A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Eunice Postol Parks & Recreation Center, Fairfield, Connecticut.

PRESENT: Scott Walker, Chairman, Jessica Gerber, Alexa Mullady, Chris McCoy, Mary Von Conta, Bridget McBride, David Weber and Brian Nerreau
ABSENT: Bryan Thompson
ALSO: Anthony Calabrese, Director; Parks & Recreation Department; Gaylen Brown, Asst. Director, Parks & Recreation Department and members of the public

Chairman Scott Walker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. ACT ON MINUTES OF:
February 21, 2018 – Mr. Walker noted that Brian Nerreau should be added to those present, hearing no other corrections, the minutes were approved as amended.

II. Program Spotlight – Mr. Seamus Grooms, Vice president of Fairfield Youth Lacrosse was present to introduce himself and the program to the Commission. Mr. Grooms distributed a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the makeup of the leagues and giving an overview of the $300K budget, field use, opportunity for future growth and the league’s community participation (see attached). Mr. Grooms explained that while many sports are a decline in participation, lacrosse is seeing a 3-4% increase. It was explained that in 2012 the league took over from a waning Wakeman Club program. Currently, they work together and have seen a more positive and inclusive culture and experience for the almost 800 boys and girls participating. The members thanked Mr. Grooms for his presentation.

COMMUNICATIONS:

III. A. Eric Johnson, Rocco & Assoc./Fairfield Police Dept. – 5K Race benefitting Bigelow Sr. Center – July 25, 2018, 6:30pm- Jacky Durrell/ Penfield Parking Lot – Mr. Johnson, along with several members of the Fairfield Police Department were present to make this request for this inaugural event (see attached). Proceeds will be shared by both the Fairfield Police Union Scholarship Fund and the Friends of the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities. Race coordinator, Marty Schiavone will run the event and is capping the participants at 1,000. The entrants, who will have pre-paid, will wear a wrist band and will use the lots across the street for free parking and the wrist band will give access to the beer tent during the post-race activities. All will be monitored closely by the Fairfield Police as is the custom during Clam Jam. There will be no rental held at the Penfield Pavilion.
Motion: A. Mullady moved, and C. McCoy seconded to approve the request.
Vote: Unanimous

Mr. Johnson asked for a reduced rate for rental of the Jacky Durrell Pavilion but no amendment was made to the motion.

B. Kerry McCullough - Day One Skate Shop – Skate Park Update – Mr. McCullough introduced himself as the new lessee along with August Taylor-Young, the monitor of the Skate Park. The new lease runs from 2018 until 2020, during the months of April until November. While this presentation was understood to be an overview of the program at the Skate Park, Mr. McCullough also presented the members with a request to place a retail kiosk or trailer on the premises (see attached). Currently, the two men are operating out of their Cargo Van but hope to have a more professional display for their retail items as well as a more convenient place to administer and store First Aid items, etc. Members were concerned with the aesthetics of another trailer on the property, which already houses the Marina Concession. Mr. Calabrese mentioned that he believes the lease mentions that a kiosk, that is aesthetically pleasing and similar to the Police Building, may be placed there. The members asked to see a copy of the lease. Mr. Calabrese will provide that to them.
Mr. McCullough described his operation and Mr. Calabrese agreed that this has, so far, provided a much better and safer experience for the users.

Ms. Patricia Conley, 32 Longdean Rd. stated that she frequently lunches at the vicinity and sees this as a wonderful asset to the Town.

The members were concerned that the request to place a trailer or kiosk on the property was not properly noticed for public input. Members asked that Mr. McCullough return to the May meeting along with very specific drawings of the trailer for their review. Mr. McCullough agreed.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT: None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: To hear and act upon:

A. Special Event Fee Proposal – This item was tabled from the previous meeting where Mr. Calabrese explained that he met with other area communities and learned that they charge varying fees for the use of their special event facilities; Stamford-$25, Westport-Free, Darien $800 currently and rising to $1,500. Currently, this department charges $300 and he proposed raising it to $800. Members had asked for more information regarding events the department has charged for. Ms. Ryan provided the 2017 and 2018 events (see attached). Mr. Nerreau asked about making a distinction between non-profit and commercial use.

