

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes - Thursday, August 26, 2010

The meeting was held at Town Hall and called to order by Acting Chairperson Tom Pentalow at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Acting Chairperson Tom Pentalow, Carmelo Amoddio and John Rascius. Dan Silbo arrived at 7:30 p.m. Also present was Kathleen Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation and Sal Cucia, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation.

Members from the public in attendance to talk about the water playground were George Nakos, 49 Thornbush Drive, Michael Buonopane, 21 Drummer Lane, Michael Orsini, 224 Highland Street and Michael Fortuna, TLB Architects, Chester, CT and Senator Paul Doyle.

Also present was John Bysiewicz, an event planner looking to discuss the possibility of holding a charity road race in November using Cove Park.

A. Public Comments.

1. Loretta's Dream Water Playground.

Acting Chairperson, Tom Pentalow welcomed the members from the public who were going to speak on the water playground. He asked Ms. Bagley to explain the process of considering a new facility in Town. She reported that in order for a new facility to be considered, the Parks and Recreation Board must approve the concept of this new facility. The next step is for the project to be researched with cost estimates, location, rules and regulations and input from Parks and Recreation staff and Town staff. The project goes back to the Parks and Recreation Board for their review and possible recommendation to the Town Council for consideration of a new project. The Town Council can either decide not to pursue the project or ask the Planning and Zoning Commission to review it. If the Planning and Zoning Commission determines the project is appropriate for the Town, they will send a recommendation back to the Town Council. The Town Council can then review their recommendation and vote to accept or deny the project. Most of our new projects have been in partnership with a nonprofit group. They generally raise funds for construction and to help with ongoing maintenance. Ms. Bagley has met with Mr. Nakos a few times to discuss this idea and some preliminary research has taken place on this proposed project.

Mr. Pentalow invited Mr. George Nakos to give a presentation on the idea of a water playground in the Town of Wethersfield. Mr. Nakos thanked the board members for the opportunity to discuss his group's idea for a water playground in the Town. He introduced other members of his committee, Mr. Michael Orsini and Mr. Michael Buonopane. Also in attendance for this project was Senator Paul Doyle. Attached to these minutes is a copy of his presentation. Mr. Nakos discussed the history of the project. They are looking to construct a water playground in memory of Mr. Nakos's daughter, Loretta. She passed away and asked her family to do something in her memory. Because of her involvement with water sport activities, her family decided to build a water playground. They have formed a corporation with friends and family under the name of Loretta's Dream Water Playground, Inc. and are seeking non-profit exemption with the IRS. Their group has been doing research on water playgrounds and working to set themselves up as a nonprofit organization. They have met with a company representative who sells water playground equipment and an architect who has designed these projects. A budget estimate for this project could be between \$300,000 - \$450,000, depending on the design and number of water features. This group is looking for the Park Board to approve their concept and allow them to move forward with preliminary plans. Mr. Pentalow thanked Mr. Nakos for his presentation and asked Board members for their comments. Mr. Amoddio thought it was a great idea. Mr. Pentalow agreed with Mr. Amoddio and asked if this group was prepared to sustain their commitment. He noted that Mikey's Place committee and the Keane Foundation still continue to help pay for maintenance of their projects. The group felt they would have a long term commitment to this project. Mr. Nakos introduced the architect that they have been consulting with on this project, Mr. Michael Fortuna. Mr. Fortuna noted that as part of the planning for this project all the state codes for pools must be met. His firm has designed and built these water parks in the state. Ms. Bagley told Board members that Mr. Fortuna had done the design work for Mill

Woods and Willard Pools during their renovation in 1997. He is also used as a consultant by the Parks and Recreation Department for different swimming pool issues.

A discussion was held on how groups enter into a partnership with the Town on construction projects. Ms. Bagley explained that each group has worked with the Town to develop a model that works for them and the Town. She will talk with the Town Manager and give him an overview of this project, background on other similar partnerships and receive feedback from him. Mr. Nakos explained that his group is looking for acceptance of the project by the Park Board so they can continue to move forward on this project. Mr. Pentalow told him that the Park Board would discuss it under their agenda item. Mr. Nakos thanked the Board members for reviewing their project.

