



TOWN OF ESSEX
Park and Recreation Commission

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426

Regular Members

Brette Fitton, Chairman

Anthony Mosa

John Bean

Daniel Needleman

Vacancy

Alternates

Carolyn Field

Vacancies

Unapproved

MINUTES
Tuesday, January 4, 2022

1. Call to Order and Attendance

The Essex Park & Recreation Commission conducted a special meeting on Tuesday, January 4, 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.

Attending Members:

Brette Fitton

John Bean

Anthony Mosa

Carolyn Field seated for Dan Needleman

Absent Members:

Dan Needleman

Staff:

Mary Ellen Barnes, Director Park and Rec Department

Stella Caione, Recording Clerk

2. Approval of Minutes:

a. Meeting Minutes November 9, 2021

MOTION made by A Mosa to approve the November 9, 2021 meeting minutes as presented;
SECONDED; C Field; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field, J Bean; **Opposed:** None;
Abstaining: None; **Approved:** 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

3. Public Comment – there were no members of the public present.

4. Financial Reports & Budget Review

General Fund Budget - M Barnes stated that the Department is halfway into the fiscal year and at 50% use. Insofar as Park Operations, M Barnes noted that the cost added up for subcontractor fees to open and close the fence related to clean surrounding the storms, trees and fence damage at Viney Hill.

M Barnes reported that the Program Revenue Fund is in the black.

M Barnes stated that as the Covid virus diminishes, there is the hope that full programming will resume.

MOTION made by C Field to approve the 12/31/2021 monthly fiscal report as presented;
SECONDED; A Mosa; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field, J Bean; **Opposed**: None;
Abstaining: None; **Approved**: 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

M Barnes stated that the seasonal payroll contracted item is overbudgeted and M Barnes is seeking approval for an additional amount of \$2,200. This number is based on the cost of \$400 for 8 months of services rendered for gatekeeping by Ray Kazmierski.

M Barnes reported that there was an overage in cost of operation of the restroom rentals. Since the onset of Covid-19, there were \$8,000 taken out of the Park & Rec budget for public restrooms. M Barnes noted that the typical annual cost of operations prior to Covid-19 was \$3,500. M Barnes stated that the cost for restroom rentals should be an individual budget-lined-item.

M Barnes reported that there was an increase in expense to cover the work that was previously performed and paid for by the Ivoryton Gardners and the Essex Garden Club. The increase also represents the annual commitment to maintain the ball fields throughout the entire year, which is a proactive approach rather than incurring costs for remediation every five years. M Barnes stated that the planting beds are established and an increase of \$18,000 will be needed for the planting beds, mulching, weeding, etc., and will also cover the maintenance fees for the ball fields throughout the year.

The Department is seeking a Community Fund total increase of \$23,700.

MOTION made by A Mosa to approve the proposed 22/23 Park & Rec General Fund budget, as presented; **SECONDED**; C Field; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field, J Bean;
Opposed: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

5. Directors Report, Parks & Program Updates

M Barnes reported on the following:

Park Events

Essex go Bragh is scheduled for March 19, 2022 with Bob Russo serving as Grand Marshal.

M Barnes reported that there has been a great response to fall programs, all of which are at capacity limits. Programming includes, Running Rams, Tennis, and Archery and outdoor Yoga was also offered.

Late Fall/Winter – M. Barnes indicated that with the increase in Covid cases, and to ensure the safety and wellness of our program participants the start of all programming that was scheduled to begin this week has been delayed. Those programs affected by the delay include Yoga and Running Rams.

Basketball was also cancelled this week. Park & Rec will however host the Essex Ski/Board Club starting this Friday at Powder Ridge.

Parks Update

All Parks – All late fall/winter cleanups are complete and all planned fall projects are complete as well.

Main Street Park - No updates

Grove Street Park - No updates

Tennis Courts - No updates

Dickinson Park - No updates

Sunset Pond - No updates

Ivoryton Green – The Ivoryton Alliance will begin taking down the Ivoryton Illuminations lighting, this week.

Comstock Park – Restoration/remediation project is complete.

Clark's Pond - No updates

Viney Hill Brook Park - No updates

Hubbard Park - Remediation project is complete

6. Old Business

There was no old business.

7. New Business

a. Programming for middle-school-age children

B Fitton indicated that it important to be cognizant of the demographic of the community and offer programming in which middle-school-aged students can participate. B Fitton suggested the inception of a subcommittee to look at programming. B Fitton and J Bean volunteered to participate on this subcommittee.

b. Proposed Scholarship in Memory of Ginny Willetts

Commissioners discussed the desire to set up a scholarship fund in honor of Ginny Willetts, former Park & Rec Commission member. Ginny was a long-standing and vital member of the Commission who consistently put first the athletic youth programming and volunteered her time to coach and oversee the various sports programs.

A Mosa suggested the installation of a plaque at Hubbard or Comstock Parks in honor of Ginny.

B Fitton stated that she will contact Ginny's family and discuss ideas on ways to commemorate her memory that speak to what was near and dear to Ginny.

A Mosa stated that for the record, he wished to identify Ginny as a wonderful woman who had a love for the youth, who supported Park and Rec, who supported the Essex Community and it was a pleasure to work with her.

8. Commission Overview

M Barnes noted that any change in Commission members status and new membership, will go through the Selectmen's office.

B Fitton reminded members that the Commission is always looking for people who are interested in serving on this Commission.

9. Public Comment – there was no public comment.

10. General Discussion – there was no general discussion.

11. Adjournment

MOTION made by C Field to adjourn at 6:22 pm to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be conducted on March 1, 2022 at 5:30 pm; **SECONDED**; J Bean; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, J Bean, C Field, A Mosa; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.
No Discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk