There were cost figures for the different line items and conceptual drawings. He said that there may be a possibility to latch onto another project that is being bonded. We would like to present a project to the 1st selectman and say that this is what we want to move forward with. We can get updated pricing from the landscape design firm.

Christopher asked about the size of the field and if it could be expanded to be full size. He would like to see the field used for more than one sport. Peter said that it would be nice to have a full-size field but most of the youth using it are in the younger age range.

The commission discussed the different plans with plan 3 being the most stripped down one. The commission discussed different amenities, how it will affect the look of the

park; the image that it would project for the town since the park would be in the center of town.

The cost of the items needed for the park such as parking, safety lighting, fencing, ADA requirements, etc. was discussed not only with cost but what we need. Also discussed was the ability to have different businesses, clubs help with providing different equipment/buildings for the park.

The middle plan seemed to be the most acceptable. Peter said that once we have a specific plan, we can put it out to bid to see what the present costs are.

Brian and Peter met with Colin Moll (1st selectman) and the meeting was about the process of what we want for the property. We need to develop a plan that can be the basis for a plan to put to town referendum. Brian said he would like to form a new subcommittee.

Bill said we have done this before. We have given them a plan and they sent it back saying it is not what they want. We need parameters from the selectmen on what they are looking for from us; what is the dollar figure we can spend and then we can produce a plan.

Brian discussed the background of the project from the original project for a community center that went to referendum (which was approved) to the recent project of a park that we presented to the towns people for their opinions. Peter feels it is different this time, that Colin wants to put this project to referendum.

Brian said that we need to form another subcommittee and we should start on this right away. We also need to invite Colin and the other selectmen to our meetings for their input. The commission discussed various views and comments on this topic.

Bill made a motion to create a subcommittee specifically to address the Bridge Street Park issue. Christopher seconded. Andy said that he thinks this is a good idea but he would also like to see us be patient since it may take a while. All commission members voted yes.

Peter will reach out to the commission members to see who is interested in being on the subcommittee. Brian said he would like the subcommittee to start meetings as soon as possible. Our target date should be the fall to have a plan together.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Summer Camp Staff: Discussed above. All staff will start training next week.

Babbs Beach Opening Date June 22: We employ a lot of college and high school students (some of them are just returning home) and they have to go through training so the opening date is June 22. People can go into Babbs but there will not be any lifeguards or gate attendants. We cannot stop people from going in so it is their choice if they want to go to the beach with no lifeguard. It will opening the same time as the Summer Fair.

Event on August 14th with P&R Commission: Youth Services and Parks and Recreation are holding a family fun night on August 14th which is the same night as our commission meeting. It will be held at Sunrise Park. Peter asked if we can cancel our regular meeting and schedule the meeting at Sunrise Park. Anytime a regular meeting is cancelled the new meeting is called a special meeting.

Sam made a motion to cancel our regular August 14 meeting and, in its place, have a special meeting on August 14th at another place at 4:30 p.m. Bill seconded. All commission members voted yes.

Other: Bill said he has a new route for the 5K and he measured it using his car odometer. It would be one of two ways. The 10K goes up Mountain Road and turns left and down to Hill Street. The 5K would go up Mountain Road and turn right to Remington Road. The other way would be to reverse the route. The commission discussed the routes we use now and the new routes proposed.

Peter said the Recreation Sports Program position starts July 1st. This position will be responsible for upgrading the officiating of all our sports. The company that will provide the go pro visual of officiating games have been in touch with Peter.

ADJOURNMENT: Bill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting