

ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
Jan. 5, 2011

(Please note these minutes have yet to be approved)

Chairman Michael Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Members Present: Michael Holmes, Anthony Mosa, Jack Spangler, Doug Senn, Stacia Libby

Park and Recreation Director Rick Audet and Program Coordinator Mary Ellen Barnes were also present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Tony Mosa to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2010 regular meeting. Doug Senn seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Financial Updates

Financial Reports were reviewed. Reports included fiscal year 2010/2011 general fund and special revenue budgets as of December 31, 2010.

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

Rick Audet presented preliminary budget figures for the 2011-2012 fiscal year which will be submitted to the Selectman's office on Friday Jan. 7th.

Director's Report

- A. Falls River Pond Project proposal
- B. Essex Great Outdoors Pursuit
- C. Essex Go Bragh Irish Parade & Festival
- D. Maintenance / Mowing Contract

Parks

- F. Comstock dugouts – all four concrete foundations have been laid
- G. Spring parks projects will be reviewed at February Commission meeting

Program Managers Report:

Mary Ellen Barnes stated that the initial planning for the Essex go Bragh is underway. Ms. Barnes requested that four commissioners contact a specific group to participate in the parade. Jim Rawn agreed to contact the fire department; Stacia Libby will contact Ralph

Herman about antique cards. Jack Spangler will contact the Historical Society, and Tony Mosa agreed to contact the Essex Veterans about acting as Color guard for the parade.

Parks Update

- 5.1 Comstock Park field naming proposal – Mike Holmes reviewed the request to name one field at Comstock Park after Joseph Sparaco. He also reviewed the petition that was submitted in support of the field naming proposal. He stated that the Town Clerk verified approximately 150 names on the petition, which represents approximately 3.1 percent of the Town of Essex population. Mr. Holmes then reviewed the requests in accordance with the policy. As stated the PRC (Park and Recreation Commission) required the input of the BOS (Board of Selectman). Mr. Holmes read excerpts from the November 17th BOS Regular Meeting. Mike restated Selectman Needleman's concerns about the naming policy. In addition, Mr. Holmes reviewed an email he received from the 1st Selectman, Phil Miller.

Stacia Libby wanted to clarify the request, stating that the naming request is to re-name a field within the park.

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to name one of the two fields at Comstock Park the Joseph F. Sparaco Memorial Field. Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was open for discussion.

Mike Holmes opened the meeting for general discussion, by the commission members. Jack Spangler feels that it is confusing to name a field with in the park.

Tony Mosa believes that the resume submitted with the request was weak and the biography was very limited and could be represent a dozen of people.

Mr. Spangler questioned the option of creating a plaque that recognized people like Mr. Sparaco who have contributed over the years.

Jim Rawn gave a brief description of a situation that arouse at Main Street Park. there was a discussion back then but then about naming items in the park and felt that there are many deserving people and that there are challenges to accommodate all the requests as we have a limited number of properties that can be recognized and singling out people who have done so much is not realistic to mane individual things after individual people. Mr. Rawn feels that this is a very significant decision that should go to a town meeting.

Doug Senn commented that there is no signage at Comstock Park and it is important that we understand that we are naming a field with in Comstock Park not renaming

the park. Mr. Senn also stated that he cannot say enough good things about Mr. Sparaco. Mr. Senn feels that the people who signed the petition who were not “verified” should not be discounted. Feels that to name a field is in no way disrespectful to the Comstock Family. Mr. Senn’s opinion is that the commission should approve the application as presented.

Stacia Libby feels we should not be discussing revising the policy. Feels that the PRC also not be constrained by the BOS suggestions or opinions.

Tony Mosa stated that it is not his intention to consider redoing the policy at this time. The volte should be based on the policy and information on hand.

Doug Senn believes that we should have reviewed the supporting documentation that was submitted but Mike Holmes and Tony Mosa stated that it is not the PRC responsibility to advise the presenting party on what to submit with the application. Mike Holmes stated that there are only three fields in town and in bigger communities with more fields having more opportunity to recognize deserving individuals. It is his personal opinion that there are many people who also contribute to the community.

General Discussion was closed.

The motion was restated

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to name one of the two fields at Comstock Park the Joseph F. Sparaco Memorial Field. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. Motion was voted on with Doug Senn and Stacia Libby voting in favor and Mike Holmes, Jim Rawn, Jack Spangler and Tony Mosa against. Motion did not carry by a majority of the commission.

Basketball Center Update

Mr. Rawn stated that the commission with seek support for all the towns commission members for the project and that an email about fundraising will be sent to all the PRC members next month.

Commission Overview

None.

General Discussion

Mr. Rawn stated that the Inland wetland commission is holding a meeting on January 23rd at Town Hall. It is the PRC understanding that we will get access use of the cabin ideas for use submitted by the Park and Recreation Director, which would be coordinated with the Scouts.

Mr. Strickland Hyde made a statement in regards to Comstock Field. He stated the field was established in 1911 and that there is a lot of history at the Comstock Field. He stated that the Fire Department has also been involved in maintaining the field over the years. He also wanted to state that he grew up with Joe Sparaco and he was a very wonder man. Mr. Hyde understands the position that the PRC was in but in but felt in was important to come to the meeting to support the naming request.

Mr. Jim Clark stated that he felt that there was a misconception that the PRC was renaming the park. Mr. Audet read the press release that stated that the request was to name one field within Comstock Park.

Motion was made by Mike Holmes to adjourn at 8:37pm. Tony Mosa seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryEllen Barnes
Program Coordinator
Essex Park and Recreation