

**ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 6, 2013**

(Please note these minutes have yet to be approved)

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

Members Present: Cathy Bishop, Virginia Willetts, Thomas Clerkin, Bob Russo, Jim Rawn, Ed Burleson, Mike Holmes.

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Bob Russo to accept the minutes from the Jan. 2, 2013 regular meeting. Cathy Bishop seconded the motion with adjustments based on a commission discussion. Adjustment was made to the minutes, to read as follows: "Motion was made by Cathy Bishop to accept the budget as presented with adjustments. Excluding line item totals for Full Time Payroll and Part Time Payroll for further review later in the meeting. Bob Russo seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved" The motion to accept the minutes from the Jan. 2, 2013 regular meeting as adjusted was unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

Jacqui Hubbard, representing the Ivoryton Village Alliance, requested use of the Ivoryton Village Green for the Farmers Market. Cathy Bishop expressed her concern regarding holding the market on the day of the Run Local/Read Local Road Race. Ms. Hubbard agreed to work together to ensure that there are no conflicts with the Market and other activities. Mr. Rawn asked Ms. Hubbard if she personally oversees the market. She states that the Ivoryton Alliance is considering hiring a coordinator for the market, as they have a limited number of volunteers, and overseeing the operations of the market is a considerable amount of work. Mike Holmes stated that the Alliance will complete the same process as everyone else to reserve the park and will work directly with Rick Audet on the standard application process. Rick Audet stated that the condition of the turf in the park has been a concern and the department has been working with its contractor to improve the density of the turf for a few years and that heavy usage in the park may cause additional wear and tear. The Director suggested vendors set up in the parking lot and base as much of the market as possible on the asphalt. He also asked for a certificate of insurance to which Ms. Hubbard agreed to provide.

Financial Updates

General Fund Financial Reports were reviewed by Rick Audet. Program Revenue Fund Financial Reports were reviewed by Mary Ellen Barnes.

Ed Burleson left the meeting at 7:45pm

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

Directors Report:

- The Director will have a site visit on Thursday, February 7 at Viney Hill Brook Park with our CIRMA rep Matt Lip regarding our procedures for not having lifeguards next summer and to ensure we are within CIRMA's best practices, will report back to the Commission next month on this issue
- Essex Great Outdoors Pursuit update: The Essex Land Trust will host the Winter Walk on Saturday, February 9. Additionally, Park and Recreation will participate in the Arbor Day event on April 27. We are planning the event at this time and need to decide on type of tree to plant and at what location. The Commission discussed planting a tree in honor of Jack Spangler perhaps at Bushnell Park and all were in favor of that idea. Mr. Rawn would reach out to Jack's family to invite them.
- The 2013 Turf Management contract has been signed and we will use the services of Greenscape of Clinton.
- Rockfall Grant Awards to be announced mid-February, we had applied for a \$500 grant for 2013 with Rockfall for the Essex Great Outdoors Pursuit program
- The Spring / Summer brochure is being sent to printer this week

Program Managers Report:

Mary Ellen Barnes updated the Commission of the Essex go Bragh Parade, stating that Cissy Brown has agreed to be the Grand Marshal for the Parade. Also updated the Commission on several programs slated for Spring and Summer 2013.

Parks Report:

- Tree fell next to tennis court / PW in process of removing
- The Director summarized for the Commission the Sunset Pond work planned for this spring: a contractor will grade the slope paid for by Paul Foundation, Essex Public Works will rake seed and straw the area, and we will treat the pond for invasive vegetation paid for by Park and Recreation. Jim Rawn stated that he received a correspondence from Jim Godsman re: the progress at sunset pond. Bob Russo stated that the vendor applies to the state of CT DEEP for permits to perform the work, the DEEP send a copy the permit to our local inland wetland commission, therefore we do not apply directly to our local inland wetland commission for this work to be performed. The director informed the commission that all water based permits are secured in this manner, it is when we look to treat any land based vegetation that we must apply directly to local inland wetland agency.
- Ivoryton Green asphalt path removed, area to be seeded in spring / future project connect a path to gazebo
- Hubbard basketball court has cracks in paint surface which is under warranty and we will have the vendor perform repairs this summer.
- Upgrades to flag pole lights planned for Hubbard and Ivoryton Green with energy efficient LED lighting is planned with our electrician.
- Dugout at Comstock tagged with graffiti successfully removed
- Two baseball field gates repaired
- Hubbard Basketball ball court entrance path ordered, met with contractor
- Viney Hill Brook Park dog park benches order

New Business:

A Ivoryton Village Alliance Farmers Market:

See Public Comments.

B Signs at Town Parks:

Rick Audet stated that we had an incident where signage advertising a local group's registration was placed in the park without permission. He contacted the group at the behest of the Commission chair and they were apologetic and stated that they did not know they needed permission. Jim Rawn discussed if we should come up with a policy allowing or prohibiting signage. Mike Holmes believed that ordinances exist that establish guidelines for signage. Cathy Bishop asked if there is an easement up to 10ft. within the park. Jim Rawn replied "No". The Commission wants to review existing policies re: signage. Rick Audet will review and report back to the Commission with his recommendation or information he receives.

