A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Penfield Pavilion, Fairfield, Connecticut.

**PRESENT:** Scott Walker, Chairman; David Weber, Jamie Benton, Alexa Mullady, Mary Von Conta, Bridget McBride, Jessica Gerber, Chris McCoy and Brian Nerreau

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO:** Anthony Calabrese, Director; Parks & Recreation Department;

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

**I. ACT ON MINUTES OF: October 17, 2018** – Hearing no objections the minutes were approved as written.

**II. COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. **Brian and Lisa Parisi, - Holy Family Parish Food Truck Festival- May 17-19, 2019 Jennings Beach Lot** – Mr. Parisi, 58 Youngstown Rd. was present and requested that the Parish be given permission to hold a two-day Food Truck event rather than their traditional carnival. They expect to have a fenced in area with 20-25 food trucks along with crafters, music and fun offerings for children. They intend to use wristbands and will order picnic tables from Public Works.

   **Motion:** B. Nerreau *moved*, and A. Mullady *seconded* to approve the request with the understanding that the Health and Police Departments will approve.

   **Vote:** Unanimously approved

2. **Steve Lobdell - Guinness World Record “Shower Event” following Half Marathon** – Mr. Lobdell, 69 Beverly Lane was present to ask for an amendment to the Half Marathon approval. The organization would like to add two pumper trucks at the finish area and create the “Largest Group Shower” and be entered into the Guinness Book of Records. The event will be for participants as they finish and spectators as well.

   **Motion:** C. McCoy *moved*, and J. Gerber *seconded* to approve the request.

   **Vote:** Unanimously approved

**III. PUBLIC INPUT: None**

**IV. NEW BUSINESS: To hear and act upon:**

   1. **2019 Beach Sticker Fees** – Mr. Calabrese made a request to raise the non-resident beach sticker fee from $175 to $200. While Ms. McBride was interested in raising it as high as $300, some others were concerned at what point non-residents might choose to not purchase the pass. Ms. Von Conta wanted to be sure we gave land-locked neighbors an opportunity to affordably go the beach.

   Greg, Horan, a non-resident spoke and asked the members to consider a smaller increase and perhaps even a senior non-resident rate.

   **Motion:** A. Mullady *moved*, and J. Gerber *seconded* to increase the non-resident beach sticker from $175 to $200.

   **Vote:** 7-1-1 (B. McBride opposed, Mr. Walker abstained)
2. **2019 Marina Fees** – Mr. Calabrese gave the PowerPoint presentation shown in October for the benefit of the public. It gave comparisons to Westport, Greenwich and Stamford, showing Fairfield far below in every size category. Mr. Calabrese showed what possible percentage increases of 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25% would mean by size category (see below). At last month’s meeting Mr. Calabrese recommended a 10% increase.

### Local Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SBM</th>
<th>Westport</th>
<th>Greenwich</th>
<th>Stamford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>$565.95</td>
<td>$875</td>
<td>$700</td>
<td>$756.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>$1400</td>
<td>$750</td>
<td>$1163.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large</td>
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<td>$1900</td>
<td>$2800</td>
<td>$1646.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Premium</td>
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<td>$2450</td>
<td>$3600</td>
<td>$2157.10</td>
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</table>

### Proposed Percentage increases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>5% inc.</th>
<th>10% inc.</th>
<th>15% inc.</th>
<th>20% inc.</th>
<th>25% inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>$565.95</td>
<td>$594.25</td>
<td>$622.55</td>
<td>$650.84</td>
<td>$695.31</td>
<td>$707.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>$885.31</td>
<td>$927.47</td>
<td>$969.62</td>
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<td>$1053.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large</td>
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<td>$1468.53</td>
<td>$1538.46</td>
<td>$1608.39</td>
<td>$1680.38</td>
<td>$1748.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium</td>
<td>$1695.54</td>
<td>$1783.38</td>
<td>$1865.09</td>
<td>$1949.87</td>
<td>$2034.65</td>
<td>$2119.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ms. Mullady made it clear that her comments at last month’s meeting suggested that the Commission look at all rate increases up to 25% to be sure that they considered all, but she does not support a 25% increase. She also suggested considering increases to Ye Yacht Yard at the next month’s meeting as they have not had an increase in quite some time.

