

SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
November 13, 2024

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 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
.....Stephen Marchillo
.....David Rusnock (Zoom)

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:.....Peter Leclerc, Director


Brian called the meeting to order at 7:05 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. Soccer Registration Numbers
 - b. Bridge Street Park
 - i. Plan under review
 - c. Resident v Non-Resident Fees
- G. New Business
 - a. New pre-k and K winter indoor soccer program
 - b. Basketball Evaluations
 - c. Volunteers needed on Friday 12/6 for Suffield Alight!
 - d. Bowling Buddies Holiday Party 12/17 @ 6pm
 - e. December P&R Commission Meeting
 - f. Other
- H. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

MINUTES: Peter reminded everyone that these are the minutes from September as we did not meet in October. Bill had a question about the sentence on page 2, *The Conservation Commission and our department do collaborate but they have a vote at what goes on at Sunrise*. Bill said he feels this needs clarification. Peter reworded the sentence as follows. The Conservation Commission and our department do collaborate on activities at Sunrise Park. The Conservation Commission manages and oversees operations at Sunrise Park.

TOWN CLERK
SUFFIELD, CT
2024 NOV 18 AM 11:13
REC'D BY: 

Bill made a motion to accept the minutes with the above revisions. Stephen seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Brian asked Peter about the overlapping coverage between Matt and Dan's reports. Peter said Matt is doing reports on Fall sports and Dan oversees that so he had that in his report also. Peter reviewed their reports and noticed there was some duplication but they were both prepping for basketball and doing other things so he did not want to make them redo the report. This is Matt's first report.

Brian asked about the new football program and the ages for this program. There are 2 coaches and the ages are 4 and 5. The name of the program is Future Ballers. Peter said this program finished 2 weeks ago.

Peter wanted to highlight Donna's October report. She had done a collaboration program between Youth Services, Senior Center, and ourselves last year: Open Night Mic. All ages were there and many different talents. The program was so successful that we were asked to do it again. This year we did a Halloween themed program and it was standing room only. This was a great community event.

Even though it is a senior center we treat it like a community center when the seniors are not using it.

Matt is adapting well and getting used to how to program not just running the events. He is very busy prepping for basketball and he is introducing some new programs. One of the programs is an adult social sport program. The program is a corn hole league which only needs 2 people for a team. The high school principal is looking to have the staff enter a team or two from each department. The program runs from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and hopefully people will go out to socialize after.

Dan wrote a grant for a STEM robotics program and it was granted. He has worked closely with Sean McCarthy and Scott Crossen. The program will run into December and then they hope to continue it in the new year.

By having Matt take over several of the sports programs it has helped Dan to work on other projects.

This is the second night of basketball evaluations. Ninety percent attendance so this is probably the best way to get parity. Sam is there helping. The commission discussed previous years and the struggle to get equal teams. The evaluation system has really helped.

OLD BUSINESS:

Soccer Registration Numbers: Andy had asked Peter to prepare previous years soccer registration so we could compare. Peter reviewed the numbers but said he was not aware of the school enrollment. The commission discussed the various possible reasons why we are seeing the fluctuation in registration numbers over the past few years. Stephen reviewed some of the numbers for travel soccer. Peter said that other communities are in the same boat as us when it comes to trying to get teams together for the older youth where the registration numbers are low.

Brian said he was surprised that there was no drop in registration during the Covid years. Peter reviewed what was done to keep the program going through this period. During this time we cancelled the program for the older kids since we did not have enough registration and we could not play in town.

Bill made a motion to move the agenda up to Resident v Non-Resident Fees: Stephen seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Resident v Non-Resident Fees: Bill had asked for a comparison of resident fees v non-resident fees. Pam made inquiries and compared them to ours. Our programs have about a 10% fee increase. On a general program there is a \$5 to \$10 fee for non-residents. For summer camps which run around \$150 to \$250 the non-resident fee is around \$20 to \$25. On many programs we are full and we want to make sure that our residents who are the taxpayers get the benefit of the programs. Some programs that are small are for Suffield residents only and the bigger ones usually are open. The commission discussed the reasons for non-resident fees and the fact that this is to ensure our residents get the benefit of their tax dollars. Also discussed was allowing non-residents to register for programs that might not fill up or have enough registration to hold the program. The programs that other towns open to non-residents was also discussed. Some programs are Suffield residents first and then open to non-residents if there are still available spots.

Brian said it might be a good idea to have a fee structure: fees for programs in a certain category and fees for larger programs and camps.

The commission discussed programs that used to be free but now have a fee and programs in other towns.

Peter said he will review our non-resident base fees and let the commission know what the percentage is.

Bridge Street Park: Nothing has really changed from the town's perspective. There was a discussion of a name for the park. Lester Smith who has passed away was an icon of the town. There was talk of how to honor him for all the work he has done for the town. He also did most of the reporting on the Bridge Street property.

Plan under review: Peter said the suggestion is to name the park The Lester Smith Memorial Park. Brian said that is a terrific idea since Lester was everywhere and always promoting and interested in the town. The commission discussed many of the things Lester has done to promote the town, articles he had written for the Observer especially on the Bridge Street property, attending meetings, etc. The consensus of the commission was that this is a good idea.

Bill made a motion to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen that we name the new proposed park at the former Bridge Street School the Lester Smith Memorial Park. Dave seconded the motion. All voted yes.

The commission discussed the Bridge Street School property, its history, the different ideas on what could be done with it, the referendum, etc. Bill asked if there is any issue with naming a town property after a person. Peter said that he did not believe there was any issue with naming parks after families/person since we have several parks in town that are named this way.

Brian said he hopes Lester is honored either by naming a component of the park after him or naming the park for Lester.

NEW BUSINESS:

New pre-K and K winter indoor soccer program: This is a new program spearheaded by Matt. Mini Stars and Super Mini Stars. The younger group, Super Mini Stars, ages 3 and 4 will be a parent and child class. The 5- and 6-year-olds, Mini Stars, are with instructors. The program will be 2 six-week sessions. So far, we have 60 registrations. The program is held at the senior center on Sunday morning. This will give us activities for kids during the winter. There are uniforms: shirt, shorts and socks that have come in and need to be printed.

Basketball Evaluations: Discussed above in program reports

Volunteers needed on Friday 12/6 for Suffield Alight: Peter is looking for volunteers for this event for set-up, during the event and breakdown. Set-up will start around 3:30 p.m. and the event will run from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. There will be food trucks at the event.

The commission discussed last year's event, the timing for turning on the Hanukkah lights and the tree incident.

Bill said he did not see the Dinner with Santa program. Peter said this year it will be Pizza with Santa. The program is open for registration. The commission discussed the success of the program along with the Santa Phone Call program which will be run again this year.

Bowling Buddies Holiday Party 12/17 @ 6 p.m.: The event will be held at the Senior Center. Peter said this has worked out well, the group is comfortable at the center and it fits our needs.

December P&R Commission Meeting: Brian reviewed the calendar for next year:

January 8, 2025	August 13
February 12	September 10
March 12	October 8
April 9	November 12
May 14	December 10
June 11	

Peter said that if we need to change a date or location, he will amend the agenda and do a special meeting.

The commission discussed moving the meeting location to the Senior Center as Peter has had the same system (what is installed at the townhall meeting room) installed at the Senior Center cafeteria. Moving it to the Senior Center would mean we do not have to worry about a conflict with the town.

Bill made a motion that beginning next January we have our monthly meetings at the Senior Center. Steve seconded.

The commission discussed this further and decided to have a trial meeting at the Senior Center before deciding.

Stephen made a motion to table the motion to the December meeting. Bill seconded and all voted yes.

It was decided to have the December meeting at the Senior Center at 7 p.m. Brian invited all to his home after the meeting ends.

Other: Stephen asked about baseball regarding what ages the tee ball program is for and the numbers. He is involved with Suffield Little League and the instructional league had very low numbers last year. He was wondering if there could be some collaboration. Peter said he has not been approached by Suffield Little League and when he started at Parks and Rec the instruction for our program was not adequate. Suffield Little League started their own instructional program because they felt the kids were not coming into their program with the proper instruction. We now have adequate instructors and lesson plans for our tee ball program and it has improved.

Peter said he asked the league to take over the softball program from us since we consistently did not have enough kids to make 2 teams prior to 2019. Peter said he would be interested in talking with someone from the league.

ADJOURNMENT: Stephen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for
Sam Lombardo, Clerk

These minutes are not official until accepted at subsequent meeting