

TOWN OF ESSEX

29 West Avenue

Essex, CT 06426

Minutes of the Essex PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

5:30 pm - Essex Town Hall & Zoom

1. Call to Order: Brette Fitton called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
2. In attendance: Carolyn Field, Brette Fitton, Anthony Mosa, Dan Needleman
Absent/Excused: John Bean, Chris Perry
Staff: MaryEllen Barnes, Director of Essex Park and Recreation
3. Approval of Minutes: May 2, 2023 Regular Meeting: With a motion by Dan Needleman and a 2nd by Tony Mosa, the minutes were approved.
4. Meeting Schedule for 2023-2024: Brette Fitton approved the schedule.
5. Public Comment: There was no public comment.
6. Financial Reports & Budget Updates: MaryEllen Barnes is completing the end of year report. She said that 16% of the budget has been used and Essex Park and Rec is \$1000 under budget. The budget has stayed the same. Portelet companies changed from Olsen (a local company that had been sold to a larger, regional company, based in Massachusetts) to Finkelday. MaryEllen said that Finkelday has provided good service and is a local company. Dan Needleman concurred that the portelets are clean; there are some spider webs. MaryEllen said they are cleaned twice a week. With a motion by Brette Fitton and a 2nd by Carolyn Field, the financial reports were approved.
7. Directors Report, Parks & Program Updates: MaryEllen Barnes presented the following report:

Park Events: Summary from meeting: MaryEllen Barnes reported that the Pumpkin Festival will now be held on Sunday. This allows for more groups to participate in the Festival. Brette Fitton noted that better signage is needed for the events so that everyone knows where to go. MaryEllen said that the Festival will take place rain or shine (unless hazardous conditions).

MaryEllen reported on the successful summer camps and the excellent counselors. 100 people attended the outing to the Hartford Yard Goats game, which was free for all.

Brette would like to pick a date in October to hold a cookout at Sunset Pond. The Police Union should be invited as they did great work on Sunset Pond.

Ivoryton Village Pumpkin Festival – Press Release – 2023

Come out and celebrate on Sunday, October 29, 2023 the 23rd Annual Ivoryton Pumpkin Festival. The event brings more than 1500 visitors to the green for FREE festival activities! Enjoy all the best traditions of Autumn and Halloween! It is a great time for the entire family, and we encourage the Halloween spirit with costumes! So much so that once again this year the event includes a Costume Parade.

Be sure to take the Great Pumpkin Challenge! We need families, groups, community organizations and local businesses to bring carved pumpkins to the Ivoryton Village Green from 1p-3p.

The festival will be filled with exciting events and activities for the entire family to enjoy.

Join Bushy Hill Nature Center 10a-Noon on their Nature Center front lawn located at 253 Bushy Hill Rd. Ivoryton, CT - for a Pre-Festival Pumpkin Carving Party. All ages and abilities are invited to create a carved masterpiece that will be displayed at the festival's lighted Pumpkin Stroll. Special thanks to the Ivoryton Business Alliance and Bushy Hill Nature Center at Incarnation Center for providing pumpkins.

Returning this year, a Costume Parade -Although the parade is open to all – It is geared from those 12 & Under. The first 125 little marchers who are registered ONLINE ONLY will receive Pumpkin Festival swag and goodie giveaways) So register ASAP! www.essexct.recdesk.com Use the programs tab.

Parade will step off from the corner of Walnut and Main Street in the Village of Ivoryton. We will march down Main Street to get the Pumpkin Festival Fun started with live music with the FEDERATION from 4:30-6:30 also at 4:30pm –The Painted Smile will be at the Brickside Pizza's side patio to add the final touches onto your costume with facepainting! Alongside The Painted Smile there will be a Selfie Station and tabletop games for friends and families to enjoy courtesy of Celebrations on the Shore.

Satisfy your sweet tooth with cookie decorating with the volunteers from Tri-Town Youth Services starting at 4:30p at the Ivoryton Village Green.

Enjoy a not so scary horse drawn hayride sponsored by the Park & Recreation Commission. Rides will leave from the Village Green from 4:30p-6:30p. If you are ready to be spooked, don't miss the Haunted Happenings at the Ivoryton Library from 4:30p-6:30p.

