

ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

December 3, 2014

(Please note these minutes have yet to be approved)

Bob Russo called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

Members Present: Bob Russo, Thomas Clerkin, James Rawn, Ginny Willetts, Tony Mosa, Peter Sarner (arrived at 7:10pm) P&R Director Rick Audet and Recreation Program Manager Mary Ellen Barnes was also present.

Approval of Minutes

James Rawn requested the minutes of October 2014 regular meeting be amended to include under Commission Overview – James Rawn Stated “I disagree with the facts of your statement and would further ask in the future if the Chairman’s wants to make a statement of this nature that he follows the standard protocol which is to relinquish the “gavel” to another Commissioner before such statements.”

Motion was made by Thomas Clerkin to accept the October 1, 2014 regular meeting minutes as amended Ginny Willetts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Peter Sarner arrived at 7:10.

Public Comment- None

Financial Updates

Rick Audet presented the current financial reports for the Park & Recreation Commission General Fund, Program Revenue Fund, Capital Sinking Fund, and Viney Hill Brook Park Awning Project.

As to the current budget of the awning project, Mr. Audet state he would confirm the amount of funds remaining in the Viney Hill Brook Park special fundraising account that can be used to cover the expenses of the awning project.

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to table the financial statements approval Tom Clerkin seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried

Director’s Report

- Hubbard driveway review – As directed by the Commission, Director met with Town planner on possible solutions or proposals to make the Hubbard Park driveway more conducive to traffic and pedestrian safety. Mr. Rawn will speak to Ms. Gould about possibly removing another arborvitae from the side of the entrance.
- With the goal of installing new picnic tables in all parks over the next couple years, in addition to purchasing as possible from general fund budget, Director suggests parks memorial picnic table program whereby a resident or local group can purchase a table for a park with a memorial plaque

installed. The Director also suggests we pay for and install a plaque at the new Clark's Pond picnic table commemorating the efforts of the Essex Foundation in their recent renovation efforts.

Correspondence

Dorothy Goss mailed a letter to the Department on October 12, 2014 regarding 50 years of Essex Park & Recreation as she was integral in starting the department in 1967, therefore 2017 being the 50th anniversary. The Commission discussed that commemorative efforts can be held in that year celebrating the 50 year anniversary.

December Park Permitted Events

Ivoryton Green

December 6

Ivoryton Illuminations

Parks Update – November & December, 2014

Main Street Park

Fall leaf removal completed 12/2/14.

Garden Club fall clean-up was completed 10/14/14.

Irrigation lines winterized, water shut off.

Proposal to spray for clover as approved by the Commission scheduled in early November with Greenscape of Clinton.

Professional Field Care weekly mowing as needed, fall clean-up scheduled.

New embankment saw good growth of grass, some plants doing ok, some may need to be replaced in the spring, will consult with Bob Russo.

Dickinson Park

Park clean-up performed 12/1/14.

DPW mowing as needed, turned in work order for fall clean up.

Director overseeded and fertilized the lawn in October.

Garden Club fall clean-up was completed 10/14/14.

Director met with Tree Warden to assess tree work at request of Garden Club. Pruning can be held off until spring, Spruce tree to left of entry gate is declining and may come down. Plan to use full budget line item on trees at this park in spring.

Hubbard Park

Fall leaf removal completed by Professional Field Care.

Will install sod on two bare spots in center field in spring.

Irrigation lines winterized, water shut off.

Basketball court leaf removal ongoing.

Topdressing of infield project completed.

Professional Field Care weekly mowing as needed, fall clean-up scheduled.

Grove Street Park

Fall leaf removal completed by Public Works.

Water line and locked box with spigot has been installed in the park creating locked water access for park.

Tennis court lighting, two bulbs are out, will repair in spring.

Looking to purchase 3 new picnic tables for park, Town funds will possibly be available for this purchase.

DPW mowing as needed, fall clean-up work order submitted.

Plan to use majority of park funds in spring for entrance pad on north side of tennis court, replacement wood fiber mulch for playground, 5-bike bike rack.

Sunset Pond

Fall clean up performed by Public Works Dept.
DPW mowing as needed, fall clean-up work order submitted.
New bench installed on north side of pond.
Park grill and concrete bench install scheduled for spring.

