

**Wallingford Parks & Recreation Department
Parks & Recreation Commission
Minutes for Wednesday, March 10, 2021
8:00 a.m. at Parks and Recreation Department**

Commissioners in Attendance:

Don Crouch, Dave Gelo, Jason Michael, Steve Rossacci, and Mike Savenelli Sr

Recreation Commission Members Absent:

Recreation Department Staff Present: Kenny Michaels, Director of Recreation Parks & Recreation

Special Guests: Lauren Takores, Record Journal Reporter; Sean Doughty, YMCA CEO

Opening Remarks: Chairperson Dave Gelo called the meeting to order @ 8:07 a.m.

Minutes:

A motion made by Mike Savenelli Sr seconded by Steve Rossacci. to approved minutes from the February 10th meeting.

Public Question/Answering:

Sean Doughty: The YMCA uses Doolittle Park for a long duration. The permit is for the pavilion, field, basketball and tennis courts.

Steve Rossacci said to Sean that at the February meeting one of his employees said they inspect the Playscape daily. Why would they inspect the Playscape daily if you don't use it? Did your staff miss spoke? Sean said yes, they did. We don't use the playscape or the softball field.

The Camp has used the park for the Before Camp 7:00-9:00am with 30-40 children that are dropped off. At 9:00am opening ceremonies are held. At 9:30am everyone is split into groups of 30-40 kids depending on the number of participants. These groups do different activities throughout the day (9:30-2:30pm) utilizing the park and the Y facility for activities (swimming, use of the gym, basketball, tennis). All campers meet back Doolittle Park at end of day. For those campers staying later go over to the Y from 4:00-6:00pm where they are picked up.

Sean said the Y employees are good stewards of the park by picking up after themselves and also of others. Their program is licensed by the state and must adhere to their guidelines including insurance and inspections.

Sean said 90% of the campers are Wallingford residents. Sean thanked everyone for their consideration.

Kenny asked Sean how South Elm Street location is the home base when the majority of kids are at the park all day? Sean clarified that the Y main facility is home base. Groups are rotated every 30-40 minutes to different locations. He said they are flexible if the space is ever needed for another event.

Agenda Items:

Special Guest Ken Welch, Coalition for a Better Wallingford "Life is Good Initiative" program
Unfortunately, Ken was not able to attend today's meeting.

Dave Gelo opened the meeting with a statement: The power that was given to the Park & Rec Advisory Commission back in 2003-2004 is being followed correctly and lawfully. The fee structures

and modifications that we are entrusted with have been adopted since then and were followed correctly by the Park & Rec Commission according to the Law Department and the Ordinance Committee. What has been reported in Social media and our local paper has in many instances been false and degrading.

We, the Park & Rec Commission, are looking **for support in what we have been entrusted with.**
Thank-you

1. Discussion regarding executive session at the January 13, 2021 Rec Commission meeting.

The Law Department previously told the Rec Commission how to go into Executive Session and the process. Unfortunately, the Law Department did not provide a list of topics that couldn't go into Executive Session.

With the misunderstanding of what topics could go into Executive Session the fee proposal that was sent to Sean Doughty in December was discussed. There was no December meeting due to lack of a quorum so this topic was discussed at the January's meeting. Kenny Michaels and the Rec Commission were informed that the Fee Proposal discussion should not have gone into Executive Session by the Law Department. The discussion centered around the proposed charge of 25% of the daily fee. There was no official vote just input from the Rec Commission. The Rec Commission felt the comments that were made by the local paper and social media were very unfair.

2. Discussion and possible action on Parks/Facilities process – language change

Language updates: The Facility packet was updated in 2015 with adjustments to some fees.

As we reviewed the language in III. Detail Information A. General

“upon issuance of a permit, the fee for which may be waived”. There was never an official waive process. There were no direct language changes.

Kenny stated that under bullet #3 removal of

b. Recognized national, state or local charitable or non-profit corporations

f. Persons seeking to raise money for recognized charitable purposes, which persons may be required to post security or otherwise satisfy the Commission that all the monies raised or collected, less expenses, are remitted for such purpose or purposes

Addition of

Wallingford Community Garden

Kenny stated that under bullet #5 proposed the following:

- Recognized national, state or local charitable or non-profit corporations charging a fee or collecting charitable contributions to the benefit of the organization will be subject to a fee
- Persons seeking to raise money for recognized charitable purposes, which persons may be required to post security or otherwise satisfy to the Recreation Department and the Recreation Commission that all the monies raised or collected, less expenses, are remitted for such purpose or purposes.

