



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, March 1, 2022

1. Call to Order and Attendance

The Essex Park & Recreation Commission conducted their regular on Tuesday, March 1, 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

Dan Needleman

Anthony Mosa

Carolyn Field

Absent Members:

John Bean

Staff:

Mary Ellen Barnes, Director Park and Rec Department

2. Approval of Minutes:

a. Meeting Minutes January 4, 2022

MOTION made by A Mosa to approve the January 4, 2022 meeting minutes as presented;

SECONDED; C Field; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field, D Needleman; **Opposed:**

None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

3. Public Comment – there were two members of the public present.

Patrick Callahan and Ann Goodwin addressed the Commission. P Callahan stated that he expressed concerns at the September 2022 meeting related to the rebounder which



amplifies and creates a sound similar loud metal drum, a sound that is intrusive, penetrating and nerve-racking, day and night. The rebounder intensifies the use of the Grove Street tennis courts. P Callahan stated that when there is a change of use, neighbors are typically notified, however, he was not. Further, the installation of the rebounder was not properly discussed and was never a formal Park & Rec Commission agenda item. P Callahan stated that it was briefly discussed as per the January 2021 Park and Rec Minutes under Old Business. The rebounder was installed July 15, 2021. P Callahan stated the installation of the rebounder has affected the quality of life and he requested relocation of the rebounder to be a formal agenda item on the May 3, 2022 Park and Rec meeting agenda.

A Goodwin stated that the rebounder was a well-intentioned project with an unintended consequence. Committed to find and situate the rebounder in another location. A Goodwin noted that this project could easily be relocated with minimal money and time.

MOTION made by D Needleman to add the Rebounder to the May 3, 2022 Agenda; **SECONDED**; C Field; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field, D Needleman; **Opposed**: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

4. Financial Reports & Budget Updates

M Barnes reported that there are plans underway for maintenance to include installation of park benches and picnic tables. Also, the department is looking at installation of a new gate at Viney Hill Brook Park in the beach area, past the emergency access. M Barnes reported that the Town will continue contract with Joe Kuzaro, will continue with lawn care maintenance, and look to spring clean the beds and other general maintenance.

M Barnes stated that there will be a small budget increase to cover a portion of lawn care and maintenance. The finalized fiscal year budget has not yet been made available.

M Barnes reported that students from Valley Regional High Scholl have volunteered one day during the last week of April to clean the flower beds. The garden club will do a spring clean-up.

MOTION made by D Needleman to approve the January 4, 2022 monthly fiscal report as presented; **SECONDED**; C Field; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field, D Needleman; **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 - Parade is scheduled for March 19, 2022 with Bob Russo serving as Grand Marshal. 2022 is dedicated to Ginny Willetts. Ginny's family will ride with the grand marshal, leading this year's parade. M Barnes noted that Ginny's family expressed their pleasure and honor to be a part of the parade.

Below is the press release announcing the parade and dedication.

"This year, the Essex go Bragh Irish Parade is dedicated to long serving Park and Recreation Commissioner Virginia "Ginny" Willetts. Park and Recreation Director Mary Ellen Barnes said dedicating the parade to Willetts was an ideal way to honor her memory. "We wanted to do something special, so we asked her family to join our Grand Marshal Bob Russo to lead the parade". "I think she would have liked that". Barnes Said. Bob Russo, who volunteered alongside her on the Park and Recreation's Commission, said Willetts was active and energetic in her service to the community, whether it be carving pumpkins at the Ivoryton Village Pumpkin Festival or coaching youth basketball, baseball, soccer and softball. "The best way to honor a woman like Ginny is to go out and volunteer," Russo said. "I can't even imagine how many lives she touched." Russo continued "Ginny worked for several years in the Oxford CT School system. One day, when I came back from watching the state track and field meet and mentioned to Ginny the names of the Oxford kids that were at the meet, she knew each one of them and told me which events she guessed they would be in. I could tell that as an educator, Ginny made it a point to know each kid and carried this into her volunteer efforts for Park and Rec"

Parade steps off from Essex Town Hall at 10am and makes it way along Main Street Essex Village on Sat. March 19th for more information please contact recreation@essexct.gov "

Assignment of Parade Duties:

M Barnes stated that she is looking for volunteers for the Essex go Bragh parade and asked that members touch base with her to confirm their availability.

Programming

M Barnes reported that there has been a great response to the Park & Rec Winter programs which have reached capacity limits; Running Rams, Tennis, Archery, Yoga, Basketball and Ski Club. M Barnes reported that all of the spring programming and our summer camp and specialty camps have been scheduled to be conducted at Essex Elementary School, and she noted that there are plans for field trips.

M Barnes reported that there is a posting on the Town's website for summer camp counselors.

Parks Update - M Barnes reported that there are several maintenance plans in place for the month of March and April, with the assistance of DPW and Park & Rec staff are looking forward to getting the parks ready for spring use.

Main Street Park - no updates

Grove Street Park – no updates

Tennis Courts – no updates

Dickinson Park – no updates

Sunset Pond – no updates

Ivoryton Green

Ivoryton Alliance took down 99% of the lights – they are waiting for assistance from the fire department to help with the Christmas tree.

Comstock Park - no updates

Clark's Pond – no updates

Viney Hill Brook Park – no updates

Hubbard Park

M Barnes asked to have the proposal of conversion of the Volleyball court to a Pickleball court added to the May 3, 2022 Park and Recreation meeting agenda. There have been quite a few inquiries and based on usage at other town sponsored courts it is something Ms. Barnes suggested that the Commission and Department consider.

MOTION made by A Mosa to add discussion of Pickle Ball Court installation to the May 3, 2022 Agenda; **SECONDED**; C Field; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field, D Needleman; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

6. Old Business

a. Programming for Middle School Age Children – Updates

Discussion tabled to the May 3, 2022 meeting.

b. Proposed Scholarship in Memory of Ginny Willetts – Updates

Discussion tabled to the May 3, 2022 meeting.

7. New Business

a. Discussion of Essex Demographics and Impact on Future Programming

Discussion tabled to the May 3, 2022 meeting.

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

Discussion tabled to the May 3, 2022 meeting.

c. Proposed Scholarship in Memory of Ginny Willetts

Discussion tabled to the May 3, 2022 meeting.

8. Commission Overview

B Fitton stated that she has not had the opportunity to visit Viney Hill Brook Park.

MOTION made by D Needleman to conduct a special meeting on April 13, 2022 regarding Hubbard Park Improvements; **SECONDED:** B Fitton; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, D Needleman, C Field, A Mosa; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

9. Public Comment – there was no public comment.

10. General Discussion – there was no general discussion.

11. Adjournment

MOTION made by A Mosa to adjourn at 6:30 pm to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be conducted on May 3, 2022 at 5:30 pm; **SECONDED;** D Needleman; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, D Needleman, C Field, A Mosa; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0. **No Discussion.**

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk