

Torrington Parks and Recreation Commission
Minutes of April 7, 2010 Meeting

Commissioner Duke Wall called to order a regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 7, 2010, at the Armory. In attendance were Secretary Dan Lovallo, Commissioner Jim Pescatore, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Brett Simmons, and Recreation Director Donna Winn.

On a motion by Dan Lovallo, with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the March 3, 2010 meeting.

On a motion by Dan Lovallo, with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the March 15, 2010 special joint meeting with the Coe Memorial Park Advisory Committee.

Correspondence

Recreation Director Donna Winn read to the Commission a letter from R. J. Avallone regarding his interest in running a summer music program in collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department. This program would culminate in a final concert to be held at Coe Memorial Park.

Discussion of Mr. Avallone's request followed, with Commissioners commenting that this event would be a nice addition to our summer programs. A motion was then made by Dan Lovallo that the Parks and Recreation Commission collaborate with Mr. Avallone and allow him use of Coe Memorial Park for his final concert and to help him any way possible.

Email correspondence which was forwarded from the Mayor's office and written by Jackey Dieli was read to the Commission. Ms. Dieli wrote the email on behalf of her co-worker, Emil Renzullo, who recently lost his 12-year old son, Emil Moe, due to complications from chemotherapy utilized to treat his leukemia. The email requested a day be dedicated on behalf of Emil Moe and the planting of a tree at Southwest School where he attended.

Superintendent Simmons stated that the Mayor's office is looking into other options for a location for the tree, and mentioned the pool or the pond area as a possibility. Mr. Simmons commented that as requests of this type come in, there should be some type of format or standards in place to handle these requests. It was suggested that this request be tabled until the entire Board could be present to participate in this discussion.

An email from Cassandra Mastrianni, Miss Litchfield County 2010 was read to the Commission, whereby Ms. Mastrianni requested that fees be waived for the renting of Coe Memorial Park to hold a "Jail and Bail" event to benefit the Children's Miracle Network. Commissioners requested that Miss Mastrianni submit a facility request for this event.

An email from Joe Lefkowski to Brett Simmons regarding summer basketball fees was reviewed by the Commission. Commissioners generally agreed that the fees for out-of-town teams were appropriate.

Citizen's Comments

Art Pettit spoke on behalf of the Machuga family to request that the City refer to their former property as Machuga Park rather than "Machuga property." He explained that some of the family considered it insulting and is concerned that the public might think that the City took over the property and burned the buildings because they were blighted. Commissioners apologized to Mr. Pettit for any unintended insult to the Machuga family; and explained that since the property has not been developed yet, they would need to consult with Corporation Counsel to see if the property can be legally referred to as Machuga Park in all future references.

Dave Kissko spoke on behalf of Local 1579's facility request to use the Coe Memorial Park Civic Center for a training meeting.

Facility Use

- On a motion by Jim Pescatore with a second by Dan Lovallo, the Commission voted unanimously to approve a request from Local 1579 to hold a training meeting on April 15 at the Coe Civic Center – maintenance fees to be paid.
- On a motion by Dan Lovallo with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve a request from the State Department of Mental Health / Primetime for use of Coe Memorial Park on May 5 for a candlelight vigil – maintenance fees to be paid if bathrooms are needed.
- On a motion by Dan Lovallo with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve all of the pre-approved facility requests (Chamber of Commerce Job Fair – June 3, 2010 - Armory; Earth Day Clean-Up – April 24, 2010 – Coe Memorial Park; PAL Dodgeball Tournament – May 22, 2010 – Bannon Street Playground; PAL Skate Jam – August 7, 2010 – Skate Park; Litchfield Hills Bike Ride – August 1, 2010 – Coe Memorial Park).
- On a motion by Dan Lovallo with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the request from PAL for high school basketball; but if using the Armory rather than an outside court, maintenance fees must be paid.
- On a motion by Dan Lovallo with a second by Jim Pescatore, the Commission voted unanimously to table the request from Biff Pond for use of Fuessenich Park for the State American Legion Tournament (July 24-August 2) until the Commission receives the Titan's schedule.

Program Updates

Recreation Director, Donna Winn updated the Commission as follows:

- The March 27 Easter Egg Hunt at Coe Memorial Park was extremely well-attended. Ms. Winn commented that she thought there were more participants than ever before and that more volunteers would be needed next year. A Ukrainian egg decorating class was also held with nine participants. Breakfast with the Easter Bunny was also held at the Elks Lodge.
- Letters were sent out to all former seasonal Recreation Department employees, with a response deadline of April 23 for paperwork submission. Damon Papp will again serve as Supervisor for the summer playground program. Mr. Papp and Ms. Winn will be conducting interviews for the summer positions.
- The new spring/summer brochure was recently distributed to all of the schools.
- Softball rosters are being received for this year's season. To date, rosters for 40 men's teams and 19 women's teams have been received.
- The Chamber's Home and Business Expo will be held this weekend at the Armory. A planning meeting with Chamber representatives was held in preparation for the event.

