A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, August 21 at 7:00 p.m. at the Penfield Pavilion, Fairfield, Connecticut.

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

**ABSENT:** David Weber

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

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

Mr. Walker asked for a moment of silence for Geovanny Tapia-Zuniga who tragically drowned at Lake Mohegan on Sunday evening.

Mr. Walker also congratulated Ms. McBride on the recent birth of her fourth child.

I. **ACT ON MINUTES OF: June 19, 2019** – Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved as written.

II. **COMMUNICATIONS: To hear and act upon:**

A. **Maureen Greco, Girl Scout Campout & Bonfire** – Because Ms. Greco was unable to attend, the item was held over to the next month.

B. **Kathy Koulogianis – Walk With Jake K-9 Fundraiser- Jennings Lot October 13, 2019**

   Ms. Koulogianis was present to request the event for the third year.

   **Motion:** A. Mullady made a motion, seconded by M. Von Conta to approve the K-9 event as requested at Jennings Beach parking lot.

   **Vote:** Unanimous

C. **Marlene Battista – Pink Pledge Bench Donation** – In celebration of the Norma Pfriem Center’s 50th Anniversary, Ms. Battista asked for permission to purchase and place a maintenance-free Pink Bench on the Sherman Green as a thank you for all the Town’s support over the years. There was discussion about possible theft of bench. Ms. Battista let the Members know that the bench they are considering weighs 250 pounds.

   **Motion:** B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by J. Gerber to approve the placement of a Pink Bench as requested with the condition that a proper placement be chosen.

   **Vote:** Unanimous

D. **Marlene Battista – Pink Pledge Event- Penfield Morning Walk October 5, 2019** – Ms. Battista asked for permission for the Norma Pfriem Center to hold a Pink Pledge Sunrise Walk at Penfield Pavilion. There was discussion about early noise in the neighborhood. Ms. Battista was willing to possibly make the walk shorter and agreed that there would be no amplified loud music or announcements in the parking lot prior to 8 am.

   **Motion:** B. Nerreau made a motion, seconded by B. McBride to approve the Pink Pledge Morning Walk at Penfield Complex subject to music and/or announcements commencing after 8 a.m.

   **Vote:** Unanimous

E. **Perry Liu – Fairfield Center Stage** – In Mr. Liu’s absence, Ms Laura Silence, was present to request a waiver for Penfield Pavilion rental fees for a November event, due to the early stage of this non-profit and asked for an opportunity to grow their base or donors and help them to be
successful by keeping their bottom line more positive. The members discussed that waiving fees for non-profits starts a precedent that would lower revenues for the Town and with such a large percentage of non-profits that rent the facilities, they would not be good stewards if they allowed waivers. Ms. Silence asked for a waiver of the extra hour fees as a compromise.

**No action taken.**

**III. PUBLIC INPUT: None**

**IV. NEW BUSINESS: To hear and act upon any business that may properly come before the Commission:**

**A. Discuss Possible Land Fill Issues Concerning Town Parks & Fields -**

Mr. Calabrese reported to the members that he has sent them several informational links and he distributed several handouts pertaining to the Gould Manor Park Sidewalk testing and other sites, a total of 20 identified by the Parks & Recreation Department, that would be tested. There was a concurrent Town meeting occurring at Ludlowe High School called by the First Selectman to give some explanations and to offer the public a chance to ask questions. Another Town meeting is scheduled to take place tomorrow as well. Following the Board of Education’s decision earlier that day to close school fields, Mr. Calabrese, with consultation with the First Selectman, and acting with an abundance of caution, closed all the recreation sites on the Town’s Testing Priority List. He expects results over the next several days.

The members discussed an issue that they had learned about in 2015 when glass was found to have been in the soil/fill used on some of the soccer fields when routine maintenance was done. Members thanked former Commission member and current RTM member Dorene Herron for recalling that problem and bringing it to the forefront during the current investigation. Mr. Calabrese and members realize that there is still much to be learned about the current problem but want to be proactive rather than reactive. When asked, Mr. Calabrese reported that the Town has 20 parks, 6 beaches and 29 playground locations in addition to its 45 fields. He was not able to let the members know about what is involved in remediation. If fields are contaminated and sports are affected, the Department will handle, explaining that outside groups will be secondary to Recreation programs and School teams. Ms Mullady stated that she would like to see some level of testing at every field, playground, and park in the areas where normal maintenance was performed.

**Motion:** A. Mullady made a motion, seconded by J. Benton that the Parks & Recreation Commission request that the Town’s Board of Selectmen require testing of all parks, fields, and playgrounds under this Commission’s purview for contaminants.

