

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

Commissioners in Attendance:

Dave Gelo, Jason Michael, and Steve Rossacci

Recreation Commission Members Absent: Don Crouch, Mike Savenelli Sr

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

Special Guests:

Sean Doherty, CEO YCMA; Courtney Grime, Board Chair YMCA; Sam Sargent, Board Member YMCA YMCA Pool Partnership Presentation

Opening Remarks: Chairperson Jason Michael called the meeting to order @ 8:09 a.m.

Minutes:

A motion made by Jason Michael seconded by Steve Rossacci to approved minutes from the August 11, 2021 meeting.

Public Question/Answering:

Agenda Items:

Special Guest Sean Doherty presenting YMCA Pool Partnership Presentation

Sean spoke about starting this project in 2015. Since COVID they realized they needed to make changes. They found supporting families, seniors, and be open to all regardless of their financial ability.

The presentation was an addition added to the back of the Westside YMCA. This addition will include lap lanes for their swim team. This will also allow for swim meets to be held there also. A splash pad, slide and water play structure is included in the design. Included is also a therapy pool to be used in partnership with Masonicare. A retractable roof is also planned, this is similar as Milford's YMCA.

A baseball field was shown on the site plan, Steve R. suggested a multiuse field so other sports can also utilize field. Sean said this is currently under discussion.

A question was asked if the projected cost was pre-COVID as the cost of materials and labor have greatly increased. Sean said, yes, the projected cost was pre-COVID so at this point the figures have not been recalculated.

Jason Michaels: The Rec Commission has a pool project that has been presented to the Mayor and Town Council for approval. Currently, they do not have a definite yes/no answer. Before the Rec Commission can commit to the YMCA they would need to know the status of the Town pool, which will serve all the residents. Jason asked if the YMCA will be asking for funding from the Town which will now take money away from the Town's Pool project. Sean said yes, they would be asking the Town for funding.

Kenny: A lot of moving parts programmatically will the pool be closed because of swim meets? What is the impact especially if other groups use the pool for swim meets? Will the pool be closed when Masonicare uses the pool?

Would we sell pool tags? Why would we have swimming lessons when the Y has swim lessons?
Sean: How does the Park & Rec get involved? We will need to have a conversation on how you are involved.

Jason M: Is there a backup plan if the Inlands & Wetlands and/or Planning Zoning do not approve their project.

Yes, they do have a backup plan and that would be to flip the design to have the addition in the front. This would include adjusting the parking area also.

1. Discussion regarding upcoming Ordinance Committee meeting regarding waiver appeal process:

Jason: There was an Ordinance Committee meeting held to discuss the waiver appeal process, but unfortunately the Rec Commission nor Kenny was informed. Councilmember Christina Tata feels the Town Council should be the appeal board for non-profit waivers that are denied. The Rec Commission feels this is unnecessary as the revised process is very clear on who can apply for a waiver. Jason reached out to Christina to discuss, but she was unavailable to speak with Jason at this time. Jason is concerned with timing of an event and waiting until the Town Council meets might not fall within the timeline of the event.

2. Advertising signs in parks – Jason Michael & Don Crouch

Kenny discussed with Kevin Pagini, Town Planner, on having advertising in the parks. Tom Talbot, the interim Town Planner, said he would meet with Kenny and the Rec Commission to review their information. Kenny will coordinate a meeting with Jason and the Planning office.

3. Community Pool – Mike Savenelli – Kenny Michaels

Mike was not present at the meeting.

4. Wallace Park – Legacy Gardens New nominee – Dave Gelo and Don Crouch

Don received the application from the Rotary Club and the Lion Clubs.

The stone will have only wording no logo. Placement of the stone will be by the fence outside the seagrass.

Jason made a motion to accept the Rotary Club's application for the Legacy Garden.

Steve Rossacci seconded the motion. Everyone Approved

Kenny will send each Club the acceptance letter.

October 23rd is tentatively set for the ceremony.

5. Pickle Ball at Harrison Park (status)

Bob Danielson contacted Kenny to see when the work would be done at Harrison Park for the Pickleball courts. Kenny discussed with Alison Kapushinski, Town Engineer, and she is still on track to meet at the end of the month. The projection is to have the bid go out early next year and the work completed by early spring.

Doolittle Tennis courts are almost done. The nets will be added today and then it is ready to be used. Kenny liked the material that was used and will look to use it for future projects. The warranty is for 20 years against any structural cracks.

6. **Lufbery Reconfiguration**

The Rec Commission meeting was not held at Lufbery Park with the Special Guest of the YMCA. A walk through is scheduled for Friday, September 10th at 10:30am with Kenny, Jason and Dave.

7. **In park security cameras (update)**

Chief Ventura, Wallingford Police Chief, met with a security company out of Oxford. He is waiting on a proposal from them on the cost of cameras.

Kenny has another camera company from the city of New Britain that he will contact. They are looking to put cameras in just the areas of vandalism, the playscape area in particular.