We will have special guest appearances. Including local horror novel author Frank Larson will be on hand to for his new book INFEST signing (books will be available for purchase on site as well)

Enjoy free refreshments, courtesy of local nonprofit community organizations - while they last on the Ivoryton Playhouse Patio also starting from 4:30pm.

Don't forget to take a stroll around the village and take in the sights of the beautifully carved pumpkins on display. Pumpkin lighting begins at 5pm and will stay lit threw the night (pumpkins must be picked up before 9am Monday morning.

For more information regarding the Ivoryton Village Pumpkin Festival, please call 860-767-4340 x148 or visit www.essexct.gov

Summer 2023 Programming Summary -

Summer Camp (k-6) we had 110 children attend summer camp 2023 at EES. Our field trips included visits to Mystic Aquarium, Hammonasset State Park, Groton Bowling Center, the CT Science Center, and Cedar Lake. We partnered with the Essex Library for Storytime and went on Historical Walking Tours with the Essex Historical Society. The feedback from Parents and campers was extremely positive. We had a wonderful team of counselors under the direction of Tim LaChance. We offered 36 weeks of scholarships to 30 children thanks to support from the Essex Garden Club and the Middlesex Community Foundation M. Jones Fund.

Jr. Warriors Basketball (k-8)-44 campers

Engineering (k-5) – 20 campers

Running Rams (k-8)- 36 campers

Tennis (ages 7-15)-20 campers

Yoga in the Park (adult) 36 participants

Family Night with Hartford Yard Goats – 100 attendees

Summer Concert Series – 9 concerts with 1 rain out.

Fall 2023 Programming

Yoga (ages 16 +), Cupcake Decorating (ages 6-16) Archery (ages 8 and up), Zumba, Running Rams (grades k-8)

Basketball(k-8) Tennis (ages 7-15) Tennis (Adult 16+) Zumba (k-6), Men's Basketball

Parks Update

All Parks – Completed projects include new slate patio and teak Adirondack chairs for Sunset (curtesy of Essex Police Union and Paul Foundation. 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. DPW mulching of beds and edging in both parks as well. Essex Garden Club fall cleanups are scheduled for Main Street Park and Dickenson Park.

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.

8. Old Business

- a. Update on Fitness Trail Project: Brette Fitton would like to table discussion on the fitness trail project until John Bean can be present as it was his idea and he has been working on ideas for the project. Some questions did come up: Tony Mosa asked who was anticipated to use the Fitness Trail. Tony and Brette asked whether the fitness equipment should just be in one park; rather than spread out over many. MaryEllen talked about the potential \$30,000 cost of the equipment, which could be purchased in bulk or piece by piece. Plattwood Park in Deep River

has an example of the fitness trail. Brette suggested that perhaps equipment could be set up in one park and run as a trial run to see who and how people utilize it. MaryEllen asked if equipment was in Comstock or Viney Hill Park, would people use it.

- b. Erin Go Bragh Parade and Easter Egg Hunt: MaryEllen Barnes noted that the Erin Go Bragh Parade is on March 23rd and that Easter falls on March 31. Discussion took place that the Easter Egg Hunt could happen on the same day as the Parade since the Egg Hunt does not last very long. Schedule discussed was: Egg Hunt at 8:30am and parade lift-off at 11:30am.

- 9. New Business: Tony Mosa and Dan Needleman followed up on the pickleball discussion in that there will be courts at Home Field Advantage and at VRHS.
- 10. Commission Overview: Brette Fitton said that 2 alternate commissioners are needed.

Brette noted that she walked on Viney Hill Brook and it was beautiful.

- 11. General Discussion: Seeding is happening on Main Street Park in Essex; Dan Needleman said they are air raiding Hubbard Park. Tony Mosa said that the summer concerts had a great turnout and that the bands enjoy coming. Dan asked about how to hire Food Trucks. MaryEllen said you have to go through the Health Department and have to guarantee the Food Trucks a minimum amount of money. We can sponsor the Food Trucks; they have to be permitted.

With a motion by Brette, and a 2nd by Dan and Tony, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25pm.

Next meeting: Tuesday, November 14 at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan K. McCann

Essex Park & Recreation Commission Clerk