

TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD

TOWN HALL, 909 FOXON ROAD, NORTH BRANFORD, CONECTICUT 06471-1290

Parks and Recreation Commission
STW Community Center 1332 Middletown Avenue, Northford, Ct. 06472
Thursday, October 5, 2017 – 6 pm

Special Meeting - Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brian Lynch at 6 p.m.

Present: Steve Torino, Michelle Provencher, Victor Palma and John Onofrio

Also attending: Lauren Munro, Director; Shawn Keogh, Program Supervisor, Meghan McCarthy and Hunter Provencher.

Approval of Minutes of June 27, 2017 and August 22, 2017: After correcting the date of the June meeting to reflect June 27 and concerning the Archery Program Lauren had said the classes worked so well she is planning to purchase their own equipment which will be paid for by just a few classes. With the corrections the Minutes for both months were accepted on the motion by Michelle Provencher, second by Victor Palma.

Parks and Fields - Discussion and Action

a. Eagle Scout Candidate Toby Tarantino has approached Town Manager Mike Paulus to ask if there was any project he might do toward his award and was advised to talk to Lauren. Since the Commission had previously discussed possible projects she mentioned the bocce courts that had been discussed for the front area by the new all surface courts. Brian suggested that if he was interested he might look at the ones installed at the Italian American Club in Branford and he should put together a proposed project sheet to present to the Commission at a future meeting.

b. Colter Field – Lauren had sent out an email concerning the history of this field and the request by the Colter family that perhaps the sign could be reinstalled designating the field by that name. During discussion members were certain that there was once a sign that showed the name of the fields as Colter, Little League, Memorial Field and Reigeluth Tennis Courts and suggested that it would be a good idea to install one so people would know which field was being used since there is no signage at present. Lauren was advised to tell the Town Council members that the Commission felt it was time to reinstate the signs with these original names.

c. Northford Basketball Courts – Bids came in and the lowest of \$91,000 was by R.S. Site and Sports accepted, but it left \$12,000 short. The Finance did come up with the difference and she was advised to take it to the Commission for approval. The Commission voted to accept the bid and to advise the Town Council to go forward with the tennis courts at Northford Park on the motion by Steve Torino, seconded by Michelle Provencher.

d. Trash Removal – John Onofrio has been following up on it and although they are supposed to pick up 3 times a week, being Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the trash at the Tennis Courts has been left full since August 3rd, coffee cups were still in the one at the Football field after the weekend and Wall field hadn't been completely emptied for a month. He checked the one at the Dog Park and they also hadn't been emptied. Brian advised Lauren to take the problem to the Town Manager since Michelle Knockwood hadn't been able to get action taken on it.

e. Port-o-lets – Lauren explained that since she's been checking on the timely cleaning and taking pictures so she has gotten credits of \$3,600 when the dates weren't listed and signed. She plans to go back to United in the future since she never had this problem while dealing with them.

Town Sports Organizations - Discussion and Action

a. Fence at Wall Field – The question had come up concerning the removal of the fence between the baseball and football fields and Lauren said that Fran Merlo explained that had been temporary for safety reasons while construction was being done on the field so there was no intention of putting it back up. Football and baseball wanted it down to avoid injuries.

b. Bathrooms at Wall Field – Football had approached Lauren to request use of the bathrooms by parents while attending practice. During discussion Brian inquired if there were portables there and Lauren responded that there were several because as other fields were no longer in use, she had those portables moved to the fields in use. In further discussion she said that Little League has a key and uses them, but pays for cleaning and maintains, so as a compromise, if football wants to share the responsibility and cost it could be managed, but it would be up to them to agree. John Onofrio said that there was a cross over between the two sports, but might cause problems if the bathrooms were left unlocked and damage was done. Brian said that since there are portables available right at the field it was felt there wasn't a need to open the bathrooms to the public and, although the bathrooms are Town property, the Town is not responsible when the building is unoccupied which leaves the burden on Baseball since they have the key.

Program Review - Discussion and Action

a. Kidz kamp for 2018 – Very successful under the leadership of Shawn Keogh and Brian said that he heard from one parent that she was so grateful for an affordable option for her children during the summer and especially appreciated the hours and activities.

