



TOWN OF ESSEX
Park and Recreation Commission

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426

Regular Members

Brette Fitton, Chairman

Anthony Mosa

John Bean, Jr.

Daniel Needleman

Carolyn Field

Chris Perry

Alternates

Vacancies

Minutes of a Meeting held on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 5:30 pm at the Essex Town Hall and via Zoom

1. Call to Order: Brett Fitton called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2. In Attendance:

Commissioners: John Bean, Carolyn Field, Brette Fitton, Tony Mosa

Absent/Excused: Dan Needleman, Chris Perry

Staff: Tim LaChance, Assistant Director of Essex Parks & Recreation attended the meeting for Mary Ellen Barnes, Director.

3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting March 7, 2023: With a motion by Tony Mosa and a 2nd by John Bean, the minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Public Comment: There were no public comments.

5. Directors Report, Parks & Program Updates: Prior to the meeting, Director Mary Ellen Barnes submitted the Parks & Recreation Report below. Assistant Director Tim LaChance emphasized that the Spring programs are going well and that the Summer programs have several sign-ups. The Cake Decorating Class and the Family Night with Hartford Yard Goats are extremely popular, among others.

Park Events

April – July – Essex Little League – Comstock & Hubbard

May 13 – May Market – Main Street Park

June 3 – Essex Land Trust Summer Concert – Main Street Park

June 9-11 – Connecticut Music Festival– Main Street Park

June 17-18- Spectrum Art Association Art Show – Main Street Park

July 4 – Ivoryton 4th of July Parade – Ivoryton Park

Aug. 5 – Lions Club Lobster Bake – Main Street Park

Aug. 19 – Essex Congregational Church Concert – Main Street Park

Spring 2023 Programming

Yoga (ages 16 +) Volleyball (Gr. 5-8), Cupcake Decorating (ages 6-16) Archery (ages 8 and up) Running Rams (grades k-8)

Football Clinic (k-8) Tennis (ages 7-15) Tennis (Adult 16+) Zumba (k-6)

Summer 2023 Programming

Summer Camp (k-6) Jr. Warriors Basketball (k-8) Engineering (k-5) Jr. Warriors Baseball (gr. 4-9) Running Rams (k-8) Tennis (ages 7-15) Yoga in the Park (adult) Tennis (adult) Cake Decorating (adult). Summer Basketball League (gr. 4-8) Family Night with Hartford Yard Goats, Summer Concert Series (see schedule attached)

Parks Update

All Parks – Spring Maintenance on all parks is in process or complete. Currently projects include new slate patio and teak Adirondack chairs for Sunset (courtesy of Essex Police Union and Paul Foundation. New LED lighting for Tennis Courts. New Benches for Grove, Clark, Dickenson. New Picnic tables for Sunset. Rototill Grove Street Playground. Playground Inspection. Remediation of vegetation in Sunset Pond courtesy of Paul Foundation. Power washing vinyl fence at Hubbard. ELL top dressed and soil conditioned Hubbard. Essex Garden Club spring cleanup of Main Street Park and Dickenson Park. **DPW mulching of beds** and edging in both parks as well. PFC field preparation for opening day and baseball season.

****It was discussed that Department of Public Works held off on mulching, which saved some money.**

Hubbard Park - STEAP GRANT UPDATE

The STEAP Grant Committee is planning to meet shortly to review pricing on a facility to house new ADA bathrooms, New Concession Stand and New Equipment Shed. The P&R and DPW Director met with Country Carpenters to get general information on costs and the design of the proposed facility. No other updates are available currently.

With a motion by Tona Mosa, and a 2nd by Carolyn Field, the Directors Report was unanimously approved.

6. Financial Reports: The Park and Recreation General Fund Report for March 31, 2023 was reviewed. Of the \$206,336 revised budget, YTD Expended is \$143,378.51; available budget is \$62,957. 69.5% of the budget has been used. The Recreation Programs Fund dated May 1, 2023 was reviewed. YTD Revenue Actual is \$88,432.10; YTD Expense Actual is \$75,459.37; Current Net Program Revenue is \$12,972.73.

Tim LaChance reported that the programs are doing well and are above capacity. The summer camp has a wonderful staff.

Carolyn Field noted the line item of Scholarship Revenue – Misc. Programs of \$300. She suggested that there should be more detail about the \$300 scholarships in the report.

With a motion by Carolyn Field, and a 2nd by Tony Mosa, the Financial Report was unanimously approved.

7. Old Business: John Bean presented his idea for a Fitness Trail and 5K. John was inspired with this idea on a trip to North Carolina. The idea would be to promote health and wellness by creating a 5K fitness loop, which would connect the parks: Grove Street, Hubbard, Dickinson, Main Street, and Sunset Pond. Each park would offer activities and/or equipment. It was noted that East Haddam and Plattwood Park in Deep River offer similar activities.

The mission statement is to Create Community through People, Parks, and Programs.

Tim suggested including New City and the loop back to create the full 2.5 miles.

Carolyn noted that Ivoryton should be included. Tim suggested that additional activities could be included for the Ivoryton Park, Comstock, and incorporate the Land Trusts.

Ideas for Activities would include:

1. Warm up
2. Pull up
3. Push up
4. Dips station/Balance beams
5. Sit up station
6. Lunges/Squats
7. Actual fitness machines

John said he watched a father doing pull-ups while his child was playing, which further inspired him for this idea.

Brette Fitton said this is definitely viable. When John asked about next steps, Tim, Brette, and Carolyn suggested doing research on cost and where each activity would go. Tim said there could be sign at each park indicating the activities; John said, as a runner, he'd love to scan a code with his phone at his park.

Tony suggested starting at one park to see how it would go. Brette suggested that there be stations with discrete signs with a work out plan and directions to the next station and how many miles away to get there.

When Tony asked about any possible negatives, Brette said they'd have to research the aesthetics of the signs and equipment and any possible noise to neighbors.

For next steps, Brette suggested that we research the cost and design of the Fitness Loop, and prepare for a special meeting to discuss, and then present to the public for input.

John emphasized that he is very passionate about fitness as are many people in the Essex community.

Follow-up to Pickleball Discussion: Mary Ellen Barnes notified the Commissioners prior to the meeting that "the town hall auditorium is not available for pickleball, it has recently been converted to a high-tech conference and meeting room and cannot accommodate high impact recreational activities."

8. New Business: Mary Ellen Barnes notified the Commissioners prior to the meeting that she needed Commissioners to be onsite supervisors for some of the summer concerts. Commissioner sign-ups thus far are as follows: June 21 US Coast Guard Jazz Band concert on the Essex Green (Tony Mosa); the June

27 John Mortorelli & Friends concert on the Ivoryton Green (John Bean); July 5 Middletown Symphonic Band on the Essex Green (Tony Mosa), and August 8 Blue Cherry on the Ivoryton Green (Carolyn Field).

9. Commission Overview: Brette said it is nice to hear that the programs are doing so well.

10. General Discussion: It was discussed that while it was disappointing to have the Essex Go Bragh parade cancelled due to expected rain, it is difficult to plan for a rain date. Brette suggested asking Mary Ellen Barnes about the pros and cons of this.

Tony Mosa brought back a brochure from a food truck in Old Saybrook and said that Deep River has Food Trucks as well. Tim LeChance said it gets very complicated with Food Trucks due to permits.

With a motion by Tony Mosa and a 2nd by John Bean and Carolyn Field, the meeting was adjourned at 6:13pm.

Respectfully submitted by Susan K. McCann

Essex Park & Rec Clerk

Next meeting: September 12, 2023 at 5:30pm