Kenny added bullet #6

- Except as herein provided, the use of Town parks or park facilities for business or profit purposes is prohibited

Don Crouch proposed Bullet #5 go to Bullet #4 as they were similar.

In addition, this wording will be added under the Fee Structure:

Any Wallingford based non-profit organization who applies for a rental of any Wallingford Park & Rec facility for consecutive days and/or generates revenue will be subject to a rental fee up to 25% of the actual fee as per Park & Rec current fee structure. The permittee will have 30 days to appeal the fee charged to the Park & Recreation Rec Commission.

After much discussion Mike Savenelli made a **Motion**: to approve the additional wording under the Fee structure stating “consecutive days and generates revenue”.

Jason Michael seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

In additional discussion, the wording changed to “consecutive days **and/or** generates revenue”.

Mike Savenelli made a **Motion**: to amend the above motion by changing the word “consecutive days **and** generates revenue” to “consecutive days **and/or** generates revenue”.

Jason Michael seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. Discussion and possible action on fee for parks/facility usage in regards to non-profit discount waiver Sec III; A;4 &5

Section E Fee Structure:

Park Fees:

The Pavilion fee remains the same \$50.00 resident \$200.00 non-resident and commercial purpose

The Field lights increased from \$100.00 to \$150.00 residents and \$300.00 to \$350.00 non-residents and commercial purpose

Special Events, Tournaments, Fundraisers fees increased from
\$350.00 to \$400.00 for Field with/out Lights for 8 hours
\$750.00 to \$800.00 Park for 8 hours

Facilty Fees:

Special Events, Tournaments, Fundraisers fees increased:

The Gymnasium fee increased from \$30.00 to \$35.00 per hour resident and \$60.00 to \$65.00 per hour non-resident and Commercial Property

The Gymnasium 8 hour daily fee increased from \$500.00 to \$600.00

Note: Commercial and Special Events, Tournaments or Fundraisers who reduce hours or cancel requests within 60 days of the rental date payment is non-refundable.

Jason Michael made a **Motion**: To approve the increase prices. The motion was seconded by Dave Gelo and approved unanimously.

There are more requests for field use over the last few years. Kenny Michaels, Director, will make the decision to close a park if the request is for multiple fields and the number of cars would greatly impact other park activities.

Jason Michael reviewed the Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association results a survey sent out to all the CRPA members about YMCAs using town property for their personal use.

The majority of responses says the YMCAs use town/city property for their programs.

Is there a charge to the YMCA for using town property, even a discounted fee? The majority responded, yes there is some fee associated with using town property.

Kenny Michaels reviewed the YMCA's request for Summer Camp to use Doolittle park. Sean said they did review their program and reduced the time requesting Doolittle Park to 8:00-12:00pm and then 2:00-4:00pm. The days will be weekdays Monday, June 21 through Friday, August 20th. Sean Doughty said they reduced the time so there would not be a financial increase to the parents. Sean said if the Park & Rec receives a request to use the park during the summer, he would be more than willing to accommodate a request.

4. Advertising Signs in Parks – Jason Michaels and Don Crouch

The outcome from the Ordinance Meeting was to go to Planning and Zoning to get on their agenda. Planning and Zoning would need to modify the ordinance to allow advertising in a residential area. Jason Michael will follow up with Planning and Zoning to be added to their agenda.

5. Wallace Park Legacy Gardens – New 2021 Nominations

Kenny asked if there were any nomination from the floor.

Don Crouch nominated the Rotary Club. Steve Rossacci seconded the nomination. Everyone was in agreement.

Saturday, May 15th at 10:00 we be the dedication for the three stones.
Women's Community Group, Historical Society, and The Rotary Club

6. Bench honoring Chuck Burghardt @ Pat Wall – Don Crouch

Chuck Burghardt, Lyman Hall High School Baseball Coach, passed away December 8, 2020. A request to honor Chuck with a bench was made. Kenny said Pat Wall would be an ideal place as that field is used by Lyman Hall Baseball team. Kenny said there is a bench that can be dedicated to Chuck.

7. Community Pool Opening for 2021 – Mike Savenelli & Kenny Michaels

Mike said he had a conversation with TLB and contractors are eager to find projects. Mike said the cost could be lower. With COVID restrictions beginning to reduce maybe now is the right time. Kenny suggested Mike schedule a Pool Committee meeting to review all the information and decide on the next step. Kenny suggested Wednesday, March 31st at 6:00pm for the meeting. Mike will reach out to the members and let Kenny know.

8. Open Discussion: (2/3 votes required to discuss item)

Kenny wanted to discuss a topic discussed at the Ordinance meeting – metal detecting.