There was a lengthy discussion as to timing and the reporting of results. Mr. Calabrese explained that he anticipates that all testing results should be received no later than Friday, August 30th. The list of priority sites was determined by a thorough review of Parks & recreation records, as well as Town and Department of Public Works records for locations where work was completed during the 2013-2016 timeframe. Mr. Nerreau questions whether it was prudent to randomly test all of the Town’s parks and fields due to the fact that research had identified 20 priority sites and the test results are due back shortly. In addition, random testing of fields may not reveal any relevant information should incorrect locations be tested. He also noted that PCBs were not found at Gould Manor but these were a large part of the contamination of the fill pile. Ms. Gerber was not certain that this Board’s request would have any impact on what the Board of Selectman chooses to do. Many members were inclined to err on the side of caution.

**Amendment to Motion:** S. Walker made a motion, seconded by A. Mullady to amend the current motion to add: The Commission will reconvene in two weeks, on September 4, to reassess the condition of the fields.

**Vote on amendment: Unanimous**

**Vote on the Amended Motion:** 7-0-1 (Nerreau Abstained)
B. Capital Planning Workshop Update - Mr. Calabrese reported that he has prepared a 5-year waterfall chart to continue to make improvements and maintain the Recreation opportunities and equipment that presently exists in Town. While Mr. Calabrese did not have the chart available, he will forward it to all the members. It included items such as extensive playground improvements, new Tennis courts at both Tomlinson Middle School and Dwight Elementary School and marina improvements. One added possibility was also turf on the South Pine Creek complex, which could be a joint effort with Town Leagues. Mr. Calabrese made it clear that this is something of a wish list but that these are important to continue the caliber of safe recreation for the Town.

Ms. Marlene Battista commented on the Recreation Showmobile that Mr. Calabrese had also mentioned. She noted that Pink Pledge has to rent these (three times in 2019 for $1000 each occasion) and this would be a good revenue-producing item as well.

V. To hear and act upon information in Reports:
   A. Marina Sub-Committee Report – Mr. Nerreau, chairman of the Marina Sub-Committee explained that the committee met the week prior and voted to put forth one of several options for the So. Benson Marina that they had been designing with the help or RACE, in order to put forth a safe and enjoyable marina. He explained that there were pros and cons to the two last options that they considered and while the boaters surveyed were not in favor of changes due to the cost involved, the committee members felt that it was their obligation to consider safety, feasibility, cost, number of users, and the ability to bring expected revenue to the Town. Mr. Walker provided and reviewed the marina drawings for Option 11 and reviewed the projected costs for both this option as well as the projected costs for Option 12 and the impact on the number of slips. As the members were given a large amount of information, Ms. Gerber asked if the members could have the opportunity to look it over and have a Public Hearing at the next regular meeting in order to hear from the public and especially the boaters. All agreed to hold the Sept. 18 meeting at Penfield Pavilion to have a space large enough to hold those who may want to hear about and/or speak to the proposal.

   Don Peterson -1061 Galloping Hill Rd.- Publicly thanked the sub-committee for their hours of work on a very difficult task.

B. Board of Education Report: Ms. Gerber reported:
   • The new Superintendent of Schools, Michael Cummings, has started.
   • In regards to the landfill issue, the Superintendent decided to close all school fields today. Testing will begin.
   • Schools open on Thursday, August 29.
   • The first regular meeting of the year will be August 27.

VI. DIRECTOR & PROGRAM REPORTS: Mr. Calabrese presented a written report (see attached). Topics included:
   • Summer programs have begun to wind down and the staff is gearing up for our Fall/Winter programs. Registration begins Thursday, August 22.
   • Lifeguard schedules are reduced due to many of our lifeguards going back to school. Unrelated to this, we did have a tragic loss of life this past weekend at Lake Mohegan after hours. I may bring forward some suggested changes to our Lake operations in the very near future.
   • We had to make a decision to cancel our “Light up the Night” event for this year. Unfortunately, we ran into some logistical issues that we were unable to solve. The staff will work on putting together this event for next year.
   • Woodstock Anniversary event tomorrow night at Penfield is sold out!
We will be hosting a celebration for our three local little leagues on the Sherman Green on Tuesday, August 27th beginning at 4:30pm. This ceremony will be recognizing the four teams that won State Championships at their respective levels.

Regarding the ongoing issues at our fields and parks concerning the Julian fill pile issues, I want you to know that we are doing everything in our power to ensure the safety of all users. We are currently working with the Health Department, First Selectman’s Office, Public Works Department, and the Town’s hired Licensed Environmental Professional to make sure we are doing everything necessary to keep the Town safe. You can follow all the up to date information on the Town’s webpage: https://www.fairfieldct.org/filluseissues

VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER – None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Ryan, Recording Secretary