

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

Parks and Recreation Commission Chairperson Patricia Fairchild called to order a regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 6:05 p.m. on Wednesday, July 7, 2010, at the Armory. In attendance were Commissioners Jim Pescatore and Duke Wall, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Brett Simmons, and Recreation Director Donna Winn.

On a motion by Jim Pescatore, with a second by Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the June 2, 2010 meeting.

Correspondence

None.

Citizen's Comments

None.

Facility Use

- Request from the Torrington Tornadoes for use of Toro I, Toro II, or Ruwet field for games from the last week of August to the second week of November, 2010. Given the number of game times requested (3 times a week in addition to Saturday and Sunday hours), Duke Wall suggested that the Tornadoes approach the City Council regarding acquisition and use of the former field at the Dog Pound for their games. Following discussion, a motion was made by Jim Pescatore to table this request until such time as the Commission can discuss this with the Tornadoes. Duke Wall seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
- On a motion by Jim Pescatore, with a second from Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the request for use of Coe Memorial Park for the Torrington Road Race on August 8, 2010, as long as they [Torrington Road Race Committee] abide by the rules set forth for primary voting. Note: It was thought that voting machines would be dropped off on August 6 for the primary on August 10.
- On a motion by Jim Pescatore, with a second from Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the request from the Northwest Chamber of Commerce for use of the Armory from Thursday, April 7 - Monday, April 11, 2011 for their annual Home Expo.

- Request from Torrington Police Athletic League for use of the Major Besse Pool for a Cops and Kids Day on August 10, 2010, from 6 to 8 p.m. Discussion began with Commissioner Wall stating that he would not want to infringe on the people who have purchased pool memberships as the pool is scheduled to be open until 7 p.m., and this request would require closing the pool at 6 p.m. In addition, lifeguards would need to be on duty an additional hour to accommodate this event. A motion followed by Duke Wall to approve this request pending a discussion with Officer Petrafesa regarding PAL paying for the lifeguards. This motion was seconded by Jim Pescatore and approved unanimously. Brett Simmons also stated that the program could be in collaboration with Torrington Parks and Recreation.
- On a motion by Jim Pescatore, with a second by Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the request from Charlotte Hungerford Hospital for use of the Armory and Coe Memorial Park for Project Homeless Connect on Thursday through Friday, May 12-13, 2011.

Program Updates

Recreation Director, Donna Winn updated the Commission as follows:

- The Summer Playground Adventure Program currently has 60 campers enrolled, a dramatic reduction from last year's enrollment of 110. Ms. Winn stated that she has learned that numbers are down in other communities as well, probably due to the economy. If registration is low again next year, Ms. Winn projected that perhaps only one or two sites would be utilized rather than the three sites that are used this year.
- Thanks to the heat wave, attendance is up at the Besse Pool. If the attendance numbers continue to increase, some people may have to be turned away. Pool staff will try to document how many residents and non-residents have been utilizing the pool. There have been no complaints received about the large pool, only complaints about the wading pool being closed.
- Auditions were held for the Northwest Idol, with 30 individuals competing. The semi-finals will be held this Saturday, July 10, at 7 p.m. at the Coe Civic Center. Casey McKenna is again helping with the event this year.
- Ms. Winn stated that she would like ideas for ways to rethink or enhance our programs. She would like to begin working on new ideas for the Toy Shower. A new idea suggested by Lynn Whittaker, one of our Idol judges, was to hold an entertainment showcase to get some new performers. This could be set up so that the smaller groups would play at the other end of the park. A meeting on this will be held in August.

- Another idea would be to hold more movie nights in Coe Memorial Park, perhaps every Friday after the concerts. It was suggested that a subcommittee for special events be set up. Arts in the park was another idea to be explored, with Artwell artists exhibiting their skills in the Park.

Sports Updates

Ken Frizzo updated the Commission on the progress of the softball program and stated that he thought that everything was going pretty well this year. Very few complaints have been received about the field conditions and thus far, no complaints have been lodged against any of the umpires. Mr. Frizzo told the Commission that he had run a poll to see if the players were happy with the bats and balls being used this year. Of the 119 respondents, 85 or 71% were happy, and 34 or 29% were not happy. Based on Parks and Recreation's suggestion, Mr. Frizzo stated that he was trying to get some interest in development of a women's softball committee. With regard to the new bats, Mr. Frizzo reported that he had spoken with an individual from Stamford using the same bats, and they are reporting less breakage with warmer temperatures. It was stated that in the colder weather, the softballs get harder, and more bats break as a result. Discussion was held on scheduling fewer games during the beginning of the season when the nights are colder to reduce the stress on the bats. Mr. Frizzo concluded his remarks by suggesting that some softballs be left in the storage container at Toro I.

Mr. Simmons distributed a handout detailing the status of the recently purchased composite bats. Ten of the original 11 bats purchased have broken.

