

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, January 12, 2009 in the Aldermanic Chambers of City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, David Mikos, Beverly Moran, James Benanto and Red Clynch. Andrew Cota arrived at 7:05 pm. Nick Serednitsky was excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti was excused.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by Red Clynch. Move to accept the minutes of December 8, 2008, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public came forward at this time.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Chairman Walsh recognized David Mikos and Dennis O'Connell for being named into the Alumni Hall of Fame of the Boys and Girls Club. A ceremony will be held on January 31st.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

A motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by David Mikos. Move to nominate John Walsh as Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

No other nominations were received. The floor was closed. Members congratulated Mr. Walsh and commended him on his continuing efforts for recreation in the City.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: The Board of Alderman approved the electrical permit fee waiver for the lighting project at the picnic grove being coordinated with the Pop Warner.

Mr. O'Connell noted that basketball season is progressing well. The Derby Veteran's Community Center is very busy. He has had to cancel some days due to weather and then reschedule. He has been doing so in part because he wants to lessen the wear on the floor from the wetness and sand being tracked in and because it makes it easier for public works to clear the area when there are no vehicles parked on the street. Most importantly, he is concerned for the safety of the participants and their families. Boy's Jr. Division basketball division's numbers are down. It was noted that there is a wrestling program for the age group also underway, coached by Buster Jadach through the USA Wrestling League. Girl's basketball is underway. The program had discussed a regional program with Ansonia but the schedule did not meld.

Mr. O'Connell anticipated that the budget will be tight through the end of the year. Utilities are rising and maintenance is always a challenge. It was noted the anticipated revenue should exceed the budgeted amount and consideration may be given to asking the Board of Apportionment and Taxation for a transfer of the surplus funds.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti was excused. It was noted that the Board of Education has voted to move the athletic programs to the Naugatuck Valley League (NVL). Members discussed the impacts of this change. The future of the Thanksgiving game was discussed. The NVL will allow for games out of the league and the discussion will have to be had with Shelton. Other rivalries such as Ansonia and Seymour are in the NVL and games with them have not been played for a number of years. Mr. O'Connell noted that the visitor's bleachers were dismantled a few years ago due to their deteriorated condition. Consideration should be given to their replacement. Members noted that this should be something that the Board of Education should be supporting. Certainly, it can be presented in the capital requests. Further discussion was curtailed until the Athletic Director was in attendance.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Benanto questioned how the new Middle School will affect the various programs in terms of facility use. The new school will have its own gymnasium. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the Derby Veteran's Community Center is used in the weekday afternoons by the school programs. The freshman basketball practice at Irving School in the evenings. Possibly, with the introduction of an additional gym, there will be opportunities for shifting the uses. Mr. Benanto suggested writing a letter to the Board of Education expressing interest in use of the schools gymnasiums for Parks and Recreation Commission programs. He noted that this may provide the opportunity to explore additional Parks and Recreation Department offerings. He noted the difficulties in finding a space for a Yoga program a while back and possibly, with additional space, alternative programs such as that could be offered.

Mr. Clynch discussed sitting down with Pop Warner to discuss their schedule in terms of their first home game being played after the first High School home game. Members questioned whether this would be possible. Pop Warner does schedule their home games on the weeks that the High School is away. Last year the Athletic Department scheduled four home practice games before the start of the regular season. This impacted the playing surface. To try to preserve the surface for the 1st High School home game is a challenge. Certainly, moving soccer games up to Witek Park has helped the conditions of the football field. Being that the High School has just entered the NVL, until the schedule is being prepared, it would be difficult to speak on this matter.

Mr. Mikos noted that the softball back stop is in poor condition. Mr. O'Connell indicated that there were no funds available at this time but it is certainly something to be looked at for a temporary fix as the problem is due to the bottom curling and ragged. Chairman Walsh questioned whether the surface water run-off on the hill, that has been problematic for many years, would be amplified by the new Middle School construction. This will have to be watched.

Chairman Walsh noted that the report that was presented to the Board of Alderman more than a year ago, but not acted upon, recommended that all facilities should be inspected annually. This recommendation is still a valid need as are the many recommendations in the report.

Members agreed that the capital projects need to be reviewed. While the economy is in a difficult state at this time, the maintenance and replacement needs are mounting. The Budget Sub-Committee will be looking at the list presented previously.

A.) Meeting schedule for 2009: Members were in agreement that the schedule of the 2nd Monday of the month has worked well. The one exception would be October for Columbus Day.

Motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by David Mikos. Move to adopt the following schedule of meetings for 2009:

January 12, 2009
February 9, 2009
March 9, 2009
April 13, 2009
May 11, 2009
June 8, 2009
July 13, 2009
August 10, 2009
September 14, 2009
October 13, 2009 (Tuesday)
November 9, 2009
December 14, 2009
January 11, 2010

The meetings will be held at 7:00 P.M. at the City Hall. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

As the new budget deliberations are approaching, Chairman Walsh appointed James Benanto and Andrew Cota to serve as the Finance Sub-Committee to work with Mr. O'Connell to develop the 2008-2009 Parks & Recreation budget.

Motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by David Mikos. Move to adjourn the meeting at 7:50p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.