On the issue of Summer Camps, Steve Torino wondered if it might a good means of attracting younger people if we were to invite directors of summer camps from surrounding towns to add the Potato and Corn Festival to their proposed field trips. Perhaps on the first day, from 2 to 4 prior to the opening since staff was there anyway. Fees might include a colored bracelet used during the field trip that would allow them free or discounted rides later on if they returned with their family. It would be a way of bringing more people in and would be good publicity. The Commission said it was an interesting idea and Lauren and Jen would have to look into it and perhaps Shawn would talk to some of his contacts to see if they would be interested in making it a field trip.

b. Updates – The Fall/Winter brochure is out and there has been some thought given to creating scare crows; a haunted and un-haunted maze, as well as the Car Trunks. She met with Shawn and they put together some other ideas for the future but she appreciates more input.

Steve asked if Lauren had attended the National Conference this year, and she did not. Although it was funded because of the unsettled budget she was asked to by-pass it and wait until next year and she agreed, although it would have been a fantastic way to gain new ideas for the future. She will be attending the State event, however, and the National money will remain in the budget for next year.

STW Community Center - Discussion and Action

a. Tennis Courts – The all- purpose court has been installed and it looks good. Lines for Tennis and Pickle ball will be painted. If the Bocce Court is made, it will be in the same area leaving room for a possible Gazebo and/or open area for the future.

b. Janitorial Services – Lauren said that they had interviewed several applicants and Craig has been hired. He worked here in the past and is familiar with the building and he will be here part time.

c. Updates – None.

Senior Center - Discussion and Action

a. Updates – Programs have been set up addressing the interests of passive and more active seniors. There will be a virtual vacation program in conjunction with Triple A which will be entertaining for those who can't travel, but also for those who might be planning travel in the future. Also a dietitian from Shoprite, who will be discussing good healthy eating ideas; and will be addressing Santa to Senior through our own town agency resources in conjunction with the Rotary Club this year.

Potato Festival Roles – Lauren said that since Jen McCall did so well organizing the Festival this year she was a good person to keep in that position if the Commission agreed, so on the motion by Victor Palma seconded by Steve Torino, to name her as the Festival Coordinator all were in agreement and Lauren will take it to the Town Council. She reminded that she is open to ideas and if anyone on the Commission wanted anything put on the Agenda, to let her know with enough time to get it posted.

Steve addressed the need for a more defined chain of command to address issues that might arise such as in a complaint or an emergency, a diagram of the various heads of different venues so everyone would be aware of who to contact. Lauren explained that it was already pretty much set up that way. She expressed concern that if it becomes too structured it will take the fun out of it, there is already a list of Supervisors who can address problems that might occur and there is no way of knowing who will volunteer until the form is sent out. Those who attend Festival meetings will meet the challenge of supervision. It was also suggested that name tags for the Supervisors naming their area, as well as a name sticker for volunteers at sign-in and the Commission felt these were good ideas.

Commission Meeting days and times for 2018 – The Commission decided to keep the schedule as it has been this year, so they will continue meeting at the Community Center at 6 pm on the third Tuesday of each month and the schedule will be sent to the Town Clerk for posting.

Public Comment – Steve questioned the Commission's roll when there is an interview with a candidate for a job opening and shouldn't the Commission be part of the process or at least invited to sit in. Brian explained that the main position was filled when they were looking for someone to replace Lauren for her job and the Town Manager called and apologized for not inviting the Commission to make suggestions. Other positions, such as interviews with Shawn, they were included. He looks at the Commission as an advisory board, listening to the public to bring concerns to the table and in helping Lauren and Shawn in moving forward. Lauren is in charge because she is hands on working and knows the work in progress.

Due to an issue of not getting email notifications, the Commission recommended that we revert to the old way of mailing out the Minutes and Agenda so there is a printed copy to refer to.

John addressed a problem of people allowing dogs on the tennis courts and said the sign specifically says no dogs are allowed, so when he observed one enclosed and defecating, he reported it to the police department and questioned if that was the right thing to do. Brian's response was that when a member of the Commission sees anything prohibited, such as this or using the fields inappropriately, they should identify themselves as members of the Commission and take whatever action is necessary.

Lauren expressed thanks to the many who stepped forward to help with the Potato Festival to make it such a success. Victor pointed out that Hunter, who was present, was a young man who was an excellent volunteer and thanked him personally.

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Leigh Bianchi, Clerk