Bill Nataro then updated the Commission on the progress of the summer basketball league. Mr. Nataro stated that this program began 25 years ago with 40 teams, and that the number has grown to 52 teams for this year. The league has been running successfully thus far this season. Mr. Nataro reported on his efforts to play as many games as possible in the Armory to avoid extra fees for using other facilities. The use of the Forman School will save about \$1,000, thanks to Scott McCarty. Mr. Nataro announced an opportunity to hold the girl's varsity championship game at the Mohegan Sun prior to the Connecticut Sun game, with no cost to the Parks and Recreation Department, to which the Commission gave its support. Mr. Nataro thanked the office staff for their assistance in helping with the summer basketball league, and noted the efforts of his assistant, Ryan Phalen. Mr. Nataro also expressed his appreciation to the Civil Air Patrol for giving up their Thursday night activities in the Gymnasium to allow the summer basketball league games to be played. Commissioner Wall also wished to express his appreciation to the staff and Mr. Phalen for their efforts. To conclude, Mr. Nataro expressed an idea that was suggested for a nostalgia basketball game honoring players from 1960 and back that could be held at the Armory gymnasium. It was noted that this year was the Armory's 100th anniversary.

Capital / Budget Updates

Mr. Simmons reported that he is putting together a project list for the 2010-11 capital improvement budget. An update will be presented at the next Commission meeting. Finalized 2010-11 department budgets for the Parks Department, Recreation Department, and Coe Memorial Park trust were distributed to the Commission.

Facility Operations

Superintendent Simmons then reviewed his list of completed, current, and upcoming projects, and stated that Parks' employee vacations had limited the work on many of the projects. Now that the staff is back to normal operational levels, projects can now be completed. Mr. Simmons highlighted the following:

- Approval has been received from the State for the Armory ventilation and front entrance projects.
- The wading pool has not been open this season due to the pool's inability to hold water. Parks' staff has been trying to locate the leak and is working with a local company to solve the problem. The pool has been refilled and will be inspected by the Health Department. If sufficient water levels can be maintained, the wading pool may be opened soon, although there is an underlying issue. The main pool has been open every day, and more chlorine was recently purchased as the chlorine on hand from prior years has lost its effectiveness. Mr. Simmons reported that the staff and guards were doing a good job maintaining the pool.
- The Machuga family has approached Mr. Simmons regarding installing a street sign that would read "Future Home of Machuga Park." Once this park has been developed and opened, a park entrance sign would be erected.

Coe Memorial Park Updates

Mr. Simmons reported that Artistic Irrigation has been performing its scheduled inspections and that the irrigation system is working well. Coe Memorial Park is looking great, and many compliments have been received. It was noted that people are not just admiring the Park as they drive by, but are pulling into the parking lot and walking through the Park. Mrs. Fairchild remarked that all of the feedback from the public that she had received has been positive.

Old Business

Further revisions to the Parks and Field Use Policies were highlighted; i.e., the addition of Section 1E, which would define the seasons, and the addition of a Fee Schedule. Mr. Simmons stated that he would be adding the Armory and Coe facility fees so that there would be a single fee schedule for all facilities. Discussions have been held with the City Comptroller relative to setting up a dedicated account for facility fees, with said

monies being available for field improvements. Mr. Simmons stated that he had forwarded these Policies to the Mayor's office to keep him updated. This document will also be forwarded to all users and a meeting to discuss the Policies will be held in either September or October.

Mr. Simmons distributed a copy of the text that will be displayed on the rules signs. The rules signs will have green lettering on a beige background, while the entrance signs will be green with beige lettering. Signs will be posted at the pedestrian entrances to the parks. Materials have been ordered and all of the rules signs and four entrance signs (Alvord, Elise Besse, Oak, and John Toro) will be installed using last year's funds. Mr. Simmons explained his selection of the four locations for the entrance signs as being parks of high use or where there were multiple signs or names for the park. It was decided that the Oak Avenue facility would be known as the Oak Avenue Sports Complex. This year's budget will allow for the installation of another eight entrance signs.

Mr. Simmons informed the Commission that ActiveNet training has been scheduled for the third week in September. Five days of onsite training as well as five days of remote training will be provided. Office hours will be limited during the onsite training, with Armory attendants helping so that the office staff will be free to attend the training. A staff member from the Finance Department will sit in on the training as will someone from the IT staff.

Plans are being fine-tuned for the Titans Non-Profit Night. Staff from our Summer Playground Program will be helping out. A flyer for the event is being prepared. Raffle tickets will be sold and prizes awarded.

New Business

Discussion was held regarding having food vendors within Coe Memorial Park during the concerts and during the movie night.

It was mentioned that the Home Run Derby will not be held this year.

The former South School building, currently occupied by Shookie Recreation will be available at the end of July. Discussion was held regarding use of the building for Parks and Recreation activities as well as the possible generation of funds from the use of the building that could be put into a reserve fund for a new facility for the Parks Department.

Other Business

Duke Wall voiced his concern regarding signage at Fuessenich Park. Although advertising space is available on the outfield fence, other signs, some of which are quite large, have been installed at other locations within the Park. Mr. Wall felt that this was inappropriate and that advertising should be restricted to the outfield fence until all the

space there has been sold. Mr. Simmons will look into this matter on behalf of the Commission.

Adjournment

On a motion by Jim Pescatore, with a second by Duke Wall, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rategan
Parks Department Secretary