

TOWN OF ESSEX  
Park and Recreation Commission

---

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426  
Telephone (860) 767-4340 x110 • FAX (860) 767-8509

**Regular Members**

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

**Unapproved**

**MINUTES Wednesday, October 7, 2015 - Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order and Seating of Members**

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

**Attending Members:**

Robert Russo  
Virginia Willetts  
Douglas Senn  
James Rawn  
Peter Sarner arrived at 7:10pm and was seated for T. Clerkin

**Absent Members:**

John Bauman  
Edward Burleson  
Anthony Mosa  
Thomas Clerkin

**Staff:**

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

R. Russo called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Approval of September 2, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** made by D. Senn to approve the September 2, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented;  
**SECONDED:** V. Willetts; **Voting In Favor:** R. Russo, V. Willetts, J. Rawn, D. Senn; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Selectman's Report**

First Selectman, Norman Needleman was in a Board of Selectmen meeting and unable to attend this evening's Park and Rec Commission meeting.

### **Financial Reports**

M. Barnes reported that the water expense for the summer 2015 was higher than it was in 2014 due to the dry weather conditions. The company who installed the irrigation system evaluated the system and determined that the mechanics of the system were in order.

M. Barnes reported that other expenses were minimum, noting that the numbers as listed on the Community Events line item reflect monies dedicated to the Summer Concert Series and purchases for the Pumpkin Festival.

M. Barnes noted that outside funds and donations are deposited into the General Fund and donations specific to certain programs must be earmarked by the donor to the Program Revenue Fund.

M. Barnes reported that the Program Revenue funds to date are at \$16,536.50 and added to revolving fund balance, the total is \$48,223.43

M. Barnes reported that the summer camp was successful, with great staffing and good participation.

### **Director's Report / Parks & Program Update**

M Barnes reported that the kitchen in the Essex Town Hall will be utilized one afternoon per week for a youth cooking program.

M. Barnes reported that the Pumpkin Festival will occur on October 24, 2015 on the Ivoryton Green and distributed a list of the Commissioner's assignments.

M. Barnes stated that she hopes to have a total of 100 pumpkins for the festival and that the Police Union will donate 50 pumpkins for carving. R. Russo will donate 12 pumpkins. D. Senn will donate 10 pumpkins. M. Barnes stated that she in need of volunteers to carve the pumpkins.

The resident trooper, stated that he will shut down Main Street and Summit Street to motor vehicle traffic during the Pumpkin Festival. M. Barnes reported on the following activities related to the Festival:

- The Ivoryton Inn will offer the cider, and set up and distribution will be staffed by Ivoryton Inn volunteers.
- Music with Margie which will be located at the side patio of the Ivoryton Playhouse.
- Edward Jones will hire a photographer and do a photography booth station located at the side patio of the Ivoryton Playhouse.
- The haunted library will be back.
- Bushy Hill Nature Center volunteers will facilitate a face painting booth.
- The Addams family is this year's school play at VRHS and Park and Rec will do a haunted movie. night featuring the Addams Family movie.
- The Lions will facilitate the hot dog station.
- Hot chocolate station at All Saints Church.
- Potato Chips set up & distribution, managed by V. Willetts & P. Sarner.
- The pumpkin toss will occur at the Ivoryton Tavern.
- Pumpkin lighting – interact, managed by T Clerkin, all volunteers and Park and Rec Department.
- Horse Rides.

M. Barnes will be on duty throughout the day to manage this event.

### **Grove Street Park**

- Monday & Wednesday Tri-Town Cheer until December 1, 2015
- Replacement of a bulb in the center of the courts and two bulbs on the perimeter of the courts.
- DPW mowing is ongoing.
- DPW will perform the fall clinic in November.

### **Sunset Pond**

- DPW mowing park ongoing.
- Local resident, Susan Malan volunteered to plant daffodil bulbs this month for spring bloom

### **Ivoryton Green**

- The irrigation system is off and winterization is scheduled for October 28, 2015.
- Farmer's Market on Saturdays will be ongoing until October 10, 2015.
- Run Local Read Local scheduled for October 17, 2015.
- Pumpkin Festival scheduled for October 24, 2015.
- Professional Field Care - mowing ongoing.

### **Comstock Park**

- Essex Little League, Monday and Saturday until October 31, 2015.
- M. Barnes reported that she arranged to have the batting cage taken down from Comstock and Hubbard.
- M. Barnes reported that she received a communication from a concerned parent related to the poor condition of the field. Areas along the infield turf which are raised, was attributed to the summer heat resulting in a ramp effect when the ball rolled from the grass to the clay. Professional Field Care came in a cut back the turf to limit the "ramp" effect. After discussing the field condition with Joe Kuzaro along with the Essex Little League (ELL) president and vice president, M. Barnes suggested that the Commission investigate creating a "skinned" field for the small field at Comstock. The ball fields at John Winthrop Middle School and Valley Regional High School within the Region 4 School District, and the Devitts Field in Deep River are all skinned fields. M. Barnes cited the following reasons for consideration.
  - Maintenance - The transition between turf and skinned areas on an infield can be one of the hardest areas to maintain on any type of athletic field and is often a factor in the outcome of a game. The importance of the skinned area is evident by the fact that 90% of the game is played on this part of the field. Irrigation is crucial to turf care, and without that option at Comstock, a fully skinned field would be ideal insofar as providing a proper play area throughout the season
  - Provide a field that is available to all levels of play; softball, t-ball, coach pitch, little league. Every division can play on a skinned field without the "turf area" impeding on play.

- M. Barnes stated that she would like the Commission’s opinion on transitioning to a skinned field, and requested approval to meet with the Region 4 Facilities Director, Bruce Glowac to discuss the benefits and installation of a skinned field, which Region 4 currently utilizes.

**MOTION** made by D. Senn to upgrade Comstock Park, specifically as related to the small field; to install a regulation size girls softball field, and for the Park & Rec Commission to establish a five-year plan to be placed on the Capitol Improvement list for the installation of electricity and other upgrades to the Comstock fields; **SECONDED:** V. Willetts ; **Voting In Favor:** R. Russo, P. Sarner, V. Willetts, J. Rawn, D. Senn; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

D. Senn suggested placement of an article in Essex Events of the Commission’s intent to upgrade the Comstock Park

J. Rawn suggested that the Commission speak with John Guskowski, Essex Town Planner and inquire about grant funding that would subsidize the upgrades to Comstock Park.

**Clark’s Pond**

- DPW mowing is ongoing

**Viney Hill Brook Park**

- DPW mowing is ongoing.
- The Gate is being opened and closed daily.
- No update from Bogaert Construction related to the completion of the Pavilion awning project.

**Hubbard Park**

- The infield upgrades which include clay conditioning and re-sodding of the playing field, will be completed next week.

**Dickinson Park**

- The Garden Club fall park cleanup is scheduled for October 15, 2015
- DPW is mowing is ongoing.

**Main Street Park**

- Normal turf management practices are scheduled for October, including the Early Fall Lawn Care with Greenscape, Clinton.
- Professional Field Care weekly mowing ongoing
- Irrigation was increased during the summer months with daily watering which eventually was reduced to five days per week through October 1 when the watering stopped.
- Winterization is scheduled for October 28, 2015

**New Business**

R. Russo distributed the Town of Essex Code of Ethics and asked members to sign off in acknowledgement of receipt. R. Russo presented a brief report on the meeting that was conducted by

the Board of Selectmen related to the impetus for the drafting of the Code of Ethics for the Town of Essex.

The Town Counsel with the oversight of the Board of Selectmen is working to bring up-to-date the Town ordinance and the Town Code.

### **Old Business**

M. Barnes reported that there is no change related to the construction related to the pavilion at Viney Hill Brook Preserve. The Commission has previously paid for the roofing material.

R. Russo reported that First Selectman Norman Needleman will attend the Commission's November 5, 2015 Special Meeting to discuss the Park and Rec revised ordinance. The Selectmen would like input from the Park and Rec Commission, and after review of the revisions, a vote of support for the revised ordinance. R. Russo asked members to review the ordinance and be prepared to discuss on November 5, 2015.

M. Barnes reported as related to meeting attendance, she sends out an email one week prior to each Park and Rec meeting in which she requests that Commissioners respond in a timely manner as to whether or not they are able to attend the monthly meeting.

### **Commission Overview**

An overview of activities and related reports were previously discussed.

### **General Discussion**

D. Senn reported on the ongoing success of the geocaching activity, which is a recreational scavenger hunt activity for finding hidden objects by means of GPS coordinates posted on a website. D. Senn previously initiated the geocache activity within Viney Hill Brook Preserve, Comstock Park, Clarks Pond, and Main Street Park.

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION** made by P. Sarner to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Special Meeting to be held on Wednesday, November 5, 2015 at the Essex Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room B, 29 West Avenue at 6:00 p.m.; **SECONDED:** J. Rawn **Voting In Favor:** R. Russo, P. Sarner, D. Senn, V. Willetts, J. Rawn; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin  
Recording Secretary