

**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of January 20, 2021**

A tele-conference meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Brian Nerreau, Chairman; Jamie Benton, Bridget McBride, Bonnie Rotelli, Chris McCoy, Margaret Weeks Horton, Dylan O'Connor and MacKay Jameson.

ABSENT: David Weber

ALSO: Anthony Calabrese, Dir. Parks & Recreation

Chairman Brian Nerreau called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Act on Minutes – December 16, 2020 - Due to the late distribution of the Minutes, it was decided that the December 16, 2020 meeting minutes would be acted upon at the February Commission Meeting.

II. Public Input: To discuss any emails previously sent that are not on the agenda already. None Presented.

III. New Business: To hear and act upon:

A. Fairfield Rotary Club – Request to have a Paddle Board and Kayak Fundraiser

Bob Vossler, 1 Ermine Street, Fairfield, CT, Director of the Fairfield Rotary Club and Chairman of this event gave a brief history of the Rotary Club. He stated that their organization would like to hold a Paddleboard and Kayak fundraiser on September 11, 2021 at 8 a.m. on Jennings beach, which would be at low tide and the reef would provide a barrier. B. Vossler introduced Jay Tini, 544 Rowland Road, Fairfield, CT as an experienced paddle boarder who will be guiding them through this fundraiser along with his son Matt Vossler who began the Swim Across the Sound and Dave Keith who has run four of these events in the past. He stated that there would be two courses. The first one would be for the less experienced kayakers and would run along the beach out to the reef and return and the second event is for the more experienced paddlers and kayakers and would also run along the beach, but then would make a left turn and head out towards Penfield Light House and come back the same route. There will be markers and buoys set up and there will be three or four small boats available if someone has to be pulled out of the water. There will also be police for traffic control and EMT's on site in case of a medical emergency. Fairfield Rotary has also applied to the Coast Guard to review their plan and are awaiting approval. Mr. Vossler stated that they would also be contacting J. Cathcart, the Marina Manager, to coordinate with him as well. They will be providing snacks and beverages. B. Nerreau asked if the experienced kayak/paddleboarders, would they be going to the Penfield Reef and out around the lighthouse, the concern being that they could be in a channel for boats exiting the Marina. B. Vossler explained that the route would not be going out to the lighthouse and that there would be a buoy north of the lighthouse designating the turnaround point. B. Vossler stated that coming out of the marina as you pass beyond the pile of rocks, there is a series of buoys that require you to go considerably out past the end of the peninsula. The tide will be low and most experienced boats stay pretty far away from the shore. They will also have three or four boats that are patrolling the area all the way out to the lighthouse that will waive off any boats. B. Nerreau asked if there were any other questions from the commission, to which there were none.

Motion: M. Jameson made a motion to approve the event, seconded by J. Benton

Vote: Unanimous

V. To hear and act upon information in Reports:

A. Board of Education Report: B. Rotelli, the new liaison to the Board of Education, stated that they have begun their budget meetings and will have two more meetings next week. In January they started a new schedule for secondary (Middle School and High School) going in person half days on Wednesday. Starting this week the elementary school schedule will be 5 half days a week. C. McCoy asked if the Middle Schools and High Schools will go to 5 days a week. B. Rotelli explained that there have been discussions, but for now they will see how the elementary grades do and then the hope is to bring the Middle School and High School in as well. The reason why they are starting with the elementary school level is that it is more difficult to cohort the older levels due to their class changing schedules. She also explained that younger children have had lower transmission rates of the COVID virus, especially in the second wave, whereas they are seeing an increase of cases in the teen population. They will continue to monitor the situation and if there are no spikes in cases, they can discuss how to implement the Middle School and High School.

C. Director's Report: Mr. Calabrese presented a written report:

Happy New Year!

Our staff has been very busy this past month planning for our spring and summer programs and events. As you could imagine, it is extremely difficult to plan for the unknown of COVID and the mandated restrictions. Many times our staff is creating a plan and two or three backup plans to anticipate the unknown.

Our digital Spring Brochure was released this past week, the feedback so far has been positive. We are doing our best to comply with the mandated restrictions and regulations. We are excited to offer programs such as playground camps, youth soccer leagues, tennis lessons, yoga sessions, adult and youth golf clinics and leagues, esports leagues, art classes, fitness classes and clinics, music lessons, fencing, cornhole leagues, and a virtual 5k event.

We've also been working on our special events calendar. We are looking forward to offering our annual summer Concert Series, Sand Jam movie nights, Peanut Butter Jam kid's concerts, and a host of other great community events!

Budget season continues to move along. The First Selectwoman will be presenting her budget to the Board of Selectman for their discussion and approval in the coming weeks. Once the BOS approves, they will pass the budget onto the Board of Finance for their discussion and approval. After the BOF approves, the budget will be considered by the Representative Town Meeting for their approval. The final approval from the RTM normally happens in May. I will keep you posted on the progress of the budgets.

As always, I have to publicly thank my staff for the amazing job they have been doing! Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

ADJOURNMENT: B. Nerreau stated with no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly J. Brown, Recording Secretary

Tele-meeting location for audio: [youtube.com/watch?v=FC-7a-ssggQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FC-7a-ssggQ)