

# TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD

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The Parks and Recreation Commission  
STW Community Center  
1332 Middletown Avenue, Northford, Ct. 06472  
Tuesday, April 25, 2017 - 6:00 PM

## Minutes

**Present:** Chairman Brian Lynch, Victor Palma, Steve Torino and John Onofrio.

**Absent:** Michelle Provencher

**Also Present:** Director Lauren Munro; Rose Angelo, Town Council Rep and Bill Savastrano, VFW.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brian Lynch at 6:00

**Approval of Minutes of March 29, 2017 - Special Meeting:** Corrections were made to add Joe Biangio, Jim Kwalack to those present at the meeting; also as to the request for the Beer tasting; the name of the organization requesting permission was the Connecticut Brewers Guild. Also, the Touch a Truck is planned for June 4<sup>th</sup> and Laurn added under Program Review, that she had ordered two Pickle ball nets for indoors and she has 14 people playing per week. Under Memorial/Coulter it should have been noted that she had two new benches ordered at that time.

## Parks and Fields:

### Eagle Scout Dog Park Kiosk:

Lauren had reached out to update Jake Hawley to let him know the status of the dog park, but she hasn't heard back from him. It has been decided to hold a soft opening for Unleashed on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> with a dedication set for May 20<sup>th</sup> at 10 am as of right now.

There is still no one who has been named to take over the Dog Park Committee, and Eric is meeting with them this week, he's leaving this job this Friday, Lauren still has no one in charge. Eric will meet with Fran from Public Works to help with installing stuff. Eric was the spear head in that project

and now that he's leaving the area there's no one who wants to step into his roll, Brian advised that she wait until after she has met with Eric before going ahead with the kiosk plans. They can always delay the opening. We will look to invite the Big Give, who donated toward the park.

### **Memorial/Coulter Fields:**

Memorial looks fantastic and now 80% of the the water lines are done and once they finish tying up the water lines they'll be relocating the shed and making that permanent.

They are looking to finding funds to fence in the basketball courts. There is a problem because people have been driving cars and snowmobiles during the winter and it will continue to be a problem with all-terrain vehicles unless fencing is installed. Coulter got good reports and the water problems seem to be solved. Lauren was not sure if the new scoreboard was up yet or not.

Lauren said that she heard that Little League Opening Day went well, windy and cold, but a success. Rose mentioned that there were some complaints about the upper field at Totoket Field where T Ball is played. Lauren said that she had not heard any complaints when baseball played there. Rose said it's in poor condition and Steve wondered if the clay that SportsPlex had promised as a donation might help to correct it. Over all, all the fields were phenomenal this week end.

### **Potato and Corn Festival:**

Lauren gave an update on Groupon which will be used on Sunday, which is the slowest day. It's a great idea for free marketing and fundraising and they will be going with it. It's a good way of getting free advertising and bringing people in. They're looking to have perforated tickets to tear off one part for parking and the other part for food. Cost hasn't been decided yet.

Alex will be attending the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting concerning his project, Beer Tasting, however he has not provided them with the packets yet, so it may not be until after the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting where they will probably have some questions for him. His packets are needed now and Rose volunteered to help with getting them delivered to Council right away.

She said that they would be giving some funding for Project Graduation again this year. Amusements has agreed to give 10 free ride wristbands again this year and they will be given to the libraries for the Summer Reading Program. Perdue has given us a \$2,000 sponsorship as well as any profits that they make from their booth, which will be something with chicken no doubt. All the money that they make will be given to the food pantry here in town.

They have been approached by St. Rose Church in Greenwich who wish to sell tickets to benefit their church at a table at our festival. They have high cash prizes of \$30,000 first prize, \$4,000 second prize, \$3,000 is third prize and \$2,000 for fourth prize. It will be completely separate, manned with their

own volunteers and are offering in return a cut of \$12 on all tickets sold at our event. The tickets are numbered and records will be kept. They in turn fund charities distributing food, counseling and scholarships throughout New Haven County. Brian said if we will not be libel or responsible for anything having to do with prizes, just supplying a table and some chairs in the Information Tent, it's basically free money. Their drawing will be on August 12<sup>th</sup> at their own event. The Commission agreed to allow the Festival Committee to go ahead with their plan.

Steve stated that they had not seen the 2016 numbers yet. Anthony didn't have them ready for her to bring to the meeting.