Superintendent Brett Simmons updated the Commission as follows:

- The Pitch, Hit & Run® event will be held Sunday, April 25, at 10:00 a.m. beginning at the Toro Sports Complex, with a raindate of Sunday, May 2. An informational meeting for those volunteering at the event has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, at 1:00 p.m. (originally scheduled for 4:30 p.m.).
- A press release was distributed announcing the marketing contest for a slogan for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Softball Updates

Dan Lovallo announced that Ken Frizzo had mentioned to him that there was an issue regarding winning teams that did not want to be moved up to the next division level, despite rules that clearly state that winning teams must be moved up. Mr. Lovallo reported that he had informed Mr. Frizzo that League rules were very clear on this point. Mr. Lovallo then informed the Commission of a suggestion recently made to compile an "A/B" division for scheduling purposes only. It was mentioned that this has been done in the past with no problems. Duke Wall expressed his concerns with this proposal, and no action was taken to approve this suggestion.

Scott McCarty, coach of the Forman School in Litchfield spoke to the Commission to request use of Fuessenich Park so that his baseball team could experience a game under the lights in what he considered to be the finest ball park in the area. He offered use of his school's gymnasium in exchange for use of Fuessenich Park, but also stated that he was willing to pay for use of the Park. Following discussion, a motion was made by Dan Lovallo that the Forman School be allowed use of Fuessenich Park for a 7 p.m. game on May 8, with fees to be paid. Jim Pescatore seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Capital / Budget Updates

Brett Simmons highlighted some of the updates to the capital plan and future capital expenditures.

- Estimates are being obtained for playground materials for construction of the playscape at Oak Avenue.
- New playground equipment has been purchased.
- The bid process is ongoing for a snow-blower attachment to the Toro 72".
- Wood fiber for the playground will be purchased.
- The bid process has concluded for backstop padding for Fuessenich Park.
- New material for the warning track at Fuessenich Park is planned.
- Quotes have been received for various fencing projects.
- Tree work is planned at Pleasant View.
- Replacement fabric for the pool area fencing is needed.
- New receptacles will be installed, beginning with one at the pond.
- Alvord parking lot work is planned.
- The purchase of a grill for the pool area is planned.

With regard to capital funding for the upcoming budget year, Mr. Simmons stated that it looked like the Parks and Recreation Department will have the same amount of capital funding as in recent years, although the additional amount that had been requested was reduced to \$50,000. This will result in scaling back of the paving projects that were planned. In addition, the capital reserve amount for the future Parks maintenance building was reduced to \$50,000.

Facility Operations

Superintendent Simmons then reviewed his list of completed, current, and upcoming projects, a few of which are noted below:

- West Torrington - The ice rink was removed and stored today. Some restoration of the area and leveling of the grade is needed. Fill and topsoil will be brought in to landscape around the picnic shelter.
- Teen Center - Interior repairs and weather proofing are underway.
- Playscapes at Oak and Jiggs have been demolished.

- The old bleachers at Toro Field have been demolished and site preparations are underway for installation of the new bleachers.
- Work is continuing on new designs for both the front steps and a ventilation system at the Armory.
- Painting at Fuessenich will be completed before the end of the month.
- A dozen field lights are planned to be replaced, utilizing the lift from DBL Industries.
- Toro will be the site for the 50'/70' field, with the first game scheduled for April 18.

It was also reported that:

- Torrington Youth Soccer will be bringing in some portable lights, at their expense, for use on a trial basis. Corporation Counsel will be preparing a waiver that the Parks and Recreation Department is not responsible for liability or safety of the lights.
- A walk of the trails at Charlene Susan Besse Park will be held on April 8 at 9:30 a.m. with volunteers who have expressed interest in using GPS to map the trails. Mr. Simmons reported that he was informed that there were individuals camping in the area. The Mayor has referred this information to the Police for their action.
- Restoration of the outdoor basketball courts was discussed, with Commissioners expressing their support of this endeavor.

Coe Memorial Park Updates

The contract with Still River Gardens was finalized, and the spring clean-up of Coe Memorial Park has begun. A walk-thru of the Park has been scheduled for April 21 at 5 p.m., at which time Still River Gardens will outline their plans for spring plantings. Commissioners were invited to attend.

Ms. Winn raised the subject of purchasing a microwave oven for the kitchen at Coe Memorial Park since there is no longer a working stove. Brief discussion was held regarding activities held at Coe that require heating of water, food, etc.

Old Business

With regard to the concession stand at the Little League field, Mr. Simmons reported that he had met with Kim Deep, Little League President, who expressed interest in continuing their operation of the concession stand for the convenience of Little League participants. The concession stand is not a huge source of revenue for Little League and sells no hot foods, rather only items such as soda, Gatorade, and candy. It does not appear that proceeds from the concession

stand would be of much benefit for ball field renovations as had been proposed in 2004 when the bid process was waived for Little League to run the concession. A motion that the Commission allow the Little League to continue to run the concession stand at Oak Avenue was made by Dan Lovallo, seconded by Jim Pescatore, and approved unanimously.

New Business

A request from the Litchfield County Board of Realtors for return of the deposit they had submitted for use of the Armory for a Green Expo was reviewed. It was noted that the Expo was cancelled within 60 days of the scheduled date.

Following discussion, a motion to return the deposit was made by Jim Pescatore, seconded by Dan Lovallo, and approved unanimously.

Brief discussion was held regarding Linda Marsh's letter of request to exercise her option to continue to operate a hot dog vending cart at Toro. No objections were noted.

Adjournment

On a motion by Jim Pescatore with a second by Dan Lovallo, the Commission voted to adjourn at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rategan
Parks Department Secretary