**Motion:** D. Weber moved, and B. McBride seconded to increase the South Benson Marina rates by 10%.

**Open Discussion/ Public Comment:** Some highlights of their remarks:

**Nick Aysseh – 253 Ruane St.** – The marina is not full of one percenters. This is putting a tax on a small percent of the Town. He asked that the Town please put in finger docks, and other amenities. Invest in the marina and then raise the rates.

**Selectman Ed Bateson – 2195 North St** – 10% is too high. Take a global view of the budget. There is revenue coming from other areas. Keep Fairfield affordable. Provide reasonably priced services. Be measured and consistent.

**Dan Fitzgerald – 27 Drumm Rd.** – The comparisons are not appropriate with the other Towns; tax base. The facility is eroding with no improvements. We should keep it a family atmosphere and hope to introduce the next generation to boating.

**Gregory Sargent – 1609 Fairfield Beach Rd.** – Asked how the Commission can justify a 10% increase while looking at the rate of inflation. The marina is not meant to be a profit center and the Commission is taxing a particular group of people.

**Ron Pine – 36 Highland Rd.** – The marina is not a rich marina. There are a lot of seniors who have no kids in the schools but are paying for them in taxes. It’s important to keep those seniors in Town. Please put in finger docks and not frog hooks.

**John Ogletree – 399 N. Benson Rd.** – Complained of the lack of dredging and that he cannot use his boat at certain tides. He receives no service from the marina.
Doug Chavenello - 3 Brookfield Ave. – The Town has seen a $360K profit this past year and still there is no dredging. There is no night security. He understands an increase if the money were put back into the marina. Until improvements are made like they are to golf courses, parks, fields, he sees no justification for an increase.

Jim Fitz - 113 Sunnyridge Ave. – Cannot be compared to Westport that has a state of the art marina with finger docks. This marina is dangerous and needs to be upgraded and brought up to date.

George Mike Herrington – 93 Rolling Ridge Rd. – The rates quoted don’t include the $100 for electricity. Westport does have electricity. He agreed that the sub-committee is working hard and the Commission is under orders to raise money but the marina is in poor repair and soon someone will bring a lawsuit when they fall in the water and can’t get out.

Arthur Hersh – 1 Oak Bluff Rd. - He has been a boater in the marina for 35 years and the channel is despicable and boats that draw 5 feet can’t get out. It’s dangerous and Mr. Tetreau needs to figure out a way to stop spending erratically. Don’t raise rates until something is done.

Bill Cristy – 174 Lover’s Ln. – You are targeting the Marina users and the Ye Yacht Yard users should get the same increases. The Town isn’t targeting golfers for the new planned clubhouse.

Patty Fiebich - 955 Jennings Rd. – She is afraid to power out since the dredging is still not done. You are deterring people from going into boating.

Rick Grauer – 268 Rowland Rd. – Why is the marina the “piggy bank for the Town”.

Jeff Vangele – 83 Soundview Ave. – Safety should be the focus. Two large boats passing each other is very dangerous. The gas dock is a dump. There are no bumpers so boats are scratched. It’s a blight.

Todd Sigmund – 7 Florence Ln. - The big issue is safety. There are no safety ladders. Any increase should go back into the marina.

End of Public Comment

Mr. Walker spoke after the public had an opportunity to voice their objections to the increase. He stated that, while it has been recommended that the Commission bring in more revenue from the Marina, they have not been “ordered” to do so. The Town sees the land area as “an under-utilized revenue source” and wants the Commission to bring our rates closer to market rates. He informed the public that the Town does not have a “Sinking Fund” and all revenue is swept into the General Fund at the end of each fiscal year. He reminded all that there has been a Marina Sub-Committee in place for over two years and they are working hard to devise a plan for a safer marina. The dredging is planned for next winter and permits are in process. Also, the Gas Dock building is scheduled to be rebuilt this winter and open for spring. He urged people to attend the monthly sub-committee meetings.

Ms. Mullady stated that the relationship between the Town and the Marina slipholders is like a landlord and tenant. It would not be right to increase a tenant’s rent if things are broken. The Town should not increase the Marina rates until promised items were taken care of. She would not support a 10% increase.

Mr. Nerreau also felt that he couldn’t support a 10% increase and suggested a 5% increase this year and a CPI increase yearly until all the needs were addressed.

Mr. Benton felt that rates need to keep up with costs and he could also support an increase “when he sees improvement and functionality”.

Ms. Von Conta explained that it is complicated and the improvements are not for lack of trying. Things take time, especially when dealing with the DEEP and dredging.

Ms. Gerber felt that the Commission should fund as much as possible and quoted the Board of Finance Chairman who asked them to “monetize its assets and make sure that it is charging
appropriately for the programs and services. This means doing your due diligence, making comparisons, and getting the market rate for the programs you provide.”

Ms. McBride felt that if rates are increased a smaller percent over a longer period of time it’s not as jarring as 10% increases two years in a row.

Mr. Weber asked about the new approved gas dock and whether the RACE consultants were responsible for late filing. Mr. Calabrese could not answer that but said that the permits for dredging have been filed.

Mr. McCoy reminded all that the State of CT is going through something unprecedented and is looking for local towns to bridge the gap. He asked those from the public to speak to their RTM representatives and to go to the sub-committee meetings once a month for current information. Because that is where change can be made. He felt that coming here once a year to complain was not the answer.

Amendment to Motion: B. Nerreau moved, and M. von Conta B. McBride seconded to amend the previous motion to increase South Benson Marina rates by a 5% increase with a CPI (Consumer Price index) increase in following years. Mr. Weber explained that this was not a legal amendment and they could not dictate what must be done in future years by future Commission members. Mr. Nerreau withdrew the amendment.

Amendment to Motion: B. Nerreau moved, and M. Von Conta seconded to amend the previous motion to increase South Benson Marina rates by a 5% increase.

Vote - 6-2-1 Amendment was adopted. (C. McCoy and A. Mullady opposed, S. Walker Abstained).

Main motion, as amended, was then considered.

Vote - 6-2-1 Amendment was adopted. (C. McCoy and A. Mullady opposed, S. Walker Abstained).

3. 2020 Budget Approval - (Incorrectly posted on agenda as 2019 Budget) – Mr. Calabrese presented each of the three budgets, Waterfront, Penfield and Parks & Recreation. Each were discussed. Mr. Calabrese will be meeting with Mr. Tetreau in the next few weeks.

Motion: A. Mullady moved, and B. Nerreau seconded to approve the Fiscal Year 2020 budget request with the change to Waterfront to include a change for dockage fees to show the newly voted change from the 10% anticipated increase to the 5% approved increase.

Vote: Unanimously approved

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

A. Marina Sub-Committee – Mr. Walker reported:
- The sub-committee met on November 13 and continues to work on a new marina design with a likely allocation for approximately 475 boats. They hope to bring something before the full Commission by December or January.
- The Gas Dock received TPZ approval on November 13. It will be built by DPW and hopefully open for spring.
- Dredging will now be pushed to winter 2019.

B. Rules Revision Sub-Committee – The sub-committee has not yet met. No Report.

VI. BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT: Ms. Gerber reported:
- The Board approved the 2019-20 calendar.
- August 29, 2019 will be the first day of school.
- There was a Special Education presentation.
- There was an update on the ECC situation with several choices on the table.
- The newly elected officers are: Chairman, Christine Vitale; Vice Chairman, Nick Aysseh; Secretary, Jessica. Gerber.
VIII. DIRECTOR & PROGRAM REPORTS: Mr. Calabrese presented a written report (see attached). New topics included:

- The new software went “Live” on November 1. The staff is trying to iron out the kinks.
- The search for a new Marina Manager is underway.
- The Tree Lighting on the Town Hall Green will be on November 30. All are invited.
- The work at Sherman Green is almost complete.

IX. GOOD OF THE ORDER – Next meeting on December 19 will include approving the 2019 meeting calendar and election of officers.

Mr. Benton asked about how the Commission hears about the management of facilities that are under its purview. Mr. Walker explained that they receive this information from the Director in his reports, or when expense requests come before them. The budgets that Mr. Calabrese presents are drilled down very specifically. Additionally, the facilities are co-managed with the assistance of the Department of Public Works and the Board of Education so sometimes the Commission is not aware of everything.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Ryan, Recording Secretary