

ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 5, 2012

(Please note these minutes have yet to be approved)

Mike Holmes called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Members Present: Mike Holmes, Cathy Bishop, Virginia Willetts, Thomas Clerkin, Jim Rawn, Park and Recreation Director Rick Audet and Program Manager Mary Ellen Barnes were also present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to accept the minutes from the November 14, 2012 special meeting. Cathy Bishop seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried

Public Comments: (combined with New Business – Lions Club Project at Viney Hill Brook Park)

Dan Mercuri, a member of the Essex Lions Club, attended to discuss that the Lions Club would like to perform a community project at Viney Hill Brook Park in 2013. Mr. Mercuri stated that they would be interested in building dog park equipment as well as a gazebo for the park. Mr. Audet presented to the Commission drawings and plans from a few years ago for a covered structure to be built at the park that VRHS students designed and then was sent off to a professional architecture firm for review and changes. Jim Rawn, in his capacity as the former Viney Hill Brook Park Project Co-Chair, reviewed the history and details of this particular project at Viney Hill Brook Park including the plans, drawing and diagrams of the previously planned covered structure. Mr. Audet stated there is a fund balance of approximately \$7,800 from the original Viney Hill Brook Park project that could be used to support this project.

The Commission supports the plans and would like to pursue the offer from the Lions Club to supply the manpower to complete the dogpark and covered structure project. Virginia Willetts suggested that we form a committee working directly with the Lions Club to establish a final plan for Commission approval, and this was agreed to by the Commission.

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to establish a Sub-Committee to work directly with the Lions Club to develop a final plan for improvements at Viney Hill Brook Park. Cathy Bishop seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Park and Recreation sub-committee representatives will consist of Thomas Clerkin, Cathy Bishop & Virginia Willetts.

Financial Updates

General Fund Financial Reports were reviewed by Rick Audet. He also updated the Commission of the information he obtained from Connecticut Water Co. as to water usage at each park. The Commission asked Mr. Audet to continue his examination of our water bills.

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

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

Directors Report:

- Rick Audet stated that he has submitted the Park & Recreation Commission Capital Improvement Program budget, as discussed and agreed upon by the Commission at 11/14/12 special meeting, to the Town capital budget review working group led by Selectman Marzi. The budget identifies 5 capital projects as well as an inventory of all parks infrastructure and equipment.
- Mr. Audet stated that he received a report of a taxus bush having been trimmed at Main Street Park in proximity to the irrigation control box and was asked to find who had trimmed it.
- Mr. Audet stated that he is researching playground designs and vendors in preparation for STEAP grant work. Jim Rawn asked if the Town has to match any portion of the STEAP grant or supplement the grant. Mr. Audet answered no, and stated that the STEAP grant covers the cost of the tennis court reconstruction and new ages 2-5 and 5-12 playscapes in full, with PW performing playscape demo work.

However, the Commission could choose to supplement the grant with funds from its general fund or capital/sinking fund budgets to purchase more and/or larger pieces of equipment but we do not have to match the grant funds. Mr. Rawn also asked if we have verified the status of the funds from the State as having been received. Rick Audet stated that the grant has been approved and the monies will be forthcoming from the state as it is a reimbursement grant.

Rick Audet stated that the Park and Recreation Capital Fund Balance is approximately \$53,000. Mike Holmes stated that we should investigate the option to build a playground with a life span could be increased by utilizing the general fund or capital fund monies of park and recreation.

Cathy Bishop stated that we must use the funds only for purposes as outlined in the grant. Jim Rawn has some concerns about the Tennis Courts drainage and asked if there was an option to move the tennis courts. Rick Audet stated that it would be costly to move the light poles and rebuild all fencing necessary for a tennis court to a nearby location in Grove Street Park and these funds are not in the grant. Rick Audet states he has already had an engineer who specializes in drainage onsite in regards to the tennis court and also has made it clear to the STEAP committee that proper drainage is of paramount importance to the success of the tennis courts.

- Mr. Audet reported that the Morning with Santa Event went well, and we had about 30 kids and their families attend.

Parks Update:

Rick Audet distributed a Park Update list, the Commission was instructed to review at home and any questions should be directed to Rick Audet.

- Director met with Commissioner Bob Russo and a CT DEEP rep at Main Street Park re Embankment Project
- Dugout at Comstock tagged with graffiti, removal efforts ongoing
- Liming at Grove, Main Street, Ivoryton Green completed
- Two baseball field gates scheduled to be repair, estimate approved from Fence World Inc.
- Contracted fall parks clean-up work ongoing now through early December

- Fall clean up at Viney Hill Brook Park completed / will order 2 new benches for dog park for spring installation
- Installed recycle bin at tennis court
- Basketball ball court entrance path ordered, met with contractor
- Mr. Richard Helmecki contacted First Selectman office, inquiring about Viney Hill Brook Park and whether the Town could assist with mowing on paths. He currently stated that he weed-whacks a couple times a year but he is finding he cannot keep up with the growth. The public works department is currently assisting with maintaining the trails.

Program Manager's Report:

Ms. Barnes notified the Commission of collaboration with the State's DEEP and Park and Recreation to host a Free Family Ice Fishing Class on Jan. 23, 2013. She distributed flyers for the program to the commissioners.

New Business: FY 13/14 park and Recreation Commission Budget Request:

Rick Audet distributed copies of the Budget Request Packet to the Commissioners. He also notified them of the Budget Workshop of December 18, 2012. He stated that we need to have the worksheet completed by the conclusion of our Jan. 2, 2013 meeting so that we can submit it on or before its due date of Jan. 6, 2013. Rick Audet and Mary Ellen Barnes will submit an estimated budget to the commission that will be reviewed and amended as needed by the commission prior to the Jan. 2, 2013 regular meeting.

Old Business:

A. Clark's Pond Rehabilitation Initiative:

Rick Audet reviewed the options that are available to rehabilitate the pond. Park and Recreation is in possession of one proposal for this project, the Commission is to decide on if and how to fund this work.

B. Special Revenue Fund Cap Amount/Purchasing Guidelines Policy

Rick Audet reviewed the proposed Special Revenue Fund Cap Amount & Purchasing Policy that he had written for the Commission. The Commission asked Mr. Audet to create a formula that will dictate the amount the fund is to be capped at and write a clause into the policy that will allow the Park and Recreation Commission to review and amend the cap amount on an annual basis as necessary.

Commission Overview:

None

Public Comment

None

General Discussion

None

Motion was made by Tom Clerkin to adjourn at 7:35 pm. Cathy Bishop seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ellen Barnes Essex Park and Recreation