

**Wallingford Parks & Recreation Department
Parks & Recreation Commission
Minutes for Wednesday, January 13, 2021
8:00 a.m. at Parks and Recreation Department**

Commissioners in Attendance:

Don Crouch, Dave Gelo, Jason Michael, Steve Rossacci, and Mike Savenelli Sr

Recreation Commission Members Absent: Recreation Department Staff Present: Kenny Michaels, Director of Recreation Parks & Recreation

Special Guests: Lauren Takores, Record Journal Reporter

Opening Remarks: Chairperson Dave Gelo called the meeting to order @ 8:05 a.m.

Minutes:

A motion made by Jason Michael seconded by Mike Savenelli Sr. to approved minutes from the November meeting.

Agenda Items:

1. Wallace Park - Legacy Garden – Presentation Rescheduled

The two stones were delivered, but the company didn't realize they had to install them. Unfortunately, one stone had a misspelled word "Perserving" instead of "Preserving". Kenny said the company was contacted to see when the replacement stone would be ready. We are waiting for a delivery date.

2. Mafia Blocks – Location in parks

Jason wanted to understand the purpose of the mafia blocks in the parks. He thought, especially with COVID, the parks should be open to the residents and not blocked. He used Lufbery as an explain and said the placement of the blocks cuts off the ability to use the full parking area. Jason said he understands that the driveways are not plowed, but he feels the parks should remain open. Per request of the Commission Kenny will setup a meeting with Dept of Public Works to discuss the mafia blocks.

3. Portal Potty at Harrison Park for Pickle Ball players

There are a lot of people playing Pickleball during the week and the Port-o-let has been removed. The Pickleball players says there is one on the Linear Trail, why can't there be one at Harrison Park. Port-o-let are funded from General Fund through a bid, noting specific units needed. The placement of port-o-lets are determined by usage. All the playing fields that closed the port-o-lets were removed. Kenny did explain the process to the Pickleball group. The money is paid from the General Fund and any additional requests to increase that General Fund budget line would need Council approval.

Question was asked if the Pickleball people can pay for the port-o-let themselves. Kenny said yes, they can Little League paid for the port-o-let for the extension of their season due to the pandemic.

4. Advertising Signs in Parks

Mike said this should be reevaluate to determine where they stand on advertising signs. He said the money could be used to maintain the fields. Mike has a copy from the Board of Ed on the school's advertising signage rules. Mike will forward the document to the group.

The next Ordinance Committee meeting is scheduled for February 2nd. Mike asked if Jason would head this up and Jason said yes, he would.

Kenny did reach out to area towns on how they handle sign advertisement in parks. Some towns let the leagues handle everything and other towns run the program themselves.

First step would be to attend the Ordinance Committee meeting to have the ordinance change the advertising signs for the parks. Once that has been changed then move forward with determining how to implement the process. Kenny said if his department is to run this program, he might need to hire someone to solicit and meet with sponsors and order design signs.

5. 2021 Commission Meetings Schedule – Recommendations

There was a discussion on how often to meet. The consensus was to meet every month except July and December, and to keep the meetings more focus and on track. Receiving the Director's report ahead of time saves a lot of time. If there is no update for a topic it can remain on the agenda as a checkpoint, but not have any discussion on the topic.

Mike S. made a **motion**: The Rec Commission 2021 meeting schedule should be monthly except no meetings in July and December. Jason M. seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

6. P&R Commission By-Laws Review - Don Crouch

a. Nominations for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Mike S. made a **motion**: to approve the amended By-Laws. Steve R. seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Jason nominated Dave for Chairperson and Mike for Vice-Chairperson.

The Commissioners all agreed they were the best candidates.

The Rec Commission is a 3-year term.

7. Executive Session

YMCA and Boys & Girls Club – Use of parks/buildings

Don made a **motion** to enter into Executive Session. Steve seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Steve made a **motion** to exit Executive Session. Mike seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Open Discussion (2/3 vote required for any item)

A question was posed to Kenny if he would consider allowing pickleball in the lower basketball courts at Doolittle Park? Kenny said he is not opposed to the idea and would review the area.

Directors Report: Ken Michaels

1. Community Lake Shoreline Clearing project was completed on December 29, 2020 by Diamond Landscape Group. Company did an excellent job, preserved the trees/bushes it was required to, cut the vines off the existing trees to prevent from being choked off, and opened a great view of Community Lake. While at Community Lake it was noted the bench at the start of the linear trail is rotting and in need of repair. Recreation Dept. will repair wood rotting planks with composite to prevent future rotting of the wood. Also noted the roof on the pavilion is in rough shape and in need of repair. Have discussed with Rob Baltramaitis will plan for repairs in the 2021-2022 budget.

2. Public Works had a pre-bid walk through January 6th at the Recreation Department for the second HVAC Unit in the gym. I am anticipating this being a spring project and will remove the old unit from Gym 1. Gym 2 was done in April of 2020 (budget year 2019-2020). Upon completion it will give the full gym AC and heating.

3. Field lighting audit was done end of November. Parks needing the most attention on bulb replacement is Pragemann Park (25) and West Side Field Baseball (17).

4. Programming Updates:

Winter program registration is low. Winter 2020 – 3,325 participants registered. 2021 – 939.

Spring Brochure Due out the end of this month

Per the DPH Recommendation to the CIAC, moderate and low-level sports can begin practicing on Jan. 19 and games can begin Feb. 1. This falls in line with our revised plan when the CTDPH had made this recommendation in November for youth basketball and adult volleyball.

5. Parks & Facilities:

- Still awaiting bid for Doolittle Tennis Courts to be sent out. Coming out of the engineering department. Awaiting PW review. Anticipated project early spring. Total reconstruction of all 4 courts. PW to install drainage around court to catch runoff from Henry St and So. Elm.
- YLL Joe Carmen Memorial Sign donation is on the council agenda for January 12, 2021
- Met with Mayor and have had discussions with Lynn Seibert, cousin of Ken Boisvert in regards to donation of a memorial bench in Ken's honor at Doolittle Park. Ken was an avid tennis player and long-time basketball official at the Parks and Recreation Department. Ken passed away in April of 2020. We are meeting Friday to confirm location.
- Dianne Saunders sent a Tyler Mill update report on January 12. The report shows there have been illegal blazed trails by mountain bikers being advertised on the website Trailforks which is hosted by NEMBA (New England Mountain Bike Association). I have forwarded the email and report to Janis at the Law Department to see how we go about this issue and the promotion of illegal trails within Tyler Mill. Janis will be working on a letter to draft and send to NEMBA and to the DEEP.
- Spring/Summer Fall Field Users' meetings will be held at the Parks and Recreation Department and schedule as follows:
 - Wednesday February 10 Small Diamond Baseball
 - Wednesday February 17 Big Diamond Baseball
 - Wednesday February 24 Lacrosse/Soccer

- Annual permit letter sent to Dr. Menzo on January 5, 2021. Response letter sent on January 11, 2021 saying field permits will not be approved by schools like it has been done in the past, but reviewed by his office due to COVID. Unsure what this means. I have a call into Sal to get further clarification. To be continued.

Next Commission Meeting – Wednesday, February 10, 2021 @ 8:00 AM

Meeting Adjourned at: 9:50 a.m. by Steve Rossacci - seconded by Mike Savenelli

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Barillaro, Sr Clerk
Wallingford Parks and Recreation