

ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 1, 2012

(Please note these minutes have yet to be approved)

Mike Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

Members Present: Anthony Mosa, James Rawn, Robert Russo, Mike Holmes, Doug Senn, Thomas Clerkin. Jack Spanger, Ed Burleson arrived at 7:45pm

Park and Recreation Director Rick Audet and Program Coordinator Mary Ellen Barnes were also present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Jim to table the approval of the minutes from the Jan. 4th regular meeting until our next scheduled regular meeting. Tony Mosa seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried

Public Comment:

No Public Comments

Financial Updates

Financial Reports were reviewed by Rick Audet. Mr. Senn asked for a review of the expenses for Sunset Pond. Mr. Audet explained they were for clearing weeds and growth from the dock area.

Mr. Holmes asked the Director to verify that the last two town events for this fiscal year are the Egg Hunt and the Essex go Bragh Parade & Festival. Mr. Audet verified that information.

Mr. Clerkin asked general questions about the special revenue fund and how it works. Rick Audet briefly explained the premise of the fund. Mr. Rawn also gave him a brief description as well.

Motion was made by Bob Russo to accept the financial statements as presented. Jim Rawn seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Director's Report

- A. Essex go Bragh planning is underway.
- B. Town Website group – Park and Recreation Director is a group member looking to form a recommendation on a new Town website for BOS
- C. Spring-Summer Brochure – creating a draft of brochure to be sent for design and printing
- D. Essex Great Outdoors Pursuit – first event is Saturday Feb 4, Winter Walk at Falls River Preserve
- E. Playground Inspection scheduled with Playground Medic & CIRMA – both are scheduled at this time to be completed in February.

Program Manager's Report:

Mary Ellen Barnes asked each Commissioner to consider nominating a Grand Marshal for the parade in addition she requested that all the commissioners be available for assistance the day of the event.

Mike Holmes reported that the feedback from participants of the Zumba class has been very positive.

Mrs. Barnes also stated that she is in the process of scheduling the Summer Concert Series. Mr. Holmes also stated that he feel that there should be a Summer Concert at Viney Hill Brook Park as well. Mrs. Barnes stated that she will schedule one of the concerts there.

Parks Report – February 1, 2012

- Viney Hill Brook Park – mowing of phragmites completed as of 1/30/12.
- All parks set for Winter. Full status and 2012 maintenance plan will be presented March 1, 2012 Commission meeting.

Old Business

Essex Basketball Center (EBC):

Mr. Rawn stated that he has been in contact with three large corporations and the feedback has been very positive.

Mike Holmes stated that he is very concerned about the project moving forward and feels that project is not getting the traction it deserves. He feels the Park and Recreation facilities are not in the same condition we were in a few years ago when this project was first presented and as a result we should be focusing our attention on our current facilities: Tennis Courts, Playground and Parks. He also state that our project partners are not as actively involved or as supportive as they once were.

Doug Senn stated that he too feels that our present facilities have maintenance concerns that are a priority such as Clarks Pond. He feels that we have access issues that need to be addressed and that should be a priority. He also feels that the project partners are no longer actively supporting the program. He also has concerns about the continuous maintenance fees of the EBC and feels that we will require public funds to maintain this facility. There was a general discussion as to what the yearly maintenance expenses would be. Mr. Senn commended the EBS Sub-Committee for their efforts but at this time we should commit our time and energy to our present parks.

Mr. Russo stated that he feels the real issue is the funding thus far, he feels we have a long way to go with a tremendous amount of effort already exhausted.

Tony Mosa is very disappointment in the level of commitment from The Park and Recreation Commission and townspeople and other who originally were on board with this project. He feels that the project may have to be abandoned if we do not get full support from the Commission. He also doesn't feel that there is a legitimate connection between our present park maintenance issues and this project.

Ed Burleson arrived at 7:45 pm and the Commission Chairman updated him on our discussion on the EBC.

Jim Rawn addressed the Commission: The Project was always meant to be completely funded by donations and we did have tremendous support from many different entities in the initial stages of planning for the project. He understands that there is no money in our town budget for new facilities and that is the challenging issue facing many organizations. Another challenge is the present economic environment, he also stressed that the commission, after many years of discussion determined that the Commuter Lot location was the optimum location for the EBC. Mr. Rawn also feels that the Commission should not set an arbitrary time line for complete funding of the project.

Mike Holmes is concerned that that maintenance issue of our current facilities has a direct effect on the support we receive from the public and other partners. Mr. Russo stated that he feels that it does have a direct effect on the public perception of the feasibility of this project.

Mr. Mosa again stated his concern about the commitment of the partners/commission to continue this project. Mr. Homes stated that he feels that the original partners and residents are no longer available or they no longer want to participate. Mr. Rawn feels that we did not function as a team. Mr. Mosa feels that it is difficult for him to work on this project without the support.

Mr. Holmes stated that this is a difficult situation and a difficult conversation that needed to be addressed, but felt it was necessary.

The Commission further discussed the EBC Project and each member was asked their thoughts on the future of the project. The Commission decided to schedule a special meeting to further discuss the EBC project.

Motion was made by Doug Senn to schedule a Special Meeting on Feb. 13, 2012 at 7pm Bob Russo seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Commission Overview:

None

Public Comment:

No Public Comments

General Discussion:

None

Motion was made by Tony Mosa to adjourn at 8:45 pm. Doug Senn seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ellen Barnes
Essex Park and Recreation