

**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of March 17, 2021**

A tele-conference meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

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

ALSO: Anthony Calabrese, Dir. Parks & Recreation, Justin Cathcart, Marina Manager

ABSENT:

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

I. Act on Minutes –

February 17, 2021 - Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved as written.

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. Robert L. Seirup – Request from the Police Athletic League (PAL) to sponsor a Pitch, Hit & Run competition at Tunxis Hill Park on Saturday, June 12, 2021. Mr. Seirup explained that this event was going to be a local competition with the best players moving on to Yankee Stadium. B. Nerreau asked if there was a rain date. The date of June 13th after 2 p.m. was selected for a rain date. D. O'Connor commented that Fairfield Little League Softball does a similar event and that Mr. Seirup might want to contact Andrew Gedacht and coordinate this event together. B. Nerreau asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to include a rain date of June 13th after 2 p.m.

Motion: D. O'Connor made a motion to approve the Pitch, Hit and Run event for June 12, 2021 with a rain date of June 13, 2021, seconded by B. McBride.

Vote: Unanimous

B. Robert L. Seirup – Request from the Police Athletic League (PAL) to sponsor their Annual Trout Fishing Derby on Saturday, May 1, 2021. Mr. Seirup explained that this event has been done for the past 65 years at Gould Manor. This request is a change of venue due to Covid and the contaminated soil at Gould Manor. They have decided to use Lake Mohegan along the Morehouse Highway side of the lake and would stock the pond the night before. There will be no rain date and the event would take place from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and everyone would be gone by noon. M. Horton asked if there would be any environmental impact of stocking the lake. A. Calabrese stated that the DEEP already stocks it and Mr. Seirup added that they also get a permit from DEEP and the day of the event, DEEP sends a representative to the event. Mr. Seirup stated that they would be following all of the CDC guidelines and that the police would be there to enforce them if needed.

Motion: M. Horton made a motion to approve the PAL Fishing Derby for May 1, 2021, seconded by D. Weber.

Vote: Unanimous

C. Alida Ward – Request for use of the Town Hall Green on March 21st for a “hopes and prayer” wall event – Request withdrawn.

D. Justin Egan – South Benson Marina Appeal. Mr. Egan explained that he had been a slip holder for the past five years and was on the waitlist for seven years prior to that. He stated that he had gotten a new phone and his emails had not synced to it so he did not receive any of the email notices nor reminder notices sent out by the Marina Manager. J. Cathcart said that he had sent out five emails and a telephone reminder to the slip holders as well as a reverse 911 type notification. J. Egan said that the first email he received was from Justin Cathcart indicating that he had lost his slip. J. Egan said he was asking for forgiveness due to the fact that he had not received any of the notices and that all of his renewal information had been delivered within 4-5 days of the expiration date. B. Nerreau stated that the deadline for the slip renewals stays relatively the same each year so as a five year member of the marina, he should have realized when the renewal period was with or without having received the notices. J. Egan said as soon as he realized that he had missed the deadline, he ran down to the office to renew. B. Nerreau asked J. Cathcart if this was the first time that Mr. Egan had missed the deadline. J. Cathcart confirmed that it was the first time. D. O’Connor asked Mr. Cathcart if they approved the appeal, would that mean that someone on the waitlist would remain on the waitlist. J. Cathcart confirmed that. Mr. Cathcart also confirmed that there would be a \$250.00 late fee assessed if Mr. Egan’s appeal to renew was approved. C. McCoy asked Mr. Egan if he had switched phone numbers to which Mr. Egan stated that he did not. C. McCoy asked Mr. Cathcart if he could confirm that the emails and text were sent. J. Cathcart stated that all he can see is that it went to the number and that he could not see if it was received. He also said that 20% of the slip holders acknowledge when they receive the email, 5% acknowledge it later and 75% do not acknowledge at all. B. Nerreau asked Mr. Egan if successful here tonight, was his email a working email, which J. Egan indicated it was now active and checked on a regular basis.