Jason Michaels made a **Motion**: to approve the topic. Mike Savenelli seconded.

Kenny said at the Ordinance Committee meeting the other topic was metal detecting in parks. There are Metal Detecting groups and they were in attendance. The spoke-person for the group said they do not damage the grounds and are very careful in retrieving objects. The Rec Commission felt the metal detectors should not be allowed in the parks. Not everyone would be mindful when digging for an object. The results could impact the leagues that use the fields. Mary Heffernon, Conservation Committee, was opposed to allowing them in parks. Mary was concerned about disrupting or killing plant life. Janis Small, Town Attorney, is working on new ordinance.

Directors Report: Ken Michaels

Old Business:

1. New working project with Lyman Hall Vo-Ag Department and conservation Commission LH Vo-Ag Department Faculty Rob Kovi (Curriculum Coordinator) and Emily Picard (Wildlife Biology Teacher) reached out about designating area in the town owned property between Pat Wall Field and LHHS as a land lab for the Agricultural Students. Myself, Mary Heffernon, Rob Kovi, and Emily Picard will be meeting on Thursday, February 11th to walk the grounds to look at the area they are looking to designate for the land lab. Scope of work at the Land Lab:
 - a. Field observation
 - b. Water quality monitoring
 - c. Habitat management – establish management goals, research techniques partner with natural resource professional (technical assistance, grants, equipment, etc.), present plans to the town environment planner for approval, implement and track goal progress (long term)
 - d. Mapping – Use map and compass, GPS, GIS, drone aerial footage, triangulation for radio telemetry simulations (wildlife tracking)
 - e. Wildlife monitoring – game cameras, acoustic monitoring, track casting, nest box installation, etc.

The faculty has already contacted and walked the area with the Southwest District Conservation Commission. The school is filling out the Inlands Wetlands exemption application to submit to Erin O'Hare.

*** Meeting is Wednesday, March 10th with Risk Manager, Mary Heffernon, Rob Kovi and Emily Picard to discuss the project.

Facilities:

Doolittle Park Tennis courts Bid was awarded to RS Site and Sports out of Oxford, CT. This company installed the new courts for the US Open in New York. Engineering is working with contractor on doing additional site work that was previously to be done by Public works regarding drainage due to the bid price coming in lower than anticipated.

Budget:

As noted last month, we have been in department budget preparations for the FY 2021-2022 budget. I was invited by Rob Baltramaitis, Director of Public Works, to be a part of his budget presentation, along with Alison Kupushinski, Town Engineer, for Capital and Non-Re-Occurring Portion of the Public Works Budget to discuss budget items/projects between the 3 departments. Park and Recreation presented their budget to the Mayor, Jim Bowes, and Tim Sena on Tuesday, March 9th.

New Business

1.) Youth Basketball, Adult Sports, Fitness Class Updates

Due to the recently released CT DECD Guidelines, the Parks and Recreation Department has increased the spectator limit from 1 to 2 spectators per player for our youth basketball league. As mentioned last month, the families have been extremely helpful in following the 1 spectator per player guidelines leading up to the change. It has helped tremendously in making the season a success to this point. Adult Sports per the new guidance are still not allowed to have spectators or family members at the games.

2.) Winter 2021 Program Numbers

Winter Programs (January 1 – March 6)

15 Canceled Activities

54 Activities Ran

69 Total Activities (76% running rate)

891 Program Participants (447 Youth Basketball)

- 3.) Summer Brochure is in development with the first proof headed to the printer on March 26. We anticipate offering a full line up of summer offerings ranging from the traditional playground camps, sports specific camps like baseball, basketball, football, multi sport, to art camps and we are looking into a modified version of the Summer Sizzlers Travel Program.
- 4.) Spring Health Fitness Programs began Monday, March 8th. Of the 24 classes only 4 canceled. Great sign of people looking to come back to programming. 87.5% class success rate. Remaining of Spring 2021 programs will begin March 29th.
- 5.) Scheduled completion date for Weber and Gannon Youth Basketball is Saturday, March 27th.
- 6.) As Spring gets closer, I will be scheduling a meeting with Kurt Treiber town Risk Manager to do our annual park tour to check playground equipment and any items needing to be addressed. Looking to complete end of March or early April.

Next Commission Meeting – Wednesday, April 14, 2021 @ 8:00 AM

Meeting Adjourned at: 10:33 a.m. by Dave Gelo - seconded by Steve Rossacci

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Barillaro, Sr Clerk
Wallingford Parks and Recreation