

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, November 28, 2017 – 6 pm

Minutes

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

Also Present: Lauren Munro, Director; Rose Angelino, Council Liaison, Bill Savastrano and Hunter Provencher.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brian Lynch at 6:05 pm.

Minutes of October 24, 2017 –Accepted on the Motion by Steve Torino second by Michelle Provencher

Parks and Fields - Discussion and Action

a. Eagle Scout projects: Toby, the Eagle Scout candidate emailed Lauren and explained he couldn't be present tonight. He explained that his proposal for the layout of the two bocce courts is almost complete and he will be presenting the plans to the Commission in December so that they can be ready in the spring.

b. Northford Basketball Courts: The concrete has been poured and the tension rods are in place and although the surface is rough it will be smoothed out in stages and is scheduled for painting in the spring. There was a discussion concerning parking since some have been using the field and the Commission Members made several recommendations such as signs stating that parking limited to front part of the lot and driving or parking on the fields is prohibited. Rose suggested that perhaps saying no parking beyond this point and advising that violations will be towed, Police take notice, similar to those at Memorial Field.

c. Trash Removal: John Onofrio has been keeping an eye on this and explained that since the fields are in limited use at present, there is no way to account for pickup accurately. The process for complaints goes through a process of Lauren addressing the situation with Michelle at Purchasing and Town Manager Paulus to arrange a meeting with Parks and Rec, however no recent meeting has taken place. Rose requested that they send her the information so she can take the problem to the Town Council.

d. Portlets: Lauren stated that she has not been satisfied with the service and has gotten a refund of \$3,600, so far. She has been sending pictures of them and they claim they can't see them clearly, but she is still disputing invoices for service in October. Lauren is trying to resolve this and needed advice as to continuing with the current vender or putting it out to bid. Members advised her that it doesn't need to be limited to State Contract, so she should follow through with requesting a bid in January to be set for April when use of the fields will pick up.

Lauren also announced that as of Monday she will be turning out the lights at Memorial Courts. Steve Torino raised questions concerning the lights at Memorial Courts and was advised that they were working, so far as anyone can see. He said he'll be checking again as he passes the fields.

Town Sports Organizations - Discussion and Action

a. Football Fence: Coach Michael Rice was invited to the meeting to discuss his concerns before taking any action on it, however he did not attend tonight.

b. Updates: Soccer goals need to be replaced. They are 10 years old and in poor condition actually falling apart. She will be seeking pricing of replacements shortly.

John brought up the continued need for field signage which has been on the agenda for some time, was addressed at a Town Council meeting where a woman questioned about them and they didn't seem to know anything about it. He questioned how it is done, Lauren explained that she sends the request to the Town Manager to be placed on Town Council Agenda, then comes back to the Commission after Town Council discussion. There was probably a delay to allow new Town Council members to be given the opportunity to act on the request. Rose Angelino explained that the Town is contemplating new signs at the entrances to Town and since they wish to all Town sign design to be uniform, they are awaiting State design approval. She suggested that if Lauren would send the request to her she would see to it that it was put on the Town Council Agenda for consideration.

Steve reiterated that there is a need, since many out of town guests have difficulty locating the fields and wondered if there could be a way to make field signage a Scout project, but Brian said it doesn't fit the Scout protocol for Eagle Scout Candidates because all Town Signs need to be uniform and scouts need to work the entire project from start to finish using their scouting skills. To cut the costs on the field signs, the Commission suggested perhaps a corporate sponsor might be found. Brian suggested that they brainstorm about what signs are needed at the various parks and what would be included on each and Victor said he would send information to Lauren to research cost of signs and suggestions of what other towns have done. Brian suggested that Lauren check to see how many parks need signs and make a list so that it can be addressed when Capital Improvements budget is set. The alternate plan would be to make up new ones that match those already in place instead of waiting for the Town to choose signs. The Park signs could all be in conformity and made up to make it easier for out of towners to find them. When asked if field locations could be included in the P & R brochure, Lauren explained that there is a space limitation, however they are all listed on line at the Town Web Site.

Steve addressed the need for control of field usage during in climate weather with emphasis made on when to cancel play. There was a game recently that was started under threatening weather and soon after were hit with torrential rains during the second game, leaving puddling on the field and loss of traction, but no one cancelled the game. The umpires have no authority and the coaches are reluctant do so due to re-scheduling, however he and Michelle were both present and suggested that there would be damage to the field, especially as another team was warming up on the adjacent outfield. In this case, he called Lauren and she made the decision to cancel the games. The question to the Commission was who had the authority to call the game. After some deep discussion Brian Lynch advised Lauren to send a letter to all sports teams prior to the start of the season with emphases on field usage especially addressing the need to appoint one person from each sport who will be responsible for assessing the condition of the field prior to the start of the game with the authority/responsibility to cancel the games due to weather, field conditions or safety and if cancelling is ignored, damage to the field will result in the team being banned from further use of Town Fields. She explained that she sends out individual letters when requesting schedules with all the rules stated, but can add to it whatever is necessary.