### **Sports Organizations:**

Lauren had just received an email from Football and distributed copies to members for their information. They are asking for a permanent location and allocation of fields with lights. Brian explained that he thought that they already had a permanent field and Rose said that years ago it was considered to be a temporary field until it was greatly improved recently, out fitted with temporary lights and that they already had a larger than promised practice field available to them. The playing field they now have is great and should be considered their permanent field. Lauren explained that the equipment box that had been positioned on the outfield last season will be moved closer to their practice field

It was also noted that they suggested taking down the fence between the practice field and the baseball field. Brian asked John Onofrio if that was something he felt was necessary. John responded that, though he was active in baseball, as a member of the Commission he represented all sports, but that fence was put there for a reason and Brian concurred. It would be a shame if football extended their practice over onto the new center field and tore it up. The fence was the demarcation line that prevented it from happening. He also said that the Commission had the responsibility to allocate the fields with respect to the funds available, the fairness of assigning them and considering what would be the best way to fill the needs of the entire community. Permanent lights were never a priority since none of the other sports require them, so permanent lighting is not in the foreseeable future so temporary lights will be the only illumination inasmuch as the estimated cost of lighting that field would be about \$150,000. Lauren also mentioned that football was granted permission to use Mill Road field a weekend in August and were using that as well, so it wasn't that they were being treated unfairly. Since Little League is in the same area, she also ordered extra pota-potties down by their practice field this year,

In addressing the request for removal of a tree, Victor explained that it's not an easy thing to do. If it is located within 10 feet of a road or pathway it needs to be posted for removal for 10 days and if there is opposition, there has to be a hearing. Brian suggested that Lauren send out a letter outlining the decisions of the Commission concerning their requests concerning the allocation of the fields, fencing, lighting and tree removal.

### **Program Review:**

Lauren was approached by Theresa Baldino who wondered about the possibility of starting a Community Garden if there was somewhere that could set aside for one and Lauren invited her to attend the next meeting to discuss it. She said it needed to have water available, be accessible by car or truck to bring in mulch and such, as well as be situated in an unobstructed sunny area. The Commission thought it was an interesting idea, but advised Lauren to make it easier on herself by getting a map of the various open areas from the Town Manager prior to her meeting with Theresa so as to allow her to scope out the one that meets her criteria since she better knows the needs for a garden. Also, when meeting with her she needs a plan as to how she will administer it, who will be in charge of assigning plots and keeping track of it. Also, it will require fencing, so how will that be handled. We aren't going to have it handed to us, it has to be self-controlled with no expense to the Town.

### **STW Community Center:**

Since it was decided that the playground equipment is no longer a priority, Lauren said she would meet with Town Council to request allocating funding from one account to the other so that work can begin for the Northford Park post and tension basketball court. She said that in talking to Mike and Anthony she thought they were going to put the kibosh on the courts out here at Stanley T. Fran felt that it would be best to do the post and tension for basketball and the tennis courts at Northford Park together having them both on the same schedule and doing Northford courts and STW courts would be a negative of funds between 18 and 54,000.

During Commission discussion concerning this original plan which called for installing new tennis courts at Northford Park, it became obvious that there would not be enough funds for all the needs including the work at Stanley T and so they should take precedence since the multi-use courts would be excellent for activities, especially during Kidz Camp and would also bring in revenue from other activities that would help replenish the Parks and Rec accounts. After considering the options, the Commission felt that the tennis courts at Northford Park could just be repaired for the time being and go ahead with building the Northford post and tension Basketball courts as planned, since there is funding enough for the post and tension Basketball court already in place. The tennis courts could simply be temporary repairs and could be visited again once proven the need, which would allow the monies necessary for building the multi-use courts at Stanley T. which fills the need for the Parks and Rec Sumer programs.

On a motion by Victor Palma, second by Steve Torino, that the allocated funding for the post tension basketball courts at Northford Park and the all-purpose courts at Stanley T be a priority, and the Northford Park tennis courts be put on hold for the present, the Commission agreed unanimously. The tennis courts at Northford can be repaired and made playable for the next few years until it is decided if there is enough demand to have them be completely replaced.

There was also a discussion considering options for funding through bids as opposed to looking to local asphalt venders and Lauren will be researching that since funds will be at a premium.

She also announced that Johnathan will be leaving shortly, and he will be a big loss to the Department because he had been such a perfect fit and everyone was very attached to him

### **Senior Center:**

The Pizza Wars project was ongoing this evening and was a success. Lauren announced that the

Annual Senior Appreciation Luncheon is set for Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Public Comment:**

Lauren said that the special Vietnam War marker proposed by Bill Savastrano had been approved by the Town Council and the engraved monument will be installed in time for the Memorial Day Parade. She is preparing flyers to be handed out during the Parade and thanked Fire Company One for volunteering to help with refreshment afterwards to keep more town people involved.

John Onofrio spoke on behalf of Joe Mascari who couldn't be at the meeting to thank the Commission and all those involved with their work on behalf of the NBLL in preparing and presenting them with their beautiful field. Their work was greatly appreciated.

On the motion by Steve Torino, second by Victor Palma, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Leigh Bianchi, Clerk