Ivoryton Green

Fall leaf removal completed by Professional Field Care.
Irrigation lines winterized, water shut off.
Professional Field Care weekly mowing as needed, fall clean-up scheduled.
Rear landscaped bed in good condition, will remove two rhododendrons in spring and bring in a few new plants.

Comstock Park

Fall leaf removal completed by Professional Field Care.
Turf is in good condition.
Professional Field Care weekly mowing as needed, fall clean-up scheduled.
Baseball fields in good condition.
General maintenance, mowing and upkeep ongoing.
New ELL batting cage has been repaired after initial install.

Clark's Pond

Fall clean up completed by Public Works.
Park maintainer cut two paths along pond for fishing access per request of Commission Chair.
New trees and grass along driveway and the two in the meadow good condition.
DPW mowing as needed, fall clean-up work order submitted.

Viney Hill Brook Park

Organic fertilization program scheduled / third of four application performed.
DPW work order to remove leaves from dog park has been submitted.
DPW mowing as needed, fall clean-up work order submitted.
Bob Russo stated that a Public Meeting was scheduled for Dec. 4, 2014 to discuss the Beaver issues at Viney Hill Brook Park.

James Rawn stated that the P&R Commission and the Conservation Commission work as partners to manage Viney Hill Brook Park with each entity being responsible for the Active and Passive recreation areas respectively. In regard to the recent discussions at the Conservation Commission meeting on beavers in VHBP, Mr. Rawn discussed the incident of high bacteria levels in the swimming pond that were a direct result of a flow of water into the pond caused by breaking up the beaver's lodge in front of the pipes a few years ago. Mr. Rawn also reviewed the structural and engineering related risks to the park and pond presented by the presence of beavers. Mr. Rawn stated if flooding of the smaller pond were to occur, the integrity of the dike could potentially be compromised to the extent that the swimming pond could be lost into the Mud River. Mr. Rawn stated that the outlet pipes needs to be kept clear of debris to help manage the flow of water, and that the amount of water that flows out of the swimming pond on a daily basis is over 100,000 gallons.

Mr. Rawn asked the Commission if they would consider taking a position to support the decision by the Conservation Commission to remove the beavers from Viney Hill Brook Park in order to maintain the integrity of the park as active and passive recreation areas.

Motion was made by Ginny Willetts stating that the Park and Recreation Commission supports the Conservation Commissions efforts to eradicate the beavers in order to preserve the structural integrity of Viney Hill Brook Park. Tony Mosa seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried

Program Managers Report:

Mary Ellen Barnes presented a summary of the programs presently running and acknowledged that Ginny Willetts and Peter Sarner have volunteered to coach youth basketball.

New Business –

a. Amendment to Park Facilities Reservation Guidelines and Wedding Fee

Motion was made by Ginny Willetts to amend the Park Facilities Reservation Guidelines and Wedding Fee as presented by Mr. Audet. Tom Clerkin seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried

b. Capital Projects Funding Approval Proposal- Main Street Park Seawall & Hubbard Baseball Field Fencing

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to approve utilizing the Capital and Sinking Fund for Main Street Park Seawall improvements and Hubbard Baseball Field fencing not to exceed 12,000.00. Ginny Willetts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion Carried.

Old Business –

a. Ivoryton Village Main Street Grant - Tabled

b. Viney Hill Brook Awning Project –Tabled

c. Viney Hill Brook Park Visioning Initiative – Tabled

d. Tennis Court private Instruction Policy – The Commission reviewed the policy and made suggestions to updates and Jim Rawn suggested we present the policy to the selectman for support.

Commission Overview –

Bob Russo stated that Rick Audet's last day is December 19, 2014. The Commission thanked Mr. Audet for his service. He informed the Commission that First Selectman Norm Needleman and Finance Director Kelly Sterner will be in at the January 2015 to review the job posting and process for the Director position & FY 15/16 budgetary process for the Park and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Mosa cautioned that it is the Park and Recreation Commission's responsibility to maintain control over the recruitment and selection process. Mr. Rawn suggested that the Commission form a subcommittee to develop and recruitment plan. Mrs. Barnes stated that she would be applying for the position of Park and Recreation Director and in the interim she would assume the duties and responsibilities of the department.

Public Comment – None

General Discussion- None

Motion was made by Ginny Willetts to adjourn at 9:05pm. Tony Mosa seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Barnes
Essex Park and Recreation