This is an unfunded project for this budget year.

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

Jason Michael made a motion to go into Open Discussion on a few topics. Steve Rossacci seconded All approved.

Westside Field – the sod on the field is spent. It is very hardpacked and the grass is like straw. Can there be something done like drill seed or is there a grub problem. It would be a shame not to correct the problems as that field was sodded five years ago. The crab grass is out of control.

Kenny will contact TrueGreen and see what applications they have been applying.

Grand Street Park has a mound of dirt. Public Works graded and seeded the area, but there is no irrigation for that park. The Boys & Girls Club was going to put in a shade structure, but that hasn't happened.

Jason will get an agenda with the Rec Commission's input and send that by Thursday noontime before the next Commission meeting. Kenny will then add his agenda items and will send it to the Town Clerk.

Is the Community Lake cutting along the edge scheduled for the fall? Kenny said it will be done this fall.

Dave Gelo made a motion to close the Open Discussion. Steve Rossacci seconded the motion. All approved.

Directors Report: Ken Michaels

Summer Programs:

129 total programs offered - we ran 121 with a success rate of 94%.

We had 2,200 people register.

Park Projects

1. **Doolittle Tennis Courts Update:** The painting and the lines are completed as of September 7th. The posts and nets are being installed on September 8th. Play can begin shortly after. Great job

by RS Site and Sport on the installation. Also, would like to thank Alison Kapushinki Town Engineer for her work and help on this project.

2. **Community Lake Fencing Project:** Still awaiting word from the Public Works department that the Purchase Order was cut for the vendor and the project has been scheduled.
3. **Dog Park Fencing Repairs:** The dog park had fence damage from storm Isaias along the Quinnipiac River Side of the park. The project qualified for insurance funding. The purchase order has been cut to the vendor, awaiting the vendor to schedule the work to be completed.
4. **Eagle Scout Project Signs:** Eagle Scout Project on the QRLT in is final artwork approval. Eagle Scout Ethan Ayers is posting 6 signs 4x6 along the trail identifying 6 trees native to the trail, providing information on each tree. This project was met with approval from Cathy Grannucci and Mary Mushinski from the QRLTC. Work projected to begin in the next week or two, once sign production is complete.
5. **Grass Cutting at Parks and Fields:** Due to the high level of rain the town has received over the last month, Public Works is doing their best to get machines onto fields to get the grass cut. Several of our fields are in a water shed/wet lands area that retains water. With the nice weather projected in the upcoming days, the hope is these fields in these areas dry out and the machines are able to be safely put onto the fields without damage. In some cases, like at Vietnam Veterans, the grass will need to be double cut due to how much it has grown.
6. **Field Paint Shortage:** As we saw with the Doolittle Tennis Court Paint, Public Works has notified me they are dealing with a supply chain issue with manufacturers of field paint. The vendor who PW uses is seeing a 2-4-week delay. Hoping this does not cause issues with fields that need lining for the fall season. I will be reaching out to colleagues through the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association to see if any other towns are experience the same problem and if any vendors have in supply.

Parks and Recreation/Town Events

1. **Wallingford Garden Market:** Just a reminder the Wallingford Garden Market has been extended an additional two weeks and will be ending September 18. Due to the overall success of the market and interest from vendors, our office has begun discussion of the potential of a fall/winter market in the future.
2. Mini Celebrate Wallingford organized by Wallingford Center Inc. is scheduled for Saturday October 2. The event will take place on the lower 3 blocks of Center St.
3. **Middle School Dances:** Beginning discussion with our programming team on the possibility of hosting a middle school dance outdoors in the parking lot at the recreation department to fall in line with COVID protocols. Will be setting up a meeting with the Health Director, Police and Risk Manager to see what is the possibility and obstacles if any.

Park and Recreation Programs

1. Fall program registration is underway. Great job by Shawn Keogh, Recreation Program Specialist on the brochure production and developing new programming such as Cornhole League and E-Gaming for middle school kids.
2. **Lil Rec'ers Pre School** is beginning Monday Sept. 13th. Open house for students and parents in Friday Sept. 10th. We are happy to have promoted Amy Carpenter and Coleen Smith into head teacher roles with the program to work with Pre School Director Debbie Tansino. These promotions came due to the retirement of Terese Biega after 27 years in the program and Despina Battista who had returned for 1 year from her retirement to help out during the pandemic. We are excited for both teachers this upcoming school year.
3. **Weber and Gannon Youth Basketball** Registration underway for the 2021-2022 season. Remaining hopeful after discussions with Steve Civitelli in the health department that we may be able to return to the school gyms for practice.

Next Commission Meeting – Wednesday, October 13, 2021 @ 8:00 AM

Meeting Adjourned at: 10:15 a.m. by Jason Michael seconded by Steve Rossacci

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Barillaro, Sr Clerk
Wallingford Parks and Recreation