

ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

December 4, 2013

(Please note these minutes have yet to be approved)

Jim Rawn called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Members Present: Tony Mosa, Cathy Bishop, Jim Rawn, Ginny Willets

Park and Recreation Director Rick Audet and Recreation Program Manager Mary Ellen Barnes were also present, along with Commissioner Thomas Clerkin, who was notified by Mary Ellen Barnes that he must abstain from voting as he had yet to be sworn in by the Town Clerk to renew his appointment which expired on December 1, 2013

Motion was made by Ginny Willets to appoint Tony Mosa as acting Chairman for December 4, 2013 Regular meeting Cathy Bishop seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Jim Rawn commented that the Commission should determine a process for the election of the Commission Chairman and encouraged all member to attend the January 8, 2014 meeting as he suggested that the Commission vote for the Commission Chairman at the January 8, 2014 Regular Meeting. The consensus of the commission members present was that we should table a vote for our new chairperson to the next meeting as there should be more members present for such an action.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to amend the minutes to read under Old Business Civic Campus Steap Grant - Rick Audet stated that the project will involve new fencing for the Tennis court, one estimate was received for \$18,500.00 for new fencing. In addition under Public Comments (Second to last Agenda Item) amend to read – Local resident Peter Sarner stated he was he is interested in becoming a member of the commission. He has volunteered to coach the Kindergarten Youth Basketball Program and would like to pursue joining the commission. Mr Sarner will contact the Town Clerk to see what the process is to join the Commission and accept the minutes from the November 6, 2013 regular meeting as amended. Ginny Willets seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Financial Updates

The General Fund Financial Report dated 12/1/2013 was reviewed by Rick Audet, Tom Clerkin asked about an expenditure for Hubbard Park which was for tree removal. The water line expense was of major concern, as there was an increase at the Hubbard Park account due possibly to a leak. Rick Audet stated that Jordan Brook Irrigation did the repairs, however we need to investigate if the repairs were done correctly or if there is still another undetected leak in the system. Jim Rawn stated that he is happy to help with an analysis of water usage and has volunteered to work with Rick Audet to finalize the investigation.

The Special Revenue Fund Financial Report dated 12/1/2013 was presented and currently shows a net fund balance of \$38,829.03. Jim Rawn stated that he has been in contact with Dr. Matt Pantera, head of the Recreation Department at Springfield College and who the Commission had consulted when

developing the Park and Recreation Program Fund. Jim Rawn stated that he asked Dr. Pantera about the status of Park and Recreation Departments regionally and how current trends in park and recreation and society as a whole have affected operations and revenues of Park and Recreation Departments.

The Commission again expressed the need to include special events payroll monies into our general fund budget and lessen the expenses we realize for special events in our Special Revenue Fund budget. The Director stated he would see that this is in our budget request in our upcoming budget process. The Director also stated that due to payroll costs that he feels it will be very difficult to break even in our special revenue fund budget in our current fiscal year. Mary Ellen Barnes reviewed status of the revenue and expenses for upcoming programs and current programs that are not included in the report.

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

Director's Report

Rick Audet reported that he received a proposal from the Town Planner for a cross walk at the intersection of Grove Street and High Street with access into Grove Street Park. The Commission discussed the pros and cons of creating an additional entrance into the park, the discussion determined that a cross walk and entrance into the corner of the park was a good idea as better and safer access into parks is a benefit to the community.

Rick Audet submitted a Park and Recreation Sinking Fund Revenue History Report to the Commission; In addition a report including the Reserve/Sinking Fund Balances and a list of all sinking fund expended allocations for the Park and Recreation Department was also presented to the Commission. Rick Audet reviewed the status of several pending expenditures that are slated to be expensed from the Sinking Fund, approximately 58,959.00 will be withdrawn from the fund for the following items, 30,000.00 for the playground installation, an amount not to exceed \$25,000.00 for the Tennis Court Fencing & balance of playground installation, and \$3959.00 for various approved projects including Main Street Embankment Project and Clarks Pond Water Treatment.

