

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
September 11, 2024

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 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 (Zoom)
.....Jackie Guzie (Zoom)
.....Stephen Marchillo
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Andrew Joly
.....Anthony Migliozi
.....Christopher Parker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Peter Leclerc, Director
.....Neil Hornish, Suffield Resident

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. Moment of Silence
- C. Public Input
- D. Review of Minutes
- E. Correspondence
- F. Program Reports
- G. Old Business
 - a. Road Race Recap
 - b. Bridge Street Park
 - i. Plan under review
 - c. Summer Recap
- H. New Business
 - a. Fall programs under way
 - b. Plan to address off-season trash at Babb's Beach
 - c. Basketball Officials Training Program
 - d. Suffield Alight! on December 6, 2024
 - e. Other
- I. Adjournment

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Peter asked for a moment of silence for the September 11 victims and families.

PUBLIC INPUT: Neil Hornish, 864 Thrall Ave., Suffield, said he had some questions regarding the July 24 Board of Selectmen's special meeting regarding an approval of an agreement to share certain facilities, including Babbs Beach and Sunrise Park, with Windsor Locks residents. It was stated that the Conservation Commission approved it and he was wondering why Parks and Rec was not included. He is curious of how the process works. He thanked the commission for having handouts for the public so they can follow the meeting.

Brian asked Peter to explain the jurisdiction of the parks. Peter said he spoke with the 1st Selectman prior to the meeting and was asked his opinion on it. We have staff at Babbs and Sunrise during the summer and he asked if the vehicles from Windsor Locks would be an issue. Since we are under capacity Peter thought it would be good to have the reciprocal arrangement between the towns. There is no director for Sunrise Park so it falls under the Conservation Commission to determine operations and policies: along with Stony Brook Park. The Conservation Commission and our department do collaborate but they have a vote at what goes on at Sunrise. If it was a bigger policy issue I would have brought it to the commission's attention.

Bill said the commission was not made aware of the agreement beforehand. Peter said he did not feel it would be a problem since we do not have many Windsor Locks residents at the park. Bill's concern is that many times the Windsor Locks pool is closed because there are no lifeguards. It does not seem to be an equal playing field. He spoke with an official from Windsor Locks on the issue of lifeguards. There needs to be 2 lifeguards for the pool to be open. Bill would like to see our selectman speak with the Windsor Locks selectman to try and find a solution for getting lifeguards. The commission discussed the lack of opening at the Windsor Locks pool and the general difficulty getting lifeguards. Different ways of enticing people to become lifeguards was discussed with the possibility of discussion on this agreement next year if it is not working equally.

Neil said he wanted to read the minutes from last month's meeting to see if we had discussed this issue but was not able to find them. Peter said they should have been posted.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: Peter received a nice note from the Seger family who the road race is named after. They also gave a generous donation.

Bruce Dinne, former Parks & Rec Director, sent a note congratulating us on the race and said the kids' race is cool and glad to see how the race has grown.

Bruce came by for a visit and it was nice to put a face to the name.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Peter recapped Dan's July report since he was out at the end of August. This year we added another group to Sunrise Day Camp and it worked well. The Adventure Camp went well too.

Peter reviewed the 8 camps that he and Brian toured this summer.

Bill said that one of his friends from Farmington ran the road race and he mentioned that we have more programs than his town which is bigger. Sam said that all the programs we have fill up.

The Volleyball camp was the last camp of the season. Now the department has a chance to catch up on our work.

Donna just started the Bowling Buddies group this week. It runs around 9 months and goes into the Special Olympics. She also does other events and programs with the group along with the bowling. She will be taking a group to the Big E next week and many of the participants have medical issues and need supervision. It is a big undertaking.

The commission discussed the dedication, work, and energy she puts into the programs.

The first week of Kids Korner Camp the tables are full of supplies. By the end they are almost gone. Donna has it all scripted out.

The last family night (multi-generational) event was a collaboration between all four departments, and led by Youth Services. It was held at Sunrise Park and there was a dunk tank. Peter volunteered for that along with 1st Selectman Colin Moll.

Fall sports open this week.

OLD BUSINESS:

Road Race Recap: Peter thanked everyone who helped with the race. We are getting runners from all over the State and they are getting faster.

Brian said that there was one point where the 10K runners and 5K were at the same place. Peter said that is why we are going to change the 5K course.

The commission discussed in detail, the reasons for moving the course, the concerns at certain points in the course and the various routes that are possible. The measuring of the course must be accurate and Peter would like to have this finalized before November so he can work on certification before it snows.

