



TOWN OF ESSEX
Park and Recreation Commission

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426
Telephone (860) 767-4340 x110 • FAX (860) 767-8509

Regular Members

Brette Fitton, Chairman
Anthony Mosa
Virginia Willetts
John Bean
Daniel Needleman
Alternates
Carolyn Field
Vacancies

Unapproved

**MINUTES - Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 7, 2021**

1. Call to Order and Attendance

The Essex Park & Recreation Commission conducted a meeting on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, 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
Anthony Mosa
Carolyn Field, seated for seated for V Willetts

Absent Members:

Virginia Willetts
John Bean

Staff:

Mary Ellen Barnes, Director Park and Rec Department
Stella Caione, Recording Clerk

2. Attendance

B Fitton called the meeting to order at 5:30p.m. Seated were B Fitton, A Mosa and C Field for V Willetts.

3. Approval of May 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes

MOTION made C Field to approve the May 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented; **SECONDED**; A Mosa; **Voting In Favor:** B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 3/0/0. **No Discussion.**

Creating the Essex Community through People, Parks & Programs!



Essex Park and Recreation 29 West Avenue (860) 767-4340 x110 recreation@essexct.gov

4. Public Comment

Mr. Patrick Callahan who was in attendance read a letter into the record related to the rebounder project at the Grove Street Park tennis courts. Mr. Callahan who lives across the street from the Grove Street Park noted that the rebounder board adds an unacceptable level of noise, noting that it does not enhance the park, is intrusive, and detrimental to the neighborhood. Mr. Callahan is asking that the rebounder board be relocated. Mr. Callahan stated that the rebounder changes the impact on the tennis courts, and the impact that the tennis courts have on the surrounding properties. P Callahan noted that when a ball hits the rebound board it amplifies the sound hitting the wood which can be loud and intrusive. The backboard intensifies the use of the space creating a change of use. Property owners ideally should have been notified of the installation of the backboard.

5. Financial Reports M Barnes stated that the reports that were distributed to members reflect the general fund only. The Finance Department general fund has moved to one lined-item versus itemization of the individual parks. This allows discretion on behalf of the Department to distribute funds as needed to the various parks within the “park maintenance general fund”.

MOTION made by C Field to approve the financial report as presented; **SECONDED**; A Mosa; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field; **Opposed**: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 3/0/0. **No Discussion.**

6. Director’s Report – September 7, 2021

Park Events

- Scarecrow Festival October 9th, Main Street Park
- Pumpkin Festival October 23rd Ivoryton Village Green

ALL Commissioners are asked to commit to volunteering for this day. Help will be needed with set up, station supervision, and clean up – also, pumpkin carving.

- Babe Ruth Baseball – Starting on Saturday, September 11th – Comstock Park
- Sandlot Baseball – parent/child pick up baseball at Comstock Park

M Barnes is working with each league’s coordinator and our Health Director to ensure they have Covid-19 guidelines in place that meet the State of CT requirements.

Summer 2021 Programming

- Summer Camp
- Running Rams
- Tennis



There has been a great response to our fall programs which are nearing capacity limits. Some of these programs include, Running Rams, Tennis, Archery. Park and Rec will also host outdoor yoga.

Parks Update

All Parks – There is a good deal of general maintenance planned throughout the parks and the Department will work with DPW and contractors to complete the projects this fall. A full fall cleanup has been scheduled for all parks.

Thanks to the generous support of the Essex Police Union and Department of Public Works (DPW), the installation of the new patio has been completed and a picnic table installed. The playground was inspected by Innovative Playground Solutions and there were no concerns noted.

B Fitton suggested that the Department schedule an informal activity at some point this year to utilize the new patio and picnic table. M Barnes suggested a ribbon cutting at which there will be hot dogs and soft drinks. M Barnes will email a few dates to members.

Main Street Park

No current updates.

Grove Street Park

The playground was inspected by Innovative Playground Solutions and was deemed safe, with no concerns.

Tennis Courts – see old business

Dickinson Park

No Updates.

Sunset Pond

See above.

Ivoryton Green

New Stockade Fencing has been installed. And some general maintenance items are scheduled.

Comstock Park

M Barnes stated that this park has been flooded 4 times in the past 15 years, noting that this recent storm created the most damage. Damage to the backstop at the large field was repaired.

Unfortunately, the effect from last week's storm caused major damage to our small baseball field. M Barnes reported that she is working with FEMA and Professional Field Care to restore the field, and the Park and Rec Department is also working with our Finance Department in hope of recouping some of the expenses. M Barnes stated that after professional assessment of the



damage and repair estimates are provided, the Commission may need to conduct a special meeting in the event emergency funding is needed.

Clark's Pond

No Updates.

Viney Hill Brook Park

Another tree has fallen on the dog park fence in the aftermath of hurricane Henri. The fence has been repaired and a tree service was contracted to identify potential trees that could cause additional damage. Additional work was done to these surrounding trees in the hopes of being proactive against future issues.

Hubbard Park

Remediation project was scheduled for late September as it has been several years since a full remediation has been done on this field. However, this remediation project may be delayed until the spring 2022 in order to attend to the other emergent projects. After discussions with Little League and our Park Steward, Dan Needleman, Professional Field Care will incorporate a more intensive yearly maintenance plan for the field moving forward.

7. Old Business

a. Updates to Signage

M Barnes reported that the budget may not allow for updates to signage as park emergency repairs will take precedence.

b. Rebounder Project Update

M Barnes reported that the eagle scout project to install the rebounder has been completed.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Commission Overview

a. Park Stewardship

B Fitton reported that she has visited Viney Hill Brook Preserve to monitor for use, and B Fitton noted that it has been enjoyable watching the seasonal changing scenery.

C Field reported that Dickinson Park looks good. M Barnes noted that the DPW will clear up the weeds on the backside of the park.



A Mosa visited Comstock Park after hurricane Henri and he stated that the area is devastated. The basketball court needs some refinishing, and clipping of the surrounding trees.

10. Public Comment

Mr. Callahan stated that he would welcome continued discussion related to the rebounder backboard, noting that the installation was inappropriate for the location.

11. General Discussion

C Field commented on branches and tree maintenance. M Barnes stated that the Commission consults with Augie Pampel, tree warden and no work is done without first seeking guidance from Mr. Pampel. M Barnes noted that there will be further discussions prior to the next budget cycle to address a lined-item for the management of trees within the parks.

12. Adjournment

MOTION made by C Field to adjourn at 6:07 pm to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be conducted on November 9, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., location TBD; **SECONDED**; A Mosa; **Voting In Favor**: B Fitton, A Mosa, C Field; **Opposed**: None; **Abstaining**: None; **Approved**: 3/0/0. **No Discussion.**

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A. Caione

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk

