



TOWN OF ESSEX  
Park and Recreation Commission

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426

**Regular Members**

*Brette Fitton, Chairman*

*Anthony Mosa*

*John Bean*

*Daniel Needleman*

*Carolyn Field*

**Alternates**

*Vacancies*

**Unapproved**

**MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, May 3, 2022**

**1. Call to Order**

The Essex Park & Recreation Commission conducted their regular on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, 5:30 p.m. This meeting was made available to the public via Zoom. Park and Recreation Commission Chairman Brette Fitton welcomed everyone to the Park and Recreation Commission public access meeting. The Park and Recreation members announced themselves.

**2. Attendance**

Attending Members:

Brette Fitton

Dan Needleman

John Bean

Carolyn Field

Absent Members:

Anthony Mosa

Staff:

Mary Ellen Barnes, Director Park and Rec Department

Stella Caione, Recording Clerk

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

**a. Meeting Minutes**

- Regular Meeting March 1, 2022

- Special Meeting April 13, 2022

**MOTION** made by D Needleman to approve the March 1, 2022 meeting minutes as presented;  
**SECONDED;** C Field; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, C Field, J Bean, D Needleman; **Opposed:** None;  
**Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

**MOTION** made by D Needleman to approve the April 13, 2022 special meeting minutes as presented; **SECONDED**; C Field; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, J Bean, C Field, D Needleman; **Opposed**: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 4/0/0. **No Discussion**.

4. **Public Comment** – There were three members of the public present; Patrick Callahan, Jean Little and Ann Goodwin.

Ann Goodwin noted that she would welcome an opportunity to have an open discussion surrounding current location of the rebounder. By way of history, installation of the rebounder was an Eagle Scout Project, which was installed on July 15, 2021, and done so with no discussion with the neighbors about possible impact to the neighborhood. The rebounder court is used for tennis, lacrosse, and soccer, and utilized from early morning up until 9:30 p.m, which is when lights are turned off for the day. It is difficult to monitor the area for the intended use. Ms. Goodwin stated that she is looking for discussion on ways to enhance the use to the benefit of the community.

#### 5. **Financial Reports & Budget Updates**

**General Fund**: M Barnes reported that 75% of the general budget has been expended. M Barnes noted that there is a little bit of money left remaining to finish up earmarked projects that are on the table and there are several invoices yet to come through from spring projects that were accomplished, all of which will come out of the remaining balance.

M Barnes stated that the water was turned back on. Ms. Barnes met with the irrigation company who reported that they did not see any leaks or concerns. Ms. Barnes stated that she will diligently monitor usage to align with budget. There has been a rainy spring which has been indicated per the rain monitors that are installed at all locations.

M Barnes stated that the resurfacing still needs to be accomplished from the damage done by floods at Comstock.

**Program Revenue Fund**: M Barnes reported that this budget item is in the black with a balance at a little over \$100.

**MOTION** made by C Field to approve the May 2022 monthly fiscal report as presented; **SECONDED**; D Needleman; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, J Bean, C Field, D Needleman; **Opposed**: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 4/0/0. **No Discussion**.

#### 6. **Directors Report, Parks & Program Updates**

M Barnes reported that the rear beds at Comstock park will be tended to at the Valley Regional community day.

## **Park Events**

May Market – 5/7/2022

Sailing Masters –Burning of the Ships Parade 5/14/2022

## **Baseball League Usage for Spring 2022 (Comstock & Hubbard)**

Little League

Babe Ruth

Shoreline Baseball

## **Spring/Summer 2022 Programming**

M Barnes reported that there has been a great response to the Park & Rec spring programs which are at capacity limits, to include, Running Rams, Tennis, and Archery. Outdoor yoga/Beginner yoga is being offered and a seven-week, full day camp is back up and running. After a two year hiatus, an Engineering program is being offered. VRHS volleyball is offering a clinic for middle schoolers, grades 5-8. M Barnes reported that the number of summer concerts were increased last year and those concerts will resume again this year. M Barnes noted that Park & Rec is pleased to put forward such diverse offerings for the entire population.

## **Parks Update**

M Barnes reported that a good deal of general maintenance and full spring clean-up is planned throughout all of the parks and Park & Rec will work with DPW and contractors to complete those projects this spring.

\*Thanks to the generous support of the Essex Police Union and the Paul Foundation DPW is in the process of installing a new patio furniture and Adirondack chairs at Sunset Pond. This project should be complete by the end of the month.

## **Main Street Park**

All Spring clean-up is complete. The Essex Garden Club did their spring cleaning and DPW edged and mulched the beds.

## **Grove & Tennis Courts**

No updates.

## **Dickinson Park**

No updates.

## **Sunset Pond**

\*Previously discussed.



### **Ivoryton Green**

VRHS Community Day volunteers will be working to mulch, weed and edge the planting beds on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Comstock Park**

All hazardous materials have been removed and new clay installed. The driveway has been leveled and filled with process material.

### **Clark's Pond**

No updates.

### **Viney Hill Brook Park**

No updates.

### **Hubbard Park**

All hazardous materials have been removed and new clay installed. The dugouts were painted, and new bull pens have been installed. A Hose will be donated as part of the Hubbard Park situation.

## **7. Old Business**

### **a. Tennis Court Rebounder**

B Fitton stated that Ms. Goodwin and Mr. Callahan have reported their concerns over the past few meetings, to the Commission, related to the Tennis Court Rebounder. B Fitton suggested that the Commission entertain a discussion this evening on where to relocate the rebounder. It was noted that the tennis courts used to close in the past during the winter months, however that closure did not occur this year.

Ann Goodwin reported that the rebounder acts as a sound board and the re-engineering of board could help to mitigate the sound. A Goodwin stated that she does want the tennis court to get as much use as possible.

D Needleman stated that he is in favor of looking at other options for another plan.

M Barnes stated that there was a demand to keep the tennis courts open in the winter months during Covid, however that can be revisited.

It was suggested that the Commission create a draft proposal for presentation to the board of selectmen.

**MOTION** made by D Needleman to conduct a special meeting on May 31, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of reporting back on the Tennis Court Rebounder; **SECONDED**; C Field; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, J Bean, C Field, D Needleman; **Opposed**: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

**b. Programming for Middle School Age Children – Updates**

Brooke Fitton stated that her law firm will donate \$500 in scholarship funding.

Further discussion on Programming for middle school age children tabled.

**c. Proposed Scholarship in Memory of Ginny Willetts – Updates**

**d. Discussion of Essex Demographics and Impact on Future Programming**

B Fitton noted that the commission will look at better ways to reach out to the community and increase communication related to programming and cancellations.

**e. Discussion/Possible formation of Committee to Review Options for Programming for Middle School Children**

**8. New Business**

**9. Commission Overview**

M Barnes reported that she received a request for application to join the Park and Recreation Commission.

**10. Public Comment**

Jean Little, 20 Grove Street who presented thanked the Commission for all of their hard work. Ms. Little stated that there is quite a bit of noise coming from the tennis court as a result of the rebounder, and the sound does travel. Ms. Little stated that she has 5 grandchildren and they all love the park, as does she.

Pat Callahan stated that middle school kids are utilizing the court. There are other rebounders made of nets which do not make noise, which potentially could remove the obstacle surrounding the current situation. This would also alleviate the need for signage, particularly since it is difficult to monitor the parks.

**11. General Discussion – there was no general discussion.**

**12. Adjournment**

**MOTION** made by J Bean to adjourn at 6:30 pm to a special meeting which will be conducted on May 31, 2022 at 5:00 pm; **SECONDED**; C Field; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, D Needleman, C Field, J Bean; **Opposed**: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk

