

ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

January 8, 2014

(Please note these minutes have yet to be approved)

Tony Mosa called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Members Present: Tony Mosa, Bob Russo, Tom Clerkin, Jim Rawn, Ginny Willets

Park and Recreation Director Rick Audet and Recreation Program Manager Mary Ellen Barnes were also present, along with Finance Director Kelly Sterner

Tony Mosa opened the meeting calling for the nomination of Robert Russo for the position of Park and Recreation Commission. Mr. Russo stated he is happy to accept the nomination.

Motion was made by Tony Mosa to appoint Robert Russo as Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission, and to immediately assume the duties of the Chairperson. Ginny Willetts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to accept the December 4, 2013 minutes as presented. Ginny Willetts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried

Motion was mad by Jim Rawn to accept the December 11. 2013 Special Meeting minutes as presented. Tony Mosa seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Review of Sinking Fund Process

Director of Finance, Kelly Sterner, discussed the process of appropriating funds from the Town's Sinking Fund accounts. She stated that appropriations are based on actual costs and the requests are usually stated as "not to exceed" a certain appropriation. The Finance Department developed the procedure to approve requests for appropriation, based on the amount and purpose of the funds. The Commission asked Ms. Sterner if there are any written procedures to request appropriations. Ms. Sterner stated that only two funds are established by ordinances and that there were no written procedures however the finance department and Board of Finance (BOF) utilizes a "best practices method" for requests.

Mr. Clerkin asked if that we had no written procedures then anyone can move money? Ms. Sterner stated no they cannot, that best practices requires requests to go through a vetting process. She reviewed that process using the Park and Recreation sinking fund as an example: Park and Recreation Commission approve the request, the Board of Selectman (BOS) then approves the request, The Board of Finance approves the request and then the request is presents to the Town Meeting. Amounts under a certain threshold, \$5,000.00 can be approved by the BOF once per year without Town meeting.

Ms. Sterner stated that the appropriation of funds by the Selectman for the Tennis Court Fence replacement was an unintended consequence of not being able to utilize the original fencing.

Jim Rawn gave a brief history of the appropriations that the Commission has utilized stating complications occur when we do not follow best practices.

Tony Mosa asked which two sinking funds were required by ordinance's, Ms. Sterner replied the Tree Committee and Open Space Sinking Funds.

Bob Russo requested that the Commission be provided the guidelines or best practices procedures established by the Board of Finance to request sinking funds. Ms. Sterner recommended that the Commission send a request to the BOF for that information. Chairman Russo requested that Rick Audet send a memo to the BOF requesting that they establish written guidelines/best practices for sinking fund requests.

Bob Russo asked if it was possible to generate a report to track sinking funds, as this would be useful to the Commission. Kelly utilizes a report based on the appropriations. It tracks the payments and expenses associated with the appropriation. She can copy that on request. Bob Russo stated that that report would be sufficient.

Ms. Sterner also briefly reviewed the budget process, stating the Park and Recreation budget focuses on the General Fund as the Special Revenue Fund was established to grow and build programs to another level without distorting the General Fund budget. Mr. Rawn stated that the process is designed for checks and balances.

The Commission thanked Ms. Sterner for her attendance, and told her that it was greatly appreciated.

Financial Updates

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.

Director's Report

Two evergreens in Ivoryton Green – was asked to look into the trees, consulted with tree warden, the trees are in a state of decline however not at a point where they should be actively taken down, just continue to monitor.

Tennis Court lighting – met with rep from Musco for a quote, the Town is meeting with NexGen on a grant program to change town owned street lights and tennis court lights to LED.

Essex Little League wrote on possibility of a food truck sponsor during next Little League season.

Also there is discussion in Little League for a batting cage to be installed at Comstock, however there are a number of site restrictions.

Thank you Letter to the Editor to Essex Foundation for Clark's Pond project / plan for ribbon cutting in spring.

Director reported he intended to renew contract with Jordan Brook Irrigation Inc. for 2014 and also renew contract with Greenscape of Clinton LLC for turf care services for 2014, unless any commissioner had further questions or concerns.

Correspondence

Planning Commission sent Essex Plan of Conservation & Development Update - 2014

January Park Permitted Events

None

Parks Update

Main Street Park

Tree thinning and pruning has been completed by Bartlett Tree Service

Dickinson Park

No report

Hubbard Park

Scoreboard covered and take down batting cage netting taken down
Basketball court cleaned off for winter.

Grove Street Park

Wear and tear to grounds due to construction, repairs scheduled for spring.
Install new walkway to playground in spring.

Sunset Pond

Ordered a second Facility Unsupervised sign for north side of pond, discussed with our CIRMA rep.
Will install prior tennis court benches along edge of north side in spring for additional park seating.

Ivoryton Green

Ivoryton Village Alliance to remove all holiday decorations from park.
With new Ivoryton Main Street Grant, will secure new parking lot curbing for the park.

Comstock Park

No report.

Clark's Pond

Essex Foundation Project – all trees and driveway culvert installed.

Viney Hill Brook Park

No report.

Program Managers Report:

Mary Ellen Barnes discussed the status of Programs and Plans for the Irish Festival & Parade

New Business:

- A. FY14/15 Park & Recreation General Fund Budget Request
- B. FY14/15 Park & Recreation Capital and Sinking Fund Budget Request
- C. FY14/15 Park & Recreation Special Revenue Fund Budget Request

The Park and Recreation Commission reviewed the budgets as presented by the Park & Recreation Director and Budget Sub-Committee. Chairman Russo recommended that the Commission vote at a Special Meeting on the Budget to allow for time all the anticipated expenses that were not yet confirmed to be updated to the new budget. The Commission agreed and scheduled a Special Meeting to Approve the Budget on Jan. 22, 2014 at 7pm.

Main Street Park Embankment Project – **Tabled**

2013 Lions Club Awning Project at Viney Hill Brook Park-**Tabled**

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

Rick Audet stated that the Bauman Foundation may donate some monies to assist with the improvement of the Tennis Courts at Grove Street Park, suggesting that additional monies will help to upgrade improvements to the courts above and beyond what was planned for and budgeted in the Civic Campus Project's STEAP Grant funds.

Essex Foundation – Clark's Pond Enhancement Project

Rick Audet stated that the project is completed, and suggested that Commission members go to the park to see the improvements. The Commission suggested that a thank you letter be sent to the Valley Courier Editor to recognize the work done by the Essex Foundation. Bob Russo will write the letter.

Commission Overview:

Tom Clerkin & Ginny Willetts were both sworn in as full members of the Commission.

Public Comment:

None

General Discussion:

None

Motion was made by Tony Mosa to adjourn at 9:55pm. Tom Clerkin seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Barnes
Essex Park and Recreation