

TOWN OF ESSEX
Park and Recreation Commission

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Regular Members

Robert Russo, Chairman
John Bauman
Thomas Clerkin
Anthony Mosa
James Rawn
Douglas Senn
Virginia Willets
Edward Burleson, Alternate
Peter Sarner, Alternate

Unapproved

Minutes - Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Call to Order and Seating of Members

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Park & Recreation Commission was conducted on March 4, 2015 in Conference Room A, of the Essex Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Attending Members:

Robert Russo
Virginia Willets
Peter Sarner
Doug Senn arrived at 7:18 p.m.
Edward Burleson arrived at 7:40 p.m.

Absent Members:

John Bauman
Thomas Clerkin
Anthony Mosa
James Rawn

Staff:

Mary Ellen Barnes, Interim Park & Recreation Director
Stella Beaudoin, Recording Clerk

R. Russo called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m.

Approval of February 4, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

The following changes were recommended to the February 4, 2015 Minutes:

- Page 2, 3rd paragraph, correction of spelling, change Jim Baum to *Jim Rawn*.
- Last page of Minutes, correction of spelling to: Augie *Pampel*

MOTION made by D. Senn to approve the February 4, 2015 Minutes as amended; **SECONDED** by V. Willets ; **Voting In Favor:** R. Russo, V. Willets, D. Senn, P. Sarner; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.

Public Comment

Cecilia Brown presented. Ms. Brown stated that she is a former, long-time member of the Park and Rec Commission and chaired the Commission for 19 years. Mr. and Mrs. Brown met with M. Barnes earlier in the week to express concerns over the size of the basketballs utilized by the younger grades and the height of the rims. Ms. Brown attended a basketball game in both the Towns of Chester and Essex and she stated that she observed a dramatic changes in the program. Ms. Brown stated that at the inception of the basketball program, with the input from several volunteers who had experience in the game, guidelines were established by the Park and Recreation Commission and the program flourished.

Ms. Brown observed that the rim height of the basketball hoops appeared to be at 10 feet for all of the age groups and she stated that the rim height for third and fourth grade children is eight feet and for fifth and sixth grade students, nine feet. Ms. Brown stated that a ten foot rim height for third and fourth graders does not allow them to gain any skills. Ms. Brown distributed an article entitled "*Moms Team*" *The Trusted Source for Sports Parents* in which the American Sport Education Program (ASEP) makes the following recommendations:

- 6-foot rims for kindergarten, first and second grades;
- 8-foot rims for third and fourth grades (8-10 year olds);
- 9-foot rims for fifth graders;
- 10-foot rims for 6th grade and above. Ten feet is what the bulk of what the international and American children shoot at, especially once they get to middle school.

The correct rim height is a primary consideration in teaching children proper shooting form.

Ms. Brown stated that it is the responsibility of the Park and Recreation Commission to make programs developmentally appropriate and fun for the age group. Ms. Brown also expressed concern regarding the appropriate ball size. Ms. Brown noted that the younger children are playing with a larger size ball.

R. Russo thanked Ms. Brown for speaking at this evenings meeting.

Virginia Willet stated that the regulation size basketball for girls has a circumference no higher than 27.5".

M. Barnes stated that the regulation size basketball for grades 5 and 6 has a circumference of 28.5".

D. Senn suggested that a reminder be sent out to the coaches as to the appropriate ball size based on the age of the player and to suggest that the coaches ensure the lowered rims for the younger players.

R. Russo stated that the Commission will research what is recommended for particular age groups.

Ms. Brown thanked the Commission for their time and consideration.

Financial Reports / 2015-2016 Budget Update

M. Barnes stated that there is no change in the budget from last month to this month. The budget as submitted was fully approved as was the Town's budget for the 2015/2016 fiscal year. The Board of Finance will make a final review.

M. Barnes stated that the year-to-date revenue is down because there are less children participating, however expenses are also down.

