

Park and Recreation Commission

Andrew Cota, Chairman

Beverly Moran
James Benanto
Ronald Sill
John Monahan
James Butler Sr.
Bruce Sill

Minutes

(meeting recorded)

Monthly meeting: Monday, April 11, 2016 in City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, Beverly Moran, Ronald Sill, John Monahan, James Butler Sr. and Bruce Sill. James Benanto was excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. The Athletic Director Rachael Artaiz was absent.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Motion made by Ronald Sill and second by Bruce Sill. Move to accept the agenda, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made Beverly Moran and second by James Butler Sr. Move to accept the minutes of March 15, 2016, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Ron Hyder was present and requested time to speak during the agenda item 8(A). His request was granted.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Correspondence was received from the Office of the Fire Marshal dated March 29, 2016 regarding the inspection of the building at 35 Fifth Street. Violations of the Connecticut State Fire Safety Code were found and corrective action is ordered to remove or remedy all listed violations within thirty (30) days from the day of the notice. Mr. O'Connell indicated that he is communicating with Fire Marshal Philip Hawks and Henry Domurad to resolve this matter. The letter has been forwarded to the Mayor and the City will be researching possible grants to fund the needed work. It was suggested that being that the Board of Education has their offices in a portion of the building that they should be advised of this notice.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell reported that Little League opened their season last weekend. The High School spring programs are underway.

Youth Soccer has not started as of yet. Mr. O'Connell has spoken with the contractor overseeing the maintenance of the Witek Park fields. As it is early in the season, the growth has only just started but he was confident that the areas, if allowed to rest for the season, should recover well. They will continue to monitor its progress. Mr. O'Connell is working with the soccer program to schedule between Witek Park and Bradley School. He noted that he is following the restitution case involving the damage at the Park but payment is slow in coming as of yet. The legal system will be reviewing the progress of payments.

The outdoor basketball courts are being maintained with crack sealing and surface repairs in preparation of the spring and summer programs.

Mr. O'Connell will be meeting with the summer program director to develop a schedule of events and purchase any needed supplies.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Ms. Artaiz was absent.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Request to use William "Red" Clynch Memorial Softball Field: Rob Hyder, Vice President of the Derby Little League, stated that in an effort to promote and grow the game of baseball for Derby kids, he has arranged for approximately 12 players for Derby to participate in a well-established, decorated travel baseball program in the Valley. As a part of the Mudcats program, the Derby boys have been honing their skills at the Valley Batting Cages on Silvermine Road in Seymour all winter. Now, the boys are eager to get outside on a more consistent basis. He requests use of the William "Red" Clynch Memorial Softball Field as their home field for the 12U Mudcats, which consists of 6 players from Derby and 6 players from Ansonia. They would like use of the field on Wednesday evenings as well as weekend evenings after 4 pm. Because Derby no longer has a Babe Ruth program in town, the Mudcats offer a very competitive, challenging schedule for Derby kids to continue to play baseball within the city limits while developing their baseball skills for their future careers at Derby High School.

Members discussed the impacts of the request. Travel baseball is increasing in popularity and can provide opportunities to the players to advance their skills. For profit private programs can have an impact on participation of local recreational programs and Derby must weigh facility usage as space and time are often constrained. Mr. O'Connell noted that the High School recently used a field on a Saturday night and this required Public Works to bring in an employee on overtime for field preparation and maintenance. It cost approximately \$200 and he wondered if the program would support this cost. Mr. O'Connell questioned whether the request should be before the Board of Alderman as this is a private organization. Members felt additional information was needed. They wondered the number of games and whether the usage would require Public Works grooming the field for their usage. They questioned the ratio of Derby players and whether the cost would be too prohibitive or if the program offers help to those unable to pay. There was concern whether the balls would be hit out of the area. It was noted that Bradley School field was not suitable or likely available for this use due to the location of the mound and the use of the field by other programs.

Mr. Hyder indicated that the program is Little League friendly and cost effective. Many other private programs are greatly more expensive than this program. He indicated that the players are in the 12 year old range and as they advance in age and skill they will be playing in Seymour. This specific program and request is to make it convenient for the Derby families to have play in their City rather than traveling always out of town. Mr. Hyder indicated that he has had conversations with the Public Works director and it did not seem to be any problems but Mr. Hyder would work out any maintenance issues that may arise. The program has a 20 game schedule with half of them being away. He estimates 10 games and 5 or 10 practices. The season starts April 20th and goes through July.

Motion made by James Butler Sr and second by Ronald Sill. Move to grant permission of the use of the William "Red" Clynch softball field to the Mudcats 12U program, pending a schedule submission and verification of availability of the facility, with it understood that there will be no special preparation of the field by the City of Derby nor alteration by the program. Discussion on the motion. Mr. O'Connell would like to have option to disclosure of financial reports of the program specific to the U12 playing team and he would like further consideration by the Commission as to the parameters of the standards of use of a Derby recreational facility. Ms. Moran requested verification of residency of the players and the team would be required to be at least 50% Derby players. Motion carried unanimously.

Update on School Field Grant: Supt. Conway is continuing discussions with the State legislators and is keeping the City informed on progress.

Discussion of Witek Park: Corporation Counsel is researching the stipulations of use of Witek Park for the Board of Alderman and as of now watercraft is not being allowed. Regarding the maintenance of the fields, it was determined that the Derby Inland Wetlands Agency stipulated at time of approval that qualified persons were to maintain the fields and as such the contractor was retained. As of now, the maintenance will continue as usual. Mr. O'Connell will be in contact with the contractor to insure that the restoration is on track and he will be verifying that the sprinklers are functioning.

Motion by Ronald Sill and second by Beverly Moran. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.