

Park and Recreation Commission

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Regular meeting: Monday 13, 2003 in the Aldermanic Chambers of City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, Al Felice, Edward Handi, Karen Izzo, David Mikos and Matt Bell arrived directly after roll call.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. Athletic Director Kenneth Marcucio was a

Additions or deletions to the agenda:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted.

Approval of minutes:

A motion was made by Edward Handi and second by Karen Izzo. Move to accept the minutes of the mee

December 12, 2002. Motion carried unanimously.

Public portion:

No one came forward and the public portion was closed.

Correspondences:

Chairman Walsh received notice from Kevin O'Meara, planner for the Valley Council of Governments, that a recreational trails program is available for the development of trails in amounts ranging up to \$50,000 and the deadline for submittal is February 1, 2003.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Election of Officers:

A motion was made by Al Felice and second by David Mikos. Move to nominate John Walsh as Chairman of Parks & Recreation Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

No other nominations were received. The floor was closed. Members congratulated Mr. Walsh and commended his continuing efforts for recreation in the City. Mr. Walsh commended Mr. O'Connell and all the volunteer efforts for the City.

Discussion with Open Space Commission: Chair Kathy Norwood and Vice Chair Richard Cerritelli were present for the Open Space Commission. Ms. Norwood noted that there have been ongoing discussions with members of the Parks & Recreation Commission for many months. The Open Space Commission has been working on enhancing recreational opportunities within the City. She indicated that the Open Space Commission has been researching grant opportunities. In conversations with Mr. Walsh on future plans for Witek Park, she was directed to the Parks & Recreation Commission. She was present this evening to explore thoughts on possible enhancements.

Mr. Walsh noted previous conversations with then Ansonia Mayor Nancy Valentine about possibly extending the Ansonia side of the reservoir parcel and connecting with trails within Derby. He also noted the Ansonia program that provides assistance in developing and building trails and this too could possibly assist Derby in its endeavors. He indicated that all these ideas have been on hold awaiting decisions on the development plan for Witek Park.

Ms. Norwood indicated that the grants may provide assistance in addressing a number of different needs at Witek Park. With the increase in algae blooms last year, the depletion of fishing stock and the increase of invasive species along the perimeter of the reservoir, water quality preservation and management needs to be studied and addressed. At the lower reservoir, a bridge over the spillway would provide a continual loop around the reservoir. Every year Boy Scout troops work to clear overgrowth and fallen debris from the trails. Materials to improve safe walking conditions are being considered. Handicap accessibility to some sections of the Park is also something that is being considered.

As available land is dwindling in the City and remaining undeveloped parcels have many physical challenges,

development, she questioned whether the City should be exploring purchases for future recreational need provide funding for such purchases.

Mr. Walsh indicated that the most pressing need is soccer fields. There is no soccer field in town. With the new fields, it would not solve all the problems, but it would give flexibility to improve other fields.

Mr. Felice indicated that two things have to happen concurrently. First, the soccer fields must be built. The sports have to be reallocated across the existing facilities. Until a plan is approved at Witek Park, he felt it was a mute point to do anything. If the fields are not built in Witek then a parcel of land has to be purchased. He discouraged any additional improvements to the Park until a decision is finalized.

Regulations for the skate park: Nothing was reported. The Commission was awaiting further information regarding funding availability.

Meeting schedule for calendar 2003

A motion was made by David Mikos and second by Matt Cripps. Move to approve the meeting schedule Recreation Commission for calendar year 2003 as follows:

January 13, 2003 February 10, 2003

March 10, 2003 April 14, 2003

May 12, 2003 June 9, 2003

July 14, 2003 August 11, 2003

September 8, 2003 October 14, 2003 (Tuesday)

November 10, 2003 December 8, 2003

The meetings will be held at 7:00 P.M. in the Aldermanic Chambers of City Hall. Motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report:

Mr. O'Connell noted an newspaper article regarding Trumbull's decision to have their Police Department background checks of individuals involving recreational activities in the City as per a recently adopted policy. He brought this to the Commission's attention as per previous discussions on this issue. He indicated communicating with Little League directors as their National League has made checks a requirement. He is also looking at an Internet enterprise that offers background checks and this is being explored. Seymour is also looking at this and possibly a joint endeavor could be cost effective. The Programs Committee will continue to discuss this. They are working with the Derby Police Department to develop a solution.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he was contacted by the Seymour Little League because two girls have requested the Seymour Little League program. They would pay the registration fee in Seymour but, per Seymour's policy, they would hold the charter for the team. Mr. O'Connell will be discussing this arrangement with the Derby Little League directors although he questioned why Derby should be paying for the charter being that Seymour would have a larger number of local players on the team. Ms. Izzo noted that the Pop Warner program has out-of-town players with no additional charge. Other programs also have out-of-town players as many go to the parochial schools to play with their fellow classmates.

The Little League has been meeting to prepare for the upcoming season. They are working with Ansonia for a series that provides teams from each town to play against each other. It is anticipated that this will add some revenue to the league.

Biddy Basketball is going well. All-star teams are being selected this week. The games will be played in the Veteran's Community Center with teams from Derby, Seymour, Ansonia and Shelton.

The Recreation Department has extended use within the building into the area that was previously occupied by Marshall. A small area is to be used for registrations. A lounge area and meeting area are also being planned. A kitchenette setting is also being explored.

Looking at the budget, it is going well. Mr. O'Connell noted that with the repairs done in the last few years, the mechanics; the on-going maintenance costs have been lower. He indicated that some line items have yet to be added as they are springtime expenses. In regards to the revenue, while it is lower than last year, it is meeting and is expected to surpass the anticipated budgeted amount.

Ms. Izzo noted that she has been made aware of a leak at the field house. The Booster Club has asked why for the closing of the facility at the end of the season. It was their belief that the Public Works winterizes the field house. Mr. O'Connell indicated that he was aware of the problem and is investigating.

The Booster Club also was wondering if the City would assist in replacing the football benches. Possibly the School shop students overseen by Mr. Behun could do the construction. Mr. O'Connell will contact Mr. Behun regarding this request.

Mr. O'Connell noted that the Recreation Department is coordinating with the High School Athletic Director to replace the basketball hoops at Irving School. This will be a shared expense with the Board of Education.

Pop Warner has been investigating solutions to their storage needs. Previously, there have been discussions regarding the placement of a portable storage unit at Ryan Field and they desire to entertain further discussions. Mr. O'Connell will pursue this matter. Members discussed the LoCIP plan to build a storage facility. That plan was funded under the current plan but the funding was recently withdrawn. They felt that rather than pursuing temporary measures, a permanent solution should be considered.

Mr. O'Connell reviewed the list of capital projects that he has recently submitted to the City. In that list a number of projects were withdrawn. Those projects being the bathrooms at Bradley and the storage facility at Ryan. Additionally presented were renovations to the existing field house and the request to replace the football field surface.

turf.

Mr. Felice noted that the issue of the bathrooms was raised at a Neighborhood Committee. Adjoining pro were seeking relief from the inappropriate activity that is occurring on the boundaries. They have request bathrooms be completed and they have also requested that a fence be installed along the perimeter. It was whether the fence was a city or Board of Education matter.

Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Marcucio was not present.

Committee Reports:

Programs Committee – The next Programs Committee meeting is scheduled for January 22nd.

Facilities Committee –The Witek Park plan is continuing before the regulatory agencies.

A motion was made by Karen Izzo and second by David Mikos. Move to adjourn this meeting at 8:15 p.m. carried unanimously.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be Monday, February 10, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at Ci Aldermanic Chambers are unavailable then the Veteran's room will be requested.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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