MOTION made by D. Senn to approve the 2016/2016 FY Budget; **SECONDED** by P. Sarner; **Voting In Favor:** R. Russo, V. Willets, D. Senn, P. Sarner; E. Burleson **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

Director's Report / Parks & Program Update

M. Barnes commented on the 2015 spring and summer brochures and the 2015 summer program. The criteria in place is that a child must be 5 years of age or older to participate in the summer program at Essex Elementary School (EES). M. Barnes stated that she has received requests from the parents of children who are 4 years old requesting that their child be allowed to participate in the summer EES program.

MOTION made by D. Senn to adhere to and enforce the age guideline of 5 years+ for participation as related to summer programs; **SECONDED** by V. Willet; **Voting In Favor:** R. Russo, V. Willets, D. Senn, P. Sarner; E. Burleson **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

M. Barnes stated that V. Willet has consented to serve as Basketball League Commission Representative.

V. Willet stated that third grade students would benefit from a lower rim height. Currently the third and fourth grade students work with the same rim height.

P. Sarner commented on the importance of the part that the coaches play in guiding our youth and stated that there are ways to make basketball for children of all ages as a learning and fun experience.

M. Barnes stated that she has upcoming meetings scheduled with Park and Rec in the Towns of Deep River and Chester.

R. Russo asked M. Barnes to obtain recommendations for age appropriate court length and rim heights. R. Russo stated that the Park and Recreation Commission will gather information, discuss options and review the survey results related to the hoop height and court length.

V. Willets suggested that a survey be sent to the parents seeking their input on the program.

R. Russo suggested the creation of subcommittees within the Park and Recreation Commission. The Commission would benefit from these smaller working groups who would handle the larger events; i.e., summer concerts and Essex go Braugh, etc.

M. Barnes distributed a job listing for two Recreation Aids to the Park and Recreation Department. The application cut-off date is March 11, 2015.

E. Burleson left the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Hubbard Park Report: M. Barnes stated that she is meeting with the president of the Essex Little League (ELL) to discuss and determine their needs.

R. Russo stated that there will be no use of the fields until the Park and Rec Commission sends out notification indicating that the fields are appropriate for play.

M. Barnes will meet with the Resident Trooper and the Gatekeeper, Ray Kasmirsky to discuss the cessation of the opening and closing of the gate effective April 1, 2015. The gate will remain open and the Essex Troopers will patrol the area.

Viney Hill Brook Park: M. Barnes will meet with Trooper Ray Kasmirsky to discuss the cessation of the opening and closing of the gate effective April 1, 2015. The gate will remain open and the Essex Troopers will patrol the area.

D. Senn suggested that the Commission consider the installation of a fishing pier at the Viney Hill Brook Pond. A subcommittee comprised of R. Russo, P. Sarnier and D. Senn will look into the construction of a pier and the likelihood of stocking the pond. There was discussion on the possibility of a future fishing derby. This same subcommittee will also look into the installation of a horseshoe pit.

Ivoryton Green: M. Barnes reported on the live fence which has now been included in the bid document.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Hubbard Park Improvements**

M. Barnes reported on the fence repair which is scheduled for spring 2015. Atlas Companies, LLC has ordered the fencing and repair will occur as soon as the weather permits.

- **Essex Go Bragh & Event Calendar**

M. Barnes stated that Essex Go Bragh event is scheduled for March 14, 2015. There have been many phone calls and people have expressed excitement over the program. Edward Jones who is a new participant, will host face painting and a hot chocolate station.

The egg hunt is scheduled for March 28, 2015.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Ivoryton Grant Updates**

M. Barnes reported that the construction bids proposal has been finalized and included in the proposal is the live hedge for the Ivoryton Park.

M. Barnes reported on the park's electric system and the port o let privacy fence.

- **Main Street Park Seawall Project Update**

R. Russo reported that the existing seawall is in need of repair. At some point in the near future, a mason will need to replace and re-mortar the stones and the cracks in the seawall.

Commission Overview

R. Russo reported that he would like for the Commission to transition to the formation of standing committees for the larger projects.

P. Sarner suggested that R. Russo put together a list of upcoming projects and determine which projects would benefit from the organization of a subcommittee.

Adjournment

MOTION made by P. Sarner to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation meeting to be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at the Essex Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room B, 29 West Avenue at 7:00 p.m.; **SECONDED** by D. Senn ; **Voting In Favor:** ; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Secretary