C Civic Campus STEAP Grant: Grove Street Park Playground & Tennis Court:

Rick Audet updated the Commission as to the status of the STEAP Grant Civic Campus Project. He informed the Commission that the Park and Recreation Commission would be fully briefed on the tennis court and playground portion of the project and will have input as they see fit on these two aspects. He stated that the Project Committee has 6 finalists from its RFP to who will perform survey and design work for the entire project. Currently Rick Audet is working on gathering information, researching trends and best practices, on playground equipment, and the bid process. Bob Russo asked if there are any aspects worth saving with the present playground. Rick Audet stated the swing set and arch climber will stay. Rick Audet stated that Grove Street Park is of great importance to the community and as such the equipment should be of the highest quality. Jim Rawn believes that 1 or 2 Commissioners should become more aware with the project and share updates. Mike Holmes volunteers to work directly with Rick Audet to develop 3 options to bring to the Commission for review. Cathy Bishop asked how this will affect accessibility to the park for the Run for Chris event and is there a time frame. Rick Audet stated that no time frame is yet established and while under construction the parking area, tennis court and playground area will not be accessible. Jim Rawn stated that he would advocate that we drill to test for water/drainage issues under the tennis courts prior to the firm being selected. Bob Russo stated that the engineers will want to test and determine drainage issues on their own and would disregard work performed by another firm.

Old Business:

A. Clark's Pond Rehabilitation Initiative:

Rick Audet received quotes from two vendors, will soon secure a third, and Bob Russo will review all proposals with the Director. May is the target date for the project to start. The goal of the project is to remove as much of the invasive aquatic vegetation as possible that is now threatening the health and viability of this park's pond.

B Main Street Park Embankment Project

Rick Audet updated the Commission on the procedures/plans to complete the Main St. Park Embankment Project. Rick Audet stated there was a suggestion to install a seawall at the embankment, that option is still being investigated. Bob Russo stated that most likely the sea wall will not be a viable option and that permitting for such may not come to fruition. Several members of the Commission asked about the FEMA deadline for application and what information will be needed to complete the application. Rick Audet will review the application requirements to ensure they are completed and that FEMA funds would remain available to us to apply for. Ginny Willett stated that we must be sure to do whatever is needed to ensure that the application is complete and submitted in

time. Mike Holmes stated that he would be comfortable with performing all the engineered plans and permitting work in 2013 and the project itself being completed in 2014 due to the many intensive projects we have going on this year.

C 2013 Lions Club Project at Viney Hill Brook Park:

Tom Clerkin updated the Commission on the project. The sub-committee has not yet met with the builder. Jim Rawn stated that we need a confirmation of costs prior to committing any funds to the project. Mr. Clerkin confirmed that the Lions Club is committed to only doing the labor. Cathy Bishop asked that the project be run by CIRMA. Ms. Willett wants to be sure that we focus on getting the costs of the project.

D Special Revenue Fund Cap Amount/Purchasing Guidelines Policy

Rick Audet presented a rough draft copy of a proposed policy to establish a revenue fund cap and purchasing guidelines. The Commission reviewed the policy making minor changes to the policy. They asked Rick Audet to revise the policy with the said changes and present it to the Commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Commission Overview:

Mr. Rawn expressed concern regarding some issues that arose since our last regularly scheduled meeting. He stated that the Commission discussed a "Plan of Action" during the Executive Session last month's meeting. The plan was to establish procedures to determine personnel reviews, step increases and other Human Resources related functions as they pertain to the Park and Recreation Staff and the Commissions responsibility. He also was concerned that the general fund Budget that was submitted to the BOS to revenue was not fully approved by the Commission, as it did not include the salary expenses for the Park and Recreation Staff. He further stated that performance reviews for the paid staff were not completed by the Commission again as planned during the executive session.

Mike Holmes stated that he doesn't know the exact process for employee reviews however he was asked to conduct reviews of the Park and Recreation Director and has done them in the past few years. Mr. Holmes also stated that Human Resource Administration is the responsibility of the Town.

Mr. Rawn stated that he is concerned that the entire commission is not involved in the process. He believed that a formal review should be performed as a collective review of the entire commission.

Mr. Rawn also stated that Commission is responsible for the Park and Recreation Budget and the voters received a budget based only in part on the Commissions recommendations.

Mr. Rawn stated that in the Town organizational chart, the Park and Recreation Commission reports directly to the Voters.

Cathy Bishop would like to be included in all areas of Park and Recreation administration.

Tom Clerkin believes that it would be impossible for the Commission to review staff performance without some kind of criteria and guidelines.

Mike Holmes stated he believes that human resources are a town administration function.

Commission Overview Continued:

John Bauman has been named an Alternate Member of the Park and Recreation Commission.

Motion was made by Tom Clerkin to adjourn at 10:00 pm. Bob Russo seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ellen Barnes Essex Park and Recreation