Program Review - Discussion and Action

a. Tree Lighting – The tree will be decorated with white lights interspersed with purple, the Town colors and will be officially lit on Friday, December 1. Lauren explained that the entire office is excited with making new plans to extend the event and the flyers are phenomenal.

b. Updates: All the trips are filling up. The staff is doing a great job on marketing. The outdoor pickle ball nets will be taken down for the season, however the program is ongoing indoors and will be offering indoor pickle ball during the day with Guilford. The Teen Ski Program number are higher than last year.

Steve saw on line that some people were interested in joining the workout program, but had preschool children and wondered if there might be a way of making that part of the program to encourage more memberships. Lauren advised him that it had been tried before and there were scheduling problems. To answer the question, do we have a program now, no, should we try one again, probably. Lauren reminisced that there was a great preschool program at the old building, however due to the layout there was a great room for it. Steve also had praise for Kerry who drives the Senior Van and how he saw her being so helpful while escorting the shopping trip to Big Y. She goes beyond her job description in being helpful and he thought she deserved the credit for it.

STW Community Center - Discussion and Action

a. Tennis Courts – The new courts have presented a few problems. They were painted twice incorrectly by the subcontractors the company, BMW, employed and there is also a problem with ‘puddling’. They are presenting bills for their work. But there are some 6 or 7 items that she doesn’t want to sign off on. She met with Kurt and Fran and they also are not satisfied. The colors are wrong and there are supposed to be two pickle ball courts, just like Memorial, but the lines are painted wrong and once you put the pickle ball nets up, there is only room for one court. The question is should they try having this company do it again, or have someone else do it and take the cost off the original bill. After discussion, the Commission advised that she should first notify the company in charge by Certified Mail, as proof she has advised them that the painting has not been satisfactory and address the problems with the courts that are puddling so that they have an opportunity to rectify the situation. She should not sign off on anything and she also advise the Town Attorney so that he will be prepared to take action if there is no response or the outcome is still not satisfactory.

Steve inquired about installing some ice skating areas for winter. Lauren is excited as well to do so, though Victor and Brian know it doesn’t work out well. The ice froze in ripples, causing dangerous conditions and the weather didn’t always cooperate.

b. Water Leaks – Lauren explained that there were some over the weekend and she has advised the Town Manager and he is aware of the situation. Staff was concerned because one in particular is troublesome since it involves a light fixture.

c. Updates – Speaking to the state of the building, Brian was wondering about the need for a wash sink in the kitchen so that the dishwasher can be used. Lauren said she had gathered the information needed and will take care of it. She also addressed the need to make this building more friendly feeling and it was decided that she will be purchasing curtains to make it more warm and welcoming.

Senior Center - Discussion and Action

a. Veterans Luncheon: There were some 38 Veterans who were honored and the luncheon was well received by those who attended, so she will have to plan differently when arranging for it next year.

b. Tree of Giving: Terry and Kathy are in charge and the tree is up and is trimmed with gift cards for town resident seniors with needs. There are two other identical trees at the two libraries and once the trees are done, they will be delivering a welcoming newsletter, with the gift card and a small gift.

c. Updates: The Thanksgiving Luncheon was successful. There were 70 meals for seniors. They are trying to get the seniors involved with collecting plastic. There is a competition among vendors in Town in collecting plastic bags with an award of a bench for the one with the most collected.

December is going to be really busy, there will be decorating the trees and they will be taking a trip to the Fantasy of Lights in East Haven, the festival of trees and the delivery of all those gifts. Fourth graders are coming, the high school is coming, so it’s a very busy time of year.

Public Comment

John Onofrio questioned how to address something for the Agenda and Lauren said that anything that must be voted on has to be listed on the Agenda, otherwise the Agenda is a guide to what needs to be discussed. However anyone wishing to have something added to the Agenda can email her and she'll include it, however it needs to be done a few days in advance so to keep that in mind. In the discussion that followed it was decided that anything in question could be brought up during public comments and if further discussion is necessary it can be added to the next Agenda.

Adjournment:

On the motion by John, seconded by Michelle, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Leigh Bianchi