Motion: A. Mullady moved, and B. McBride seconded to raise the special event fee from $300 to $400 for any newly approved special events.

Amendment: B. Nerreau moved to amend the motion by replacing “to raise the special event fee from $300 to $400 for any newly approved special events” with “increase special event fee for non-profits to $500 and adding a for-profit fee of $800”. Amendment was seconded by B. McBride.

Vote: In favor - C. McCoy, B. Nerreau, B. McBride – Amendment Failed

Amendment: A. Mullady moved to amend the motion by replacing “to raise the special event fee from $300 to $400 for any newly approved special events” with “increase special event fee for non-profits to $400 and adding a for-profit fee of $800”. This Amendment was seconded by B. Nerreau.

Vote: 6-1 D. Weber opposed - Amendment passes.

Motion: Now amended as above.

Vote: 6-1 D. Weber opposed - Motion passes.

B. Penfield Pavilion Rental Rate/Time Proposal – Carried over from the last meeting, Asst. Director, Gaylen Brown presented an updated proposal after meeting with Ms. McBride and strategizing to revise the rate structure to include 6 tiers per peak and off/peak season (see attached). Ms. Brown raised the Saturday night rates and included a $1,000 difference between resident sand non-resident rates. Ms. Brown stated that the feedback she receives from most vendors is that the department is not charging enough for Saturday nights at the facility.

Motion: C. McCoy moved, and B. McBride seconded to approve the request as presented.

Vote: Unanimous

VI. NEW BUSINESS: To hear and act upon:

A. Hotel Beach Pass Use – Due to Mr. Mark Barnhart’s inability to attend the meeting, Mr. Calabrese requested that the program enabling local hotels to offer beach stickers to their guests be continued.

Motion: J. Gerber moved, and D. Weber seconded to continue the Hotel Beach Pass Program.

Vote: Unanimous

B. Patricia Conley - Lighthouse Committee Surplus Funds – Ms. Sherri Steeneck and Ms. Conley of the Lighthouse Preservation Committee explained that the Committee had, in 2010, raised $13,800 in donations in an attempt to secure the Lighthouse, however someone else has recently purchased it for a sum of $285,000. The State Attorney General’s Office stated that the Lighthouse Committee must go before the Probate Court to secure permission to dispense the funds. For numerous reasons they are not permitted to return the money to the donors. They would like the Commission’s approval for three proposed ideas for spending the funds, which comes to a sum of $12,700:
1. Dual telescopes to view the water and lighthouse from Penfield Pavilion.
2. Two Fiberglass Placards depicting the history of the Penfield Lighthouse.
3. A large granite boulder with a plaque stating that its location is the best to view the Lighthouse.
Motion: B. Nerreau moved, and A. Mullady seconded to accept the three proposed ideas for dispensing of the Lighthouse donations, with their ultimate locations to be determined by the Parks & Recreation Director.

Vote: Unanimous

C. Fairfield Field “Blanket Permit” Policy – Mr. Calabrese asked the American Little League to return following the last Commission meeting where it was learned that the league has several players in their league who are not residents. Mr. Calabrese explained that leagues obtain “blanket permits” based on the understanding that they have 100% residents on all their teams. Matt McGuire, 615 Hulls Hwy. Spt., president of the league, was present as well as treasurer, Lucas Swineford, 55 Mariner’s Way, Fairfield. Mr. McGuire explained that there are 6 children (1% of the 630 playing) who reside outside of Fairfield but attend schools in Fairfield. He added that this has been taking place since 2011. He stated that Little League International changed their rules recently to allow children to play in the Town where they attend school. He assumed that this was an accepted policy for the Town. There was lengthy discussion as to whether an exception should be made for this season or whether others would then come asking for the same exception. Mr. Calabrese shared, and Mr. McGuire agreed, that without a blanket permit they could not run the league. They would not be able to call in every two weeks for two hours per week as the rules state and still run the league. Presently, rosters are set and games have begun. Mr. Walker stated that while he felt very badly that the children would suffer for the mistakes of the administrators, he also read from 2014 field meeting minutes that discussed this very issue and noted that Mr. McGuire was present at the meeting. Mr. Walker also stated that he knows that Girls American Little League is well aware of the rule and is very surprised that the boys were not aware. Ms. Mullady was concerned that this exception would set a precedent for every private school child from out of town who wanted to play in Town leagues. Mr. Calabrese said they have the option to tell these 6 children that they can’t play this season. Mr. McGuire stated that if the vote went against allowing an exception then he would have to contact those families. He stated that only one was eligible for the All-Star District team this summer. Members were not interested in giving the exception through the summer.

Motion: D. Weber moved, and C. McCoy seconded to waive the blanket permit policy for Fairfield American Little League for this current spring season only.

There continued to be lengthy discussion and Mr. Weber moved the previous question.

Vote: 4-4 B. Nerreau, S. Walker, A. Mullady and M. Von Conta opposed. The motion failed to gain a majority.

Mr. Walker explained that because the motion failed, Mr. Calabrese was obligated to pull the blanket permit from Fairfield American Little League unless the league removed the out of town players from their rosters.

D. YMCA Field Usage Fee – Ryan Leworthy, 25 Flower St. Bridgeport and Youth & Family Program Director for the Fairfield YMCA was present to request that the YMCA be exempt from fees for use of fields for their programs. Mr. Calabrese explained that this fee had always been waived in the past but he felt it was his obligation to bring it before the Commission and obtain their approval for continuing this policy.

Motion: J. Gerber moved, and C. McCoy seconded to waive the field usage fee for the YMCA.

Vote: Unanimous

VII. To hear and act upon information in Committee Reports:

A. HSR Building Committee – Ms. Mullady, liaison to the sub-committee reported that the committee meets every other Tuesday and they have put an RFP out on the street. It focuses on three golf-centered options which are:

1. To renovate the existing clubhouse and cart barn as they stand.
2. To tear down and rebuild a new clubhouse and cart barn where they stand.
3. To build a new Clubhouse and Cart barn where the existing Maintenance Building on Hoydens Lane near the driving range.

Mr. Calabrese mentioned that the third option seems, before any other studies or budgets are examined, to be the most popular and many feel it will increase the driving range revenue as well. Ms. Mullady mentioned that this option could open up the present clubhouse space for more recreation-centered opportunities such as an ice rink, paddle tennis, etc. While Ms. Mullady stated that she will continue to
attend the meetings, she shared a timeline which shows this project going out to 2020, past her tenure on the Commission in 2019. She asked for a volunteer to join her or take her place. Mr. Calabrese mentioned that the RTM and Board of Selectmen will receive quarterly updates.

**B. Marina Sub-Committee** – Mr. Walker reported that the sub-committee met on April 10. The Marina Manager reported that he has been filling slips and has 25 unclaimed at the present time. The gas dock upgrade is still planned and should be going forward at some point this year. The committee continues to work on long-range planning. They received a preliminary report from RACE who reported that the marina is in fairly good condition. They provided six options with various plans for improving the marina however all resulted in loss of slips. RACE will be invited to return on May 8 to make a more formal presentation. Finally, the sub-committee received the financial report for the marina which showed that it does make a profit, including debt service. All of these items are working toward providing a 10-year plan.

**VII. BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT**: Ms. Gerber reported:
- There was a Town Hall meeting on Feb. 28 (7:30 at RLMS auditorium.) The recent school shooting in Florida was the focus and the Chief of Police was present. He shared that since 2011 $7 million has been spent on school security. The Police have been very open and helpful.
- The budget reviews have all taken place and they wait on the final RTM approval on May 7.
- High School graduations have been set for June 20.
- The new science curriculum will be set for approval in May.

**VIII. DIRECTOR & PROGRAM REPORTS**: Mr. Calabrese presented a written report due to the expected length of this meeting, (see attached). Topics included:
- A new Recreation Coordinator was hired and will start April 30.
- Summer registration has begun and the new brochure is in the mail.
- A Comedy Night has been scheduled May 24th at Penfield Pavilion.
- Budget has been approved by BOS, BOF and is now awaiting final RTM approval on May 7.

**IX. GOOD OF THE ORDER – None**

**ADJOURNMENT**: There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Ryan, Recording Secretary