

ESSEX PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

May 4, 2011 - MINUTES

(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, James Rawn, Robert Russo. Stacia Libby joined the meeting at approximately 7:15pm.

Park and Recreation Director Rick Audet was also present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Tony Mosa to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2011 regular meeting.

Bob Russo seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Financial Updates

Financial Reports were reviewed. The Park and Recreation Director reviewed the current status of the department's general fund and special revenue budget.

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

Director's Report

- A. Park and Recreation Commission budget status – The Board of Finance reviewed our budget proposal and it now goes to May 9 Town Meeting vote.
- B. Summer Concert Series sponsorships – The director informed the Commission that \$1750 in sponsorships to date have been received. Mike Holmes stated that he wishes we could have more sponsorships from local businesses, specifically doctor and dentist offices, and encouraged Park and Recreation to reach out to such businesses more.
- C. Fall 2011 brochure – The Director stated that for the fall 2011 brochure, we will contract out the design and printing and attempt to redo the look and layout of our publication. The Department is soliciting a paid Ad space for the back top half of the brochure with local businesses.
- D. Essex Great Outdoors Pursuit – Our next EGOP program is the Fishing Class on May 20 and Fishing Field Trip on May 21. The CT DEP will conduct their CARE program which teaches many aspects of fishing to novices. The class will be held at Essex Town Hall, and fishing will be conducted at Chatfield Hollow.
- E. Comstock dugouts – There was general discussion and consensus that that new dugouts are great, and extended kudos and appreciation to the Essex Little League board and any other volunteers for their tremendous efforts in this successful project. It was noted and discussed that Essex Little League plans to install a plaque on one of the dugouts.
- G. Summer Camp Staff – The Director informed the Commission that the summer camp staff interviews and hiring process has been completed. All staff will attend CPR and BBP training as well as staff orientations.
- H. Request to contribute to Essex Elem AED purchase – Mr. John Orr had delivered a letter to the Park and Recreation Department detailing his initiative to raise money in the community through donations and purchase two AED units for Essex Elementary School. There was discussion on this request.

Motion was made by Jim Rawn to contribute \$1500 towards the purchases of the AED units with the understanding that Mr. Orr, or a qualified member of our local Fire or Ambulance organizations, would provide annual training on an ongoing basis to our summer camp staff. Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

- I. Eagle Scout Project Ideas – An Essex resident emailed the Park and Recreation department looking for ideas for an Eagle Scout project for his son. Ideas were discussed and it was agreed we should ask the scout if he has any special skills or areas of interest. It was agreed that the Director would follow up with them.
- J. Park and Recreation truck – The Park and Recreation Department recently secured an older pick up truck to help in the basic operations and maintenance of our parks. The Director is taking the truck to a local garage to ensure it is a safe and viable vehicle for the Department prior to moving any further with this equipment.

Program Managers Report:

Rick Audet presented the program managers report. Mr. Audet reviewed the department's current programs and their registration totals. He went on to discuss our program offerings for the summer. It was noted that many programs have a good turnout so far, and we are also hopeful that our summer programs continue to increase in registrations. Mr. Audet described new program offerings such as Skyhawks Cheerleading and Adult Yoga among others as our ongoing efforts to increase and improve our program offerings to the community. Mr. Audet concluded by stating that our Program Coordinator Mary Ellen Barnes has done an excellent job with our programming of late and noted her efforts to create new opportunities.

Parks Update

Mr. Rick Audet distributed a parks maintenance tasks list that have been completed so far this spring. Work is ongoing with many more work orders and tasks to be completed in the parks.

Main Street

Cobblestone pads installed under 2 benches

Extend stone at walkway to cover bare grass area near water fountain "patio"

Professional Field Care performed a thorough spring clean up

Our plumber installed new water valve box

April 12 – Garden Club Clean up

Mulch beds have been worked on by Hortus

Hemlocks sprayed by SavaTree

Turf care: aerated, sprayed for weed control, organic fertilization planned for Week of May 9

Opened and tuned irrigation system, checked system operation

Ivoryton Green

Install new fence rails and posts in portions of split rail fence

Raked, weeded, edged, mulched flower bed

Trimmed hedges between port o let and flag pole

Met with Ivoryton Gardeners on their proposal to add rose bushes

Added topsoil to low areas and holes

Dug up curb stop damaged during winter storms, turned water on

Turf care: aerated, sprayed for weed control, organic fertilization planned for Week of May 9
Opened and tuned irrigation system, checked system operation

Essex Elementary

Softball field work: installed new clay, leveled, cut back weed growth, edged, painted bases - increasing the "playability" of this field
Installed new padlock onto Tennis Court gate

Grove Street

Installed new playground mulch under swing and arch climber
Professional Field Care Spring performed a thorough spring clean-up per our contract
PT Maintenance staff general park clean up
Replaced all older picnic tables with new ones.
Ordered all parts and work to be performed on playscape in accordance with playscape inspection
Took out the old bench with concrete footing
Tree work: trimmed dead branches on tree just to right of trail (walking away from town hall) adjacent to far edge of 2-5 playscape, cabled the sugar maple, took out 2 maples at rear of park along road, safety prune trees in this immediate area as well
Added stone to walking path, fixed drain problem
Turf care: aerated, sprayed for weed control, organic fertilization planned for Week of May 9

Hubbard Field

Fence repairs, secured with wire fence ties as necessary
Recycle bin installed
Pulled out bush by foul ball canister
Trimmed back growth along fence line
Painted dugouts and green trim of shed/bathrooms building
Turf care: aerated, sprayed for weed control, fertilization
Field work: rolled field, dragged infield, edged, scarify clay, add clay, built 2 new bullpen mounds, Opened and tuned irrigation system, checked system operation
Put up volleyball net

Tennis Court

Fence repairs / secure with wire fence ties as necessary / reinstall post caps and support rails as necessary.
Spring clean up of court
Put up nets and windscreen

Dickinson Park

Turf care performed: aerated and sprayed turf at no additional cost to contract

Viney Hill

Organic fertilizer application to turf areas on April 28
Installed swing set mulch
Winter debris pick up, general grounds care
Cleared walkway up to dog park

Sunset

Pulled dead willow tree off bank

Comstock

Baseball field fencing – install wire fence ties as necessary

Dugouts project completed

Scraped gazebo in preparation to paint

Purchased new gazebo cupola

Installed recycle bin

Installed safety cap to baseball fence

Clark's Pond

Clean park sign

Check picnic table

Jim Rawn stated that we need to ensure the community is made aware of our programming and park maintenance efforts. Stacia Libby stated that Facebook is a great way to accomplish this. Bob Russo mentioned our email blasts and Tony Mosa added that Essex Events magazine are good ways to promote our efforts. It was agreed that Park and Recreation would use all available means to continue its efforts in communicating to our residents.

Basketball Center Update Mr. Rawn stated that the Essex Basketball Center subcommittee is currently seeking support from the town's commission and board members for the project. Mr. Rawn has attended the Board of Selectmen and Zoning Board meetings and will soon attend Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, and Board of Finance for their support. Mr. Rawn discussed the need to have the Town's commission and board members show their support of the project prior to going out to businesses and families in the community. It was agreed that Park and Recreation staff will assist the EBC subcommittee in the administration of the fundraising phase of the project. Stacia Libby raised the idea as to whether we should focus on our capital improvement projects now instead of the basketball court.

Commission Overview

None

General Discussion

Bob Russo discussed his attending the Opening Day ceremony for Essex Little League. He stated that the event was very well done by Little League and was very enjoyable to attend. Mr. Russo also stated that certain areas of the ball field turf are subpar and he hopes we can improve them. Mike Holmes agreed with Mr. Russo in his assessment of the field conditions and stated that we are working closely with our new turf care vendor, and, while most of our turf areas are in good shape currently, are hopeful in being able to improve our fields and town greens to even more optimal levels.

Jim Rawn stated that he is glad the Park and Recreation Capital and Sinking Fund request was brought back up to the \$13,000 that was proposed. Mr. Rawn recommends that we continue to refine our Capital Improvement Plan, and meet with key Town personnel and Board members to continue a discussion to ensure that our capital improvement needs, including the three immediate concerns of the Grove Street Park playscape, Grove Street Park tennis courts, and Essex Elementary School tennis courts, are properly addressed and supported by the Town.

Mr. Rawn also stated that the Park and Recreation Department's letter to the editor regarding the Essex Garden Club was a job well done. Mr. Rawn concluded by stating that all community signs that may be placed in the foot of Main Street Park should be placed to the far east edge of that space as to not detract from the gateway to the park.

Motion was made by Tony Mosa to adjourn at 8:20pm. Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Audet
Park and Recreation Director
Essex Park and Recreation