Stephen suggested that we get some extra plain shirts for youth. We can put labels on them here. This way we can keep any extras for next year.

Bridge Street Park:

Plan under review: The landscape architect was in the office to review the plan presented last month to try and reduce the cost. Stephen asked what the figures came out to be. Peter said \$1.8/1.9 mil for the above option and for the two other options \$2.2 mill. The field was discussed and Brian said that it is important to have the field open to multi-use options along with sports. We need to make it more attractive to all groups in town. He asked the commission to think about ideas for the field. Some possible events are farmers' market, concerts, general programming, and sports practice area. Bill suggested doing something for the Senior Center since it is so close by. Things that could be put out and picked up such as bocci ball.

Peter said that as soon as he has any further information, he will pass it along.

Summer Recap: The camps and programs were discussed above.

We had a rough time with Wednesday Night Concerts because of the rain. We had 3 concerts cancelled due to rain. PeoplesBank sponsored the concerts and we had a good turnout at the ones we held. The concerts were rescheduled and held in late August.

Saturday Movie Nights were sponsored by the Stephanie Salerno Realty Team. We really appreciate the sponsorship because the license fees needed to show the movies is expensive.

The last one was rained out but the others were well attended.

The summer was a success.

Fall Programs underway: Bowling Buddies, adult fitness, pickleball, flag football, and soccer have started or are starting this week.

There was a school contractor removing the old Spaulding school playground mulch and they drove over the west side of the kindergarten soccer field. It created ruts. It is being fixed so it should be ready for this weekend.

Sam asked who was responsible for the refurbishing of the Middle School gym. Peter said the Board of Education approved the work. He reviewed the steps involved with the refinishing of the floor and it should be good for 3 to 4 years. The floor should be done by next week. Peter said this is probably the last time they will be able to refinish the floor. When it wears out there will have to be a decision on whether to replace the floor. If a new floor is put in Peter hopes they will connect the two spaces so there is no divider between the gym floors.

Plan to address off-season trash at Babb's Beach: It is a public park and can not be closed to the public. Since there is no regular staff, we are having a problem with people leaving their trash at Babbs. The gate staff are trained before we open Babbs since they are not only taking money, but potentially dealing with medical emergencies, and other situations. When we have staff, we give all people coming in a trash bag to take their trash out, and there is not an issue.

We have put up No Parking signs on our property. There are no legal spots to park on the street. It is posted that cars will be towed if parked in No Parking areas.

Peter will put together a cost for having staff at the park from Memorial Day on and present it to the 1st Selectman.

Bill asked if the program using the prisoners could be used to pick up trash twice a week. Peter said that he will ask. The prisoners may be able to pick up trash during the week but the weekend is when people use the park and the trash would not be picked up.

The commission discussed how the staff could be used at the beach to help with the trash situation during the season and when we do not have lifeguards on duty. Bill felt we should have gate attendants and a sign that there is no Lifeguard on Duty once the weather starts to get warm.

Peter said he hopes to have a plan before the budget process starts in December since having attendants at Babbs will cost money.

Basketball Officials Training Program: We invested funds from the Bombard Family Golf Tournament donation. We usually buy equipment or bring in training for the coaches. This year we decided to buy licenses for training basketball officials. With this program we will be able to certify them through us. They will watch videos and then they will do an in-person clinic and take an exam. The program can be tailored to our level. They will be officials in training and will get paid.

Chris Parker (P&R Commissioner) and Mike Gage, certified officials, have been doing our program for the past 2 years. Peter reviewed the credentials for Chris and Mike.

Brian asked what the timeframe is and Peter said November. The commission discussed how much the officials can make officiating games and that they can also advance to high level competition.

Matt Cummings will be working on this and Peter would like to do this for soccer next year.

Suffield Alight on December 6, 2024: Peter wanted to get this on everyone's radar. We will be looking for volunteers.

Other: Bill said that our programs are filling up and the price differential between town residents and non-residents is minimal, \$5. His suggestion is to increase the fee between residents and non-residents. We should be giving the opportunity to sign up to our residents.

Bill made a motion, maybe one or two months from now, to do some research with other towns in the area to see what the differential is in pricing between residents and non-residents and bring it back to the commission and at that point we can have discussion and vote on it.

Dave seconded the motion and all voted yes.

Peter thanked Sam, Stephen, and Andy for their work on preparing the soccer uniforms. They did a great job and we have more coming.

The commission discussed the number of teams that the Travel Soccer Club has and other topics regarding the soccer club, games, and coaching.

ADJOURNMENT: Bill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting