A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Eunice Postol Recreation Center, Fairfield, Connecticut.

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

ABSENT: Chris McCoy

ALSO: Anthony Calabrese, Director; Parks & Recreation Department and Justin Cathcart, Marina Manager.

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

I. ACT ON MINUTES OF: March 20, 2019 – Hearing no objections the minutes were approved as written. (J. Benton not yet present).

II. COMMUNICATIONS: To hear and act upon:
1. Jay Gross – Underwater Beach Clean-up Survey - Mr. Gross of 11 Abbey Road was present to request permission to take a dive team around the waters of Penfield and Jennings beaches to survey and cleanup the waters where trash has accumulated to determine if there is an issue. Mr. Gross will be in contact with the Marina Police to formulate a plan. He would need receptacles from the Town to deposit the trash and surface support protection from the Marina Police. No date has been chosen but would likely be in early Fall when waters are less clouded by algae.

Motion: B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by B. McBride to suspend the Parks & Recreation rule Section 6C prohibiting scuba diving in Fairfield waters in order to permit Mr. Gross and his team to scuba dive off the swim areas of Jennings and Penfield beaches for a water cleanup on a fall date after September 15, 2019

Vote: 6-0-1 (S. Walker abstained, J. Benton not present)

2. Brendan Sullivan – Lights Proposal at Sullivan Football Field – Mr. Sullivan of 780 Hillside Road was present to request permission to replace the current lights on the existing fixtures at Sullivan Field for the Youth Football League. When asked about neighbor reaction, Mr. Calabrese and Mr. Sullivan explained that this is merely a replacement with more technologically advanced LED lights. Mr. Sullivan explained that the current lights were often out of service and he explained that the height of the new lights would not exceed the current level, that there would be a reduced number of lights per pole, and that the newer technology creates less spillage beyond the field. Mr. Sullivan added that the league would pay for and arrange for the light change. They hope to do it prior to Fall and will wait to be sure that there is no disruption to the Osprey nests.

Motion: B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by A. Mullady to approve The Fairfield Youth Football League’s request to replace lights at Sullivan Field as requested.

Vote: 6-0-1 (S. Walker abstained, J. Benton not present)

3. Dennis Nolan – Field Maintenance – Dennis Nolan, President of Fairfield Little League Girl’s Softball along with Casey Elliot, and John Doolan, Field Managers came before the Commission to apprise them of issues that have arisen with Diamond Landscaping (formerly Tarantino), the current field maintenance company contracted by the Town. Mr. Nolan
described and provided documentation of disparity in the maintenance and opening of fields for boys’ and girls’ leagues (see attached). They described confusion as to when fields are open, and finger pointing when communication breaks down. The league representatives did not put blame on the Parks & Recreation Department and made a point to complement Parks & Recreation and DPW. They added that the rebuild scheduled for Sturges Field has been postponed for several years due to budget issues, however Ms. Gerber, Board of Education liaison, explained that this field has been given a Priority level 1 for next year’s budget. Mr. Calabrese agreed that over the last year or more there has been a decrease in satisfaction by all parties involved and he will relate this conversation to Department of Public Works and Diamond representatives. Mr. Walker also mentioned that when there is dissatisfaction, the time to speak up is at budget hearings. Mr. Calabrese believes that the contract expires in December.

III. PUBLIC INPUT: None

IV. NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Walker asked if Mr. Calabrese could look into purchasing benches with backs for the deck at Penfield Pavilion. They are more comfortable for the elderly visitors.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

VI. To hear and act upon information in Committee Reports:
A. Rules Sub-Committee - Mr. Weber reported that the committee met two days prior and concluded their work. He presented their changes to the full Commission for them to review before taking a vote at the May meeting.
Other than grammatical or format changes, most changes were to the Leagues section where they hoped to make the language consistent with the website version. Mr. Benton also stated that they are asking for residents who call to reserve a field to identify the league for which they are reserving.
The full Commission discussed the smoking section briefly. Ms. Ryan will forward minutes from the previous Commission meetings that dealt with smoking at beaches for their review. Smoking at the Pavilions was also discussed. Mr. Calabrese stated that they would handle this internally. The Committee did not propose any changes to the Marina as these rules had been reviewed recently. They also made no changes to rules pertaining to dogs since the Conservation Commission is presently making a study of this. No action was taken.

B. Marina Sub-Committee –
   a) Appeals Update – Marina Manager, Justin Cathcart reported that seventeen of eighteen who were given an extension in the appeals process have all brought in their paperwork and paid the late fee. Three who had not responded finally responded and paid their fees as well. Five who responded after the deadline went back on the waitlist.
   550 slips are filled
   offers are out for:
   30 small boats
   5 for medium
   9 for large.
   b) Town Hall Meeting Report – Mr. Nerreau reported that the Sub-committee held a Public Hearing on 4/23 and that for most of the meeting it was a very productive.
Race Engineering presented their work and then the sub-committee explained their work and subsequent Option #11. A written survey was taken and then the participants broke into groups based upon boat sizes where they used a spokesperson to voice their opinions. There was also a time for questions and answers. The committee will tabulate the answers and continue as needed.
VII. BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT: Ms. Gerber reported:

- A Music Curriculum was presented for 6-12
- H.S. Graduations will be held on 6/14. There was discussion about this taking place on a Friday evening and its effect on the Jewish community.
- Redistricting conversation is ongoing
- Solar proposals were given for roofs at Holland Hill and RLMS as well as carports at Stratfield and Burr.
- Para professional contracts were approved.
- There will be a Town Hall meeting on 4/30 at 7:30 at the BOE Admin Building.
- Superintendent search is ongoing.

VIII. DIRECTOR & PROGRAM REPORTS: Mr. Calabrese presented a written report (see attached). New topics included:

- The department held a successful Easter “Eggstravaganza” with over 600 participants.
- Spring Sports are starting for youth and adults
- Social media presence has been ramped up considerably.
- Spring Brochures are in homes this week.
- Penfield is hosting both a DIY workshop collaborating with A/R (Anders/Ruff) and Summer Comedy Nights which begin May 23. Both events are BYOB.

IX. GOOD OF THE ORDER – No Discussion

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Ryan, Recording Secretary