

**SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
August 14, 2024**

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held a special meeting on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 in the Pavilion at Sunrise Park, 2075 Mountain Road, Suffield, CT.

ATTENDANCE: .....Brian Casinghino, Chairman  
.....Bill Boucher, Vice Chairman  
.....Sam Lombardo  
.....Andrew Joly  
.....David Rusnock

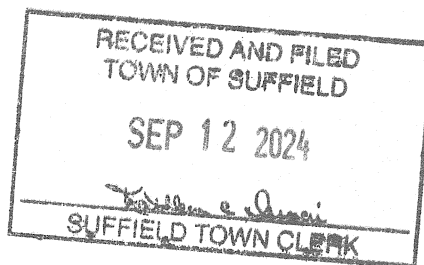
ABSENT: .....Jackie Guzie  
.....Stephen Marchillo  
.....Anthony Migliozi  
.....Christopher Parker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: .....Peter Leclerc, Director  
.....Kathy Bielonko, Suffield resident

Brian called the meeting to order at 4:09 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. Babb's Beach Cleaning
- G. New Business
  - a. New Staff and Promotion
  - b. Summer Recap
  - c. Road Race
    - a. Pre-race volunteers
    - b. Day of volunteers
  - d. Fall Sports
  - e. CRPA Conference
  - f. Other
- H. Adjournment



**PUBLIC INPUT:** Kathy said she attended tonight's meeting because she is interested in the Bridge Street property. She felt the townspeople need to be aware of the cost and that

it should go to a town vote. It needs to be reviewed in more depth to see what the townspeople would like to have on it.

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

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Peter said that he will wrap up all the summer correspondence at the September meeting.

**PROGRAM REPORTS:** The reports for June and July are from Donna. Dan's report is only June – he was out unexpectedly yesterday.

Peter reviewed the programs and events that are listed in the programs.

The day camps started the last week of June and ran 6 weeks. There were also specialized camps. The staff was great and the school staff was also excellent this year. We had police, fire and ambulance visit the camps. Peter said a parent came up to him and said that our camps had the best ratio of returning staff and that is why she picked us.

The bowling buddies' group was busy with some events at the Senior Center and also virtual events.

Sam said that he has heard positive things from residents and his kids have taken part in the programs and he feels the same way.

Brian said he and Peter toured several of the camps. Brian said he was impressed and complimented Peter and the staff.

Sam said there is a waiting list for the pickleball courts. Peter said he researched policies but wanted to wait and see how things worked before he decided on any rules. Peter said that Dan had a pickleball tournament that he piggybacked with the Summer Fair. Bill and his daughter participated in the tournament and did well.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Bridge Street Park:** Peter reviewed his meeting with Colin (1<sup>st</sup> Selectman) where Colin asked Peter to speak with the commission about reducing the cost of the plan, but keeping it looking nice. He then reviewed his conversation with Sam and Andrew about value engineering the park. Peter said that he feels bathrooms are a must. We will need electric service for safety lights and pavilion; we can move the bathrooms to the north side of the pavilion and close to the playground. Peter reached out to the firm that drew up the plans and asked if they would revisit the plan and trim to reduce the cost but still keep it looking good.

Peter passed out the rendering for Option A with a cost breakdown with alternatives. This is to bring the price down below \$2 million. The area is not flat so earthwork needs to be done, concrete will be needed, etc.

The commission reviewed the plan with the alternatives in place of the original items proposed. With the alternates the price is \$2.2 million. Andrew spoke about the field and having it ready to be turned into multi-purpose open space within a year. He also spoke about the reasons he feels it is needed. The open space will only be graded and seeded to start with and then if the citizens want to create a multi-purpose field, we could do that.

If Colin agrees with going forward with the park, then it will have to go to the Borad of Selectmen and if approved then to a Town Referendum. The commission discussed the advantages of the park and the need for parking in the business parking area. Sam said it has been kicking around for many years and we need to put it out to the residents and either go forward or put it to bed. The commission discussed the various components of the park and what funding is available and is not.

Brian told Kathy that the commission is very cognizant and cares about the financial impact of the project. We want to propose a project that will beautify a very important parcel in the center of town in a way that can bring a lot of quality where we need it most. The park is an inter-generational facility. Peter said the park is a 4-season park and the slope could be used for sledding in the winter and if it gets cold an ice-skating rink could be put up. The playground is important for young children since the school playgrounds are not available to the public when school is in session.

Sam feels the town needs to do something with the property, since right now it is just an open space for people to walk their dogs and it is not attractive.

**Babb's Beach Cleaning:** Babb's is a public space so we cannot keep people out and some of the people who use the area are not respectful of the park. We have staff at the park by the end of June. Once staff is at the park the problem with people not picking up after themselves stops. Peter is going to propose to Colin (1<sup>st</sup> Selectman) that next year, starting in May we have an attendant there. He will present the cost which will include training and salaries.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**New Staff and Promotion:** Dan Leonard has been promoted to Recreation Supervisor as of July 1, which was well deserved. Matthew Cummings was hired mid-July and he is doing something similar to Dan's old role handling recreation camps and sport, youth through adult. Peter reviewed Matt's work experience and the wealth of experience he has.

**Summer Recap:** Some information on the summer recap has been discussed above. This is the last week of camps – volleyball and tennis. Next week it is a typical vacation week.

**Road Race:** The race will be held September 7 which is also the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Suffield on The Green. Last year we had 54 registrants at this time and this year we have 100.

**Pre-race volunteers:** We are looking for pre-race volunteers who will help with getting shirts and numbers organized.

**Day of volunteers:** We are also looking for race day volunteers. Peter said there are 2 volunteers who want to drive the pace car which is usually donated by Artioli Dodge.

**Fall Sports:** Registrations are underway with normal registration numbers except for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> /4<sup>th</sup> girls' soccer. The commission discussed the possible reasons for the decline. Peter said that we will make do with what we have.

**CRPA Conference:** This is the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association Conference at Mohegan Sun which the entire staff went to last year. This year Peter nominated Pam for the ABCD Aware (above and beyond the call of duty). This is for someone that has exemplified customer service. Peter also nominated Donna for the Distinguished Service Award. Donna does a lot of work behind the scenes. Both nominations have been accepted and we hope to get at least one award.

We have been nominated for the Park of Merit Award for the tennis/pickleball/basketball project. The improvements made to the courts and having the school children vote for the color scheme of the courts were the reasons behind this nomination.

**Other:** Andrew asked Peter if he could put together the registration numbers for soccer for the past several years. He is interested in seeing the progression in the program. Peter said soccer is a complex program on the website. Every year Pam does not make a new program she just clones it so it erases the previous year. Peter said he will get the information from Dan and compile it.

Bill asked about the agreement between Windsor Locks and Suffield for use of the Windsor Locks pool for us and the use of the parks for Windsor Locks residents. He said he has gone three times and the pool is closed due to lack of lifeguards. He checked the website and there was no notice that it was closed.

The commission discussed the lack of lifeguards and that to get the certification it is expensive. There was discussion on how to help get more lifeguards and one way is to pay for the certification course.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Sam made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andrew seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for  
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting