

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
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TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD

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Parks and Recreation Commission
STW Community Center
1332 Middletown Avenue, Northford, Ct. 06472

Monday, December 21, 2015
7:30 P. M.

Minutes

Members Present: Brian Lynch, Victor Palma, Michelle Provencher, Steve Torino and Karen Ablondi

Also Attending: Director Lauren Munro; Rosanne Krajewski, Potato Festival Director; Michael Paulhus, Town Manager; Rose Angeloni, Past Council Liaison; George Miller, New Council Liaison and Clifford Potter, Bill Savastrano, Dennis Pannone and Richard Inzero, Potato Festival Committee.

Chairman Brian Lynch called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of November 30, 2015 Special Meeting were accepted unanimously on the motion by Karen Ablondi, second by Michelle Provencher.

Public Comment: Clifford Potter addressed the Commission concerning the decision to change the number of days the Festival should run and what day should be eliminated if that was the decision. He felt that Sunday is a traditional Family Day, when many were committed to the traditional events scheduled, the Cow Chip raffle, Road Race, etc. , while Saturday night is always well attended for the fireworks and Friday is especially popular with young people, so he felt that Thursday should be eliminated. Dan Herman, Potato Festival volunteer spoke to the feelings of the volunteers in preferring it be a 3 day venue and mentioned that some vendors regret the need to be away from their regular business for an additional day, in that it was inconvenient and sometimes not worth it. Also, it was getting difficult to get commitment from many regular volunteers who were burned out by the fourth day and not volunteering again.

George Miller, the new Town Council liaison to the Commission introduced himself and Rose Angeloni reported that the Council felt they needed a financial statement

sooner than November and that the estimated salary increase for the Festival Director was too high and Mr. Miller also commented on the issue of salary, concurring that since she is already a part time employee with the Town she is well paid. Mike Paulhus suggested that he also would like to see a financial report before the end of October, even if it wasn't complete, it could contain estimated outstanding bills, such as the Police Department and Public Works which remain pretty standard.

Dennis Pannone, Supervisor of Volunteers stated that he felt 4 days were too much since he and many others needed to take a day off from their jobs to work the Festival and felt that the Thursday night should be eliminated to make it easier to get volunteers. He also pointed out that Rosanne's salary doesn't come from Town Revenues, but from the income from the Potato Festival and felt it shouldn't be tied to what the Town Council felt she should be paid. Brian Lynch explained that the Town Council always has direct input into decisions by the Board. The decision concerning the Potato Cooker was denied for some time, but was finally approved and has proved its worth.

Karen Ablondi said she had looked into pay for Event Planners and they were earning three figures. Victor Palma pointed out that as a part time employee Rosanne was not receiving medical benefits nor overtime pay and was paid about \$19.50 an hour last year, so the request of an increase to \$22, as proposed, was not outrageous, especially since she is limited to approximately 19 and a half hours a week, but puts in much more time during the Festival. Brian concurred saying that she did a terrific job this year, well entitled to the increase in pay.

Potato Festival: After the discussion Brian turned attention to the Agenda.

a. Reappointment of Rosanne Krajewski as Festival Coordinator for 2016: On the motion by Karen Ablondi, seconded by Steven Torino, the Commission was unanimous standing behind her commending her dedication and voted 5/0.

b. Salary for Festival Coordinator: The Commission felt that the small increase to \$22 per hour they recommended was well worth it and on the motion by Victor Palma, second by Michelle Provencher, the unanimous vote by the members was yes. It was suggested that she keep track of her hours for future reference. Rosanne is capped at 1,000 hours currently.

c. Festival date 2016: After considering all the information given by the Potato Festival members and volunteers, it was decided that future festivals be held to 3 days, with those being Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Steve Torino made the motion and Victor Palma seconded it with the commission voting unanimously to eliminate the Thursday night in favor of keeping Sunday.

Public Comment: Clifford Potter addressed the Commission with the support of the Potato Festival Committee on giving fair compensation to Rosanne for all the

hours and effort she puts in to making the Potato Festival the success that it is. It was always supposed to be a Community Event, not a cash cow, the Commission agreed. Brian thanked Rose Angeloni for her commitment to making the things work so smoothly and hoped she would continue her interest.

Adjournment: On Steven Torino's motion, seconded by Karen Ablondi the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Leigh Bianchi , Clerk