

**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of June 16, 2021**

A tele-conference meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Fairfield was held on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Brian Nerreau, Chairman; Bridget McBride, Chris McCoy as acting Chairman, Jamie Benton, MacKay Jameson and Margaret Horton Weeks

ABSENT: Bonnie Rotelli, Dylan O'Connor, and David Weber
Acting Chairman Chris McCoy called meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

I. Act on Minutes – May 19, 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 Vossler, 1 Ermine Street, Fairfield, CT – Request on behalf of the Fairfield Rotary Club to waive the \$400.00 special event fee for the previously approved Paddle and Kayak Fundraiser event to be held on September 11, 2021. Mr. Vossler explained that all of the net proceeds of the event will be going back to the community or non-profit organizations in the general area and was asking for the Town to consider waiving the \$400.00 fee or to consider it a donation for the event.

J. Benton asked if it there was a policy for this or whether there was a history of granting these requests. C.McCoy explained that the majority of the organizations that come before the town are 501c3 non-profits and historically the Commission has not able to grant fee waivers. B. Nerreau stated that while it is within their purview, the Commission did have a review a few years back and there was an analysis done to see the percentage of events that were held that were for 501C3 organizations and they don't have a specific policy, however the problem is that just about every group that comes before them is very worthy, but they have held tight on this position to not set precedence.

C. McCoy asked if there were any questions or if anyone wanted to make a motion. With none being heard, the request for the fee waiver was not approved. B. Vossler said he understood and he thanked the Commission for their consideration.

B. Fiona Andren – 33 Hill Farm Road, Fairfield, representing St. Paul's Episcopal Church – Request to hold Sunday worship services at Jennings Beach from July 11, 2021 through August 29, 2021. F. Andren stated that St. Paul's has been doing these services for the past 25 years with the exception of last year due to Covid. C. McCoy stated that typically this type of request would be grandfathered in and would only need Director Approval.

Motion: M. Weeks made a motion to approve the motion, seconded by M. Jameson.

Vote: Unanimous

C. Sarah Roy – 3 Buena Vista Road, Fairfield – On behalf of the Bike and Pedestrian Committee – Request to hold a World Day of Remembrance event on Sunday, November 15th at Sherman Green.

S. Roy explained that the organization would like to draw awareness to traffic victims, stating that it is a global epidemic and that the number of victims is up 21% over last year. In Connecticut alone, there were 43 pedestrians killed. There were two deaths within Fairfield in 2020 and 2021. The event would start in the early afternoon and they plan to invite town, state and U.S. representative to attend along with emergency first responders. There will be a moment of silence and they will have a first responder present to speak. They would also like to have a temporary art installation in the park just for the afternoon. At the end of the event, they will have a voluntary walk/bike ride to the Mill Plain entrance of the highway ramp where Christine McMahon was killed and lay flowers in her honor. J. Proctor of 428 Pequot Avenue stated that she was here to support and endorse/work with Sarah. Ms. Proctor explained that her son Charlie was a victim of traffic violence while riding his bike in Arlington, MA.

C. McCoy asked if the date of November 15, 2021 was available at the Sherman Green, which was confirmed that it is. M. Weeks asked about additional logistics. S. Roy stated that they would be coordinating with the police department. B. McBride expressed her concerned with the walk/bike ride to the Mill Plain Road entrance ramp and asked if they had considered any other route for the walk. J. Benton asked if they would consider going over the bridge near Tomlinson Middle School and through the train parking lot to avoid going through the railroad underpass. B. Nerreau shared these concerns but did not think they would need to reroute their walk as long as they coordinate it with the police. They will be there at the various dangerous choke points such as underneath the railroad tracks if they believe it is too dangerous to walk or ride through there, they will coordinate a different path with you.

Motion: B. Nerreau made a motion to approve the request subject to them coordinating the walk/ride path with the Fairfield Police. B. McBride seconded.

Vote: Unanimous

D. Michael Carter – 99 Harbor Road, Southport, CT – Request to have a Push for Entrepreneurship challenge/fundraiser on October 16th from 9-12 at Veterans Park with a rain date of October 17th from 12 -3. M. Carter explained that this event would be a 2 hour push up challenge. Last year’s event had 53 pushers, 15 kids demonstrating inventions and 30-40 spouses, kids, onlookers and they raised over \$40K. The only difference in this year’s request is that he is asking for a rain date as well. When asked if they expected the same number of people at this year’s event, M. Carter stated that they were hoping to go up 10-20% and that the goal is to keep expanding it.

C. McCoy asked if the dates requested were available, which were confirmed.

Motion: M. Weeks made a motion to approve the motion, seconded by B. Nerreau.

Vote: Unanimous

V. To hear and act upon information in Reports:

A. Board of Education Report: - B. Rotelli not in attendance. No Report

B. Director’s Report:

Summer is here and there is a lot to report. First, all of our summer programming is up and running. Registration numbers have been extremely strong across the board. We have a little bit of everything to offer for residents of all ages.

Our summer special events calendar has been filling up and has been well received. We've seen record numbers coming out to enjoy our Summer Concert Series, Farmer's Market, and other exciting events.

There are some major projects on the horizon for our Department. We are excited to announce that remediation and enhancements will begin at Gould Manor Park in the coming weeks. We will be leading the charge by renovation both Little League fields, rebuilding the tennis court, replacing the large playground, and replacing the small playground with Fairfield first outdoor Fitness Park!

In addition to these projects, we are also in discussions with the Town's administration on a number of other projects. Once these projects are selected, I will formally apprise the Commission. Our Tomlinson Tennis Court renovation should also be fully completed in the next week or so. We are happy with the finished product and excited to open these courts back up to our residents.

At the Board of Selectmen meeting this past Monday, the First Selectwoman announced an update on the Town's reorganization plan:

"I wanted to let the Board know and update residents on our furthering commitment to reorganizing Town government in a way that makes sense and is efficient. We are moving the position of DPW Superintendent to Superintendent of Parks, under the Park & Recreation Department. This eliminates the position at DPW and has no budgetary impact.

Doug Novak will now direct report to the Park & Recreation Director, Anthony Calabrese. He has expanded responsibilities and will have Kevin Fox and the seven full time staff move under his supervision. We believe this change provides more accountability and a better chain of command. Anthony currently oversees the parks and yet the people managing them don't report to him and it doesn't make sense.

Frankly, many other Towns have it organized this way and I am not sure why we did it differently.

DPW's four supervisors, Highway, Fleet, Building and Tree will now direct report to the DPW Director and Assistant DPW Director, which we are currently hiring for, as you know. During winter storms, all hands will be on deck.

Like I said before, this a change in who people will report to but there is no budgetary impact. And like we did with separating out the marina budget last year, for the next budget cycle we will take out Parks from DPW and move it under P&R."

We are extremely excited for this change and look forward to providing a more efficient service to our residents.

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 None

ADJOURNMENT: C. McCoy stated with no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly J. Brown, Recording Secretary

youtube.com/watch?v=sa_vLq4urnQ