Jim Rawn stated that the Park and Recreation Commission never approved the tennis court fencing request from our Sinking Fund, he stated his disagreement that the Commission had no involvement in certain construction aspects of the Civic Project, even though we have a vested interest in the project. Jim Rawn asked who was on the Civic Campus Project Team, Rick Audet stated that Norm Needleman, Kelly Sterner, Dave Caroline, Rick Audet and John Guskowski. Mr. Rawn asked Mr. Audet who approved that the monies were to be taken out of the Sinking Fund for the tennis court fence. Mr. Audet stated that Norm Needleman along with the Director of Finance, Kelly Sterner made the decision. Tom Clerkin questioned how they were able to do that without the Park and Recreation Commission's approval. Do they have authority to do that? Mr. Rawn stated that the Park and Recreation Commission has a fiduciary responsibility for the parks and all related funds. Mr. Clerkin stated why we (the Commission) go through all these procedures for other park and recreation policies and procedures. Tony Mosa feels that the Commission has been removed from any involvement in the project and as a result he feels we have no responsibility for funding the project from our Park and Recreation Sinking Fund. Jim Rawn suggested the we invite Director of Finance Kelly Sterner to the next Commission meeting to discuss the process for expensing from the Park and Recreation Sinking Fund.

Mr. Rawn also requested that a history of approvals for Sinking Fund expenditures be conducted to ensure that they were documented within our meeting minutes.

Correspondence: Rick Audet received correspondence for the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station dated November 12, 2013 and reviewed it with the Commission. Our report stated that neither the European hardwood ambrosia beetle nor the Oak ambrosia beetle were found.

November Park Permitted Events

Ivoryton Illuminations

Parks Update

Main Street Park

Turf is in good condition towards the water and thin in heavily shaded area near gazebo in park. We will continue efforts to improve our turf conditions, mostly turf density.

Painted 2 picnic tables

Fall clean-up ongoing.

Final mowing has been performed.

Moved bench at request of Garden Club.

Garden Club performed fall clean-up of the beds.

Irrigation System turned off.

Dickinson Park

Fall clean-up to be performed by PW

Hubbard Park

Turf inside baseball field in very good condition, turf outside baseball field was heavily seeded in the fall.

Trimmed euyonomous bush along road side fence.

Fall turf care completed, fall clean-up ongoing, and final mowing completed.

Stored volleyball net

Work order turned in to cover scoreboard and take down batting cage netting

Grove Street Park

Wear and tear to grounds due to construction, repairs scheduled for spring.

Will install bike rack at Grove Street Park for spring 2014.

Replacing ballast on hold, all power to court turned off

Fall turf care finished and final mowing performed.

Fall clean-up ongoing.

Stone wall embankment clean-up completed.

Sunset Pond

Turf is in fair condition.

Fall clean-up to be performed.

Ivoryton Green

Turf was in very good condition in mid-October, did see a lot of wear and tear due to special events.

Narrowed landscaped bed, seeded.

Fall turf care and final mowing completed.

Park fall clean-up ongoing.

Comstock Park

Aeration and overseeding performed

Dugouts cleaned out / bases stored for winter

Turf in very good condition considering no irrigation and extremely dry Sept / Oct

Clark's Pond

Turf is in fair condition.

Fall clean-up to be performed by Public Works dept.

Viney Hill Brook Park

Turf is in fair to good condition.

Dog park fall clean up started.

Fall general weed whacking and clean up completed

Organic fertilization product application 4th of 4 applications completed.

Fall clean-up to be performed by Public Works dept.

Program Managers Report:

Mary Ellen Barnes stated that the updates are as discussed under the Financial Statements for the Program Revenue Fund.

New Business:

Main Street Park Embankment Project – Tabled

2013 Lions Club Awning Project at Viney Hill Brook Park:

Tom Clerkin summarized the status of the project stating that it is still slated for completion by the end of November; he also presented a sample of the roofing material and a project expense summary report.

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

Essex Foundation – Clark's Pond Enhancement Project

Rick Audet stated that the project is nearing completion, and suggested that Commission members go to the park to see the improvements. Both Rick and the commissioners present who had seen the improvements to date at the park think that it looks fantastic.

Commission Overview:

Tabled

Public Comment:

None

General Discussion:

None

Motion was made by Cathy Bishop to adjourn at 9:15pm. Ginny Willetts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Barnes
Essex Park and Recreation