Motion: B. McBride made a motion to approve the appeal, seconded by D. O’Connor.

B. Nerreau said that he would be supporting this appeal, however, he stated that Mr. Cathcart and the commission have worked extremely hard to make the renewal process as organized and fool proof as possible and that he would not support another appeal should Mr. Egan ever come before the Commission again for a similar problem.

Vote: Unanimous

E. Skate Park Sub-Committee – To hear and act upon the revised Rules and Regulations for the Skate Park.

D. O’Connor explained that a sub-committee was formed to look into allowing scooters in the Skate Park and would be in support of an open concept if Risk Management was in agreement. The sub-committee met once in March with Director Calabrese as well as Chelsea Seres. Seres informed the sub-committee that Risk Management did approve all of these changes. The subcommittee voted unanimously in favor of the changes to include scooters, no attendant and updated signage. Risk Management stated that bicycles would still not be allowed in the skate park. M. Jameson wanted to know why they would allow scooters if the skate park was made solely for skateboarding. A. Calabrese said that the company designed the park for skateboards only because, at the time, scooters were not popular but now scooters use has increased significantly. Mr. Calabrese added that scooter use has caused only minimal damage over the years. B. Nerreau stated that there would need to be a modification to the agenda in order to vote on scooters tonight as this was not identified, and it should be addressed this evening otherwise

they would not have modified rules and regulations included by the park's opening date of April 1.

D. O'Connor said that if approved, the rules would be changed relatively quickly and it would be just a signage change that Risk Management already approved and it could be ready by April 1.

Motion: M. Jameson moved to revise the agenda and D. O'Connor seconded. The Agenda would be modified to "Hear and act upon the use of scooters and to revise the rules and regulations to the skate park

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: B. McBride made a motion to approve non-motorized scooters at the skate park starting April 1, 2021, in addition to the elimination of a skate park attendant. The Rules and Regulations will include the language around scootering and non-attendant. D. Weber seconded.

Vote: Unanimous

V. To hear and act upon information in Reports:

A. Board of Education Report:

B. Rotelli advised that everyone is back in school full time and everything was going well so far. The BOE is also in the middle of the budget process at this time. C. McCoy asked about spring sports at the middle school level. B. Rotelli stated that she would get clarification and report back.

B. Director's Report:

Spring is just around the corner! With that being said, we are in the middle of our spring program registration. Our numbers are solid across the board, with many of our programs filling up quickly. Leading the registration process are our Summer Camp programs, Golf lessons, and spring Soccer leagues. The staff is currently working on building the courses and programs for our summer brochure which will be released in April.

Additional good news was announced by the Governor last week with the lessening of some of his COVID restrictions. These revised restrictions increase the capacity of our indoor and outdoor events by a significant amount. While not at 100% capacity yet, we are slowly getting closer to "normal" as the vaccine makes its way to the general population.

Budget season continues to move along. The Board of Selectman made some modifications to the budget earlier last week. They voted to support the budget for the most part as presented. The budget will now move onto the Board of Finance for their consideration 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.

We started the budget season with five non-recurring capital projects, we are down to two that will move on to the RTM later this month. The projects that were cut from the process included the Dougiello lights, the upgrades to Jacky Durrell's kitchen and bathrooms, and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. While this is disappointing, we will continue to put forth projects that maintain and upgrade our facilities.

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.

IV. Good of the Order

B. McBride stated that without Jessica Gerber, the Tree of Hope subcommittee consists of only C. McCoy and herself. J. Benton had mentioned he would be willing to take over for J. Gerber. C. McCoy wanted to officially nominate B. McBride as the Chairman of the subcommittee. B. McBride accepted.

ADJOURNMENT: B. Nerreau stated with no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly J. Brown, Recording Secretary

Tele-meeting location for audio: [youtube.com/watch?v=K3qhwYZrmUI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3qhwYZrmUI)