

**Fairfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Community Discussions**  
**Group: Parks and Recreation Dept. 2/9/22 2 – 4 pm**

In Attendance:

- Chelsea Ceres – Recreation Dept.
- Justin Cathcart – Marina Coordinator
- Kevin Fox – Parks Supervisor
- Bob Bigonette? – Golf Pro
- Scott Buckholz – Recreation/Aquatic Coordinator
- Doug Novak – Superintendent of Parks
- Gaylen Brown – Assistant Director Parks/Recreation
- Anthony Calabrese – Director Parks/Recreation
- Ginna Paules – Program Coordinator

Programming

- Summer camps use schools...reserved through BOE, don't always get approved, or during renovations.
- COVID last year, couldn't use indoor space at schools...no indoor facility...would be great (Giant Steps...field house/multi-use as a long-term goal). Only one outdoor court in town.
- Rock wall...is needed.
- Adolescent/toddler programs easy to run, middle school/early high school programming...not much to turn to, 'teen center'...transportation an issue and would require coordination with schools.

Facilities

*Marina:*

- 600 slips at Benson, no frills...great deal \$630 per season, antiquated equipment.
- Redevelopment a few years ago...rates would be raised; slips would be lost.
- Waitlist 2-12 yrs. depending on size of boat.
- Future redesign would be great, but hard to sell.
- Most typically only go if they own a boat...but Ash Creek folks walk dogs, and at Jennings Beach
- Ramping/lighting all old...spent a lot of money on redesign plan: 600 down to 480 slips, with modern amenities for safety. Put on hold due to remediation priorities/COVID.
- Frog arms are also antiquated, not the best.
- New life rings for safety added, installing security cameras...will need to replace floats/pilings...do have engineering plans.
- 2019 dredging happened, sought reimbursements, didn't get.
- Community Sailing Foundation (Southport)...loosely connected with P/R at Yacht Yard, offer limited opportunities.
- Kayak racks around town provided.

*Parks and Recreation:*

- Ash Creek for dog park...on beach between J1/J2 put in bandshell for live music.
- Jennings Beach great location for splash pad, mini-golf, ice skating in winter months.
- Basketball noise is an issue in neighborhoods.
- Event space outdoors with fenced/controlled access/egress, and outdoor covered pavilion.
- Driving range has a lot of opportunity...double decker illuminated range would benefit the community/revenue generator.

- Drew Park community garden (water provided) \$100-\$125 per plot fully utilized, with a wait list.
- Lake Mohegan...water park...just a couple of features. It's a special place and may take away the special serenity. Building could have 2<sup>nd</sup> story for restaurant...passive recreation, sunsets/photography.
- People knocking down the doors to put a restaurant on the marina....never the right opportunity. Boardwalk on the waterfront...not appropriate at a large scale.
- Complex...field house in a park setting (multi-purpose)...tricky with existing land holdings...Dugiello has potential...Tunxis 1975 plan could have worked...people don't want to drive...but people don't want cars/traffic.
- Passive recreation...sites border each other, and town is missing something with conservation...and resource sharing. Lake Mohegan is perfect example...shared use/efforts and build on it. (labor force of 4 for Conservation)...town came close 25 years ago to merging both Depts.
- Fitness trails...Riverside Park, trails behind Oldfield/Senior Center (elements along stations).
- Driving range could use some love...
- Frisbee golf is exploding.
- Sgt. Murphy Park...has potential for dog park...no parking though, would just serve immediate residential area.
- Warehouse (They own it, cold-storage) behind P/R department would be great for indoor 2-story field house, downstairs – full gymnasium, upstairs, classes , party rentals...rely on BOE for gym space and needed greatly...would then need a space for storage...currently full.
- Party boat/night cruise potential?
- Heat Jackie Durrell for year-round rentals, esp. with Penfield being torn down.

#### Information

- Walking guide at Lake Mohegan is needed.

#### Connectivity/Mobility

- Should consider linking sites together...Conservation has series of these maintained and maps. Fairfield LL and Challenger...for disabilities, Highwood Park is a good location for this. Mats at beaches... Penfield Beach, Jennings, Lake Mohegan has wide H-accessible all-terrain chairs...MOBI mats at Jennings and Penfield to access Hobi-Cats, plastic tiles for beach ramps Penfield/Jennings.
- ADA trails Lake Mohegan, Southport and Sasco Beach.
- Boardwalk connecting 5 beaches with bike path along coast would be great.
- East Avenue trail through the marshes.

#### General Comments

- Bring in conversation regarding gender-neutral into P/R programming and planning.

## Fairfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Community Discussions

### Group: Flood and Erosion Control Board/Sustainable Fairfield 2/9/22 2 – 4 pm

#### In Attendance:

- Becky Bunner – Chair Flood and Erosion Control Board

#### Programs

- Town does a great job, programs, kids Do more programs at beach...sand castle contest (Police Dept. does this in coordination with P/R. More family types of things at beach. Pickleball.....more is needed. Town gardens...in center part of town/senior center.
- Town Farm (Haydu Prop. not functioning currently) possibly take over (learning/farm program, with a composting program).

#### Facilities

- Bike trails/paths...are needed. Work with other towns to safely bike (rail trails)...along Metro-North.
- Kayak launch...Ash Creek/DPW garage with access to the Pine Creek?
- Awareness of town's sailing program at Southport....offered out of Penfield/Jennings?

#### General

##### *Flood/Erosion Control/Sustainable Fairfield:*

- Town should consider to build resilience into this plan.
- Working with DEEP...create a larger dune area along the front of Jennings Beach and continues to Rickards Beach. Geo-tubes investigated and should be reconsidered with demolition of Penfield.
- Rethinking parking/stormwater...permeable, bioswale.
- AARP funds to do down water project, have done permeable pavement at train station.
- Rooster River flooding is a problem, Owen Fish Park, Melville, Tunxis parks affected. Melville...idea was floated to take back field and convert to detention basin – not preferred to lose a field...woods there could be a solution. Owen Fish slopes behind 3<sup>rd</sup> base, it is intentional to create a detention basin.
- Regulations don't call for GI/LID.
- Sustainable Fairfield...EV charging stations are needed as manufacturers production increases...trending more and more.
- Solar...where are there opportunities, working with schools, 'ZREC' process, town savings in the form of electricity...parking lots potential location...plowing a bit more difficult to avoid stations.
- Recycling Infrastructure...out of control. Recycle more with appropriately sized containers, picked up regularly...upgrade all facilities. Town used to make \$50k, now they pay \$500 k...but going down slowly.
- Pollinator pathways...opportunities? (Pollinator Pathway group)...good example at H. Smith Richardson, which is great, includes technology to learn about species.
- Food sourcing at golf course...privately leased with 7-year contract but can request naturally-grown/local sourced next time around.

## Fairfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Community Discussions

Group: Justin Beck 2/17/22 12 – 1 pm

In Attendance:

- Justin Beck, Economic Development Commission
- Gaylen Brown, Assistant Director Parks and Recreation

Input:

Programming

- Pickleball...a lot of folks asking for...what about winter sports...domed conversion facility for ice skating, soccer and lacrosse.
- Taste of Fairfield...folks in town are already talking about this, making Fairfield a destination. Paid admission, vendors showcasing local food. Could hire event person (Stamford does this now). There is so much talent in town we could draw on for entertainment. Behind Burr Mansion, behind Town Hall, Jennings Beach...
- Drum circles at the beach...if permitted. Could be one-off or scheduled monthly. Would likely need permission of Parks and Recreation Commission.
- Beach volleyball could be big...expositions, tournaments. Would need setup (stands) could be paid for through sponsorships, may need to bring in sand...
- X Games competition/roller derby.
- Casino Night?
- Festival of the Kite (Redondo Beach, CA does this)..an organized festival/event. Sand sculpture programming is pretty cool too.
- Sports skills competition during tournaments/competitions.
- Sunset dinner cruises.

Facilities

- Fencing...banners could be placed with advertising to generate revenue.
- Jackie Durrell...closed in winter, maybe use for pee wee soccer? Perhaps consider portable HVAC...seems underutilized.
- Firepits at the beaches...needs to be more between Jennings and Penfield and not limited to the summer, should be year-round.
- Restaurant at the marina...is needed, perhaps in parking lot. Could connect with the trails and could be a community asset.

Information

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Connectivity/Mobility

- Shuttlebuses in season...in between hotels/motels/train station/beaches to capture some revenue and facilitate moving people around town without additional vehicles. Rickshaws...with paid advertising on the cart...more of a novelty.
- Boat transit to areas in the community.

#### General Comments

- Sponsorships/naming rights for fields, parks, gazebos and other town-owned facilities...town needs more revenue to offset costs to stabilize property tax rate, or for new projects. Existing park names don't have current relevance...take advantage of success of programming for sponsorships through naming rights.
- With the right marketing approach, tap wealthy residents (fund managed by them) to work with Town to provide upgrades through naming rights, outside of everyday politics.
- Public auction of town items...stored/leftovers/decommissioned. Town had cars no one was using...I'm sure there are other items lying around.
- Current events aren't always 'healthy' ...vegetarian/vegan/dairy-free options should be included.
- Engage the universities to support facilities and programming. This is an asset we should be tapping into. Perhaps sponsorships, students could utilize facilities, advertise. Public debate contest? Leadership opportunities for youth in Fairfield. Competitions/exhibitions.
- Pizza cook-off...there are 25 pizza establishments in town...could be fun.