2. Road Race – November 7th.

Acting Chairperson, Tom Pentalow invited Mr. John Bysiewicz to provide information on his request for a Road Race at Cove Park. Ms. Bagley distributed copies of the letter Mr. Bysiewicz sent to her requesting permission to use Cove Park for a Road Race. Mr. Bysiewicz explained that he is requesting permission to hold a 5K Run, Health Walk and Kids' Fun Run to celebrate the life of a child who passed away and the funds will benefit the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. The event would take place November 7th and the race route would be in old Wethersfield. He would use Cove Park for the start and end of the race from 8 a.m. until noon. They hope to attract 300-400 people and raise between \$10,000 - \$12,000. He is working with the Police Department on the race route. The family of this child does not live in Wethersfield, but they have friends in the community. Ms. Bagley noted that this event will follow the Keane Carnival. Last year the grass had to be fixed because of damage by the carnival rides. If damage happens again this year and is fixed, the road race participants will not be allowed to use the restored areas. A fee will be assessed to this group for the use of the park. Board members asked about the times for the race. Mr. Bysiewicz has spoken with the local churches so that this event will not conflict with their services. He is looking to start the race around 10 a.m. Acting Chairperson, Tom Pentalow explained that the Board would discuss this request under their agenda item. Mr. Bysiewicz thanked the Board for considering his request.

B. Minutes – July 22, 2010.

Dan Silbo moved to approve the minutes of July 22, 2010. The motion was seconded by Carmelo Amoddio and approved unanimously.

C. Monthly Report – July 2010.

The Monthly Report was reviewed by Board members. Ms. Bagley explained that the department held many events and programs during the month and the pools were very busy because of the extremely hot weather in July.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Fall Brochure – Ms. Bagley reported that the department's brochure of programs and specials events was being delivered to Wethersfield residents today as an insert of the Rare Reminder Newspaper.
2. Letter from Mr. Phil Tougas on the Possibility of a Bike Trail near Old Reservoir Road.
The Town Manager received a letter from Mr. Tougas asking about the potential for a bike trail in his neighborhood. The Town Manager sent this letter to Ms. Bagley and asked her to discuss it with the Park Board. Ms. Bagley met with Mr. Tougas at his home and discussed his ideas with him. She would like to bring his suggestions to the Conservation Commission to review, because they have been instrumental in developing the bike trails in Town. Board members thought this was a good idea and asked her to report back to them.

E. Old Business.

1. New Playground Equipment at Mill Woods Park.

Ms. Bagley reported that construction is completed. Mr. Silbo said that he was at the park and noticed a lot of children playing on the new equipment.

2. Mill Woods Lighted Little League Field.

Ms. Bagley gave a brief report on the condition of the field. The maintenance staff have been working on the field. They found out the areas that looked burned out had a fungus attack. They brought in a contractor to spray the field to eliminate the fungus and they have replaced these areas with new sod. The field is recovering.

F. New Business.

1. Water Playground.

Board Members discussed this request. They felt it would be an improvement to our park system. Tom Pentalow moved to approve the concept of a water playground in Town. The motion was seconded by Carmelo Amoddio and approved unanimously. Ms. Bagley will work with this group to develop project plans and report back to the Park Board.

2. Road Race – Cove Park, November 7, 2010.

This request was discussed by the Board. They felt it was good to have people use the park and visit the Town. They asked Ms. Bagley to make sure all coordination is done with the Police Department. They concurred that a fee should be charged for park use. Ms. Bagley informed Board members that a road race would be held in Town this upcoming Sunday. She recently found out that it could attract 1,000 runners. Usually this race attracts a smaller number. She would like to make sure there are no problems with that race before giving permission for this one. Tom Pentalow moved to allow the use of Cove Park for a Road Race on November 7, 2010 pending no problems from the Sunday, August 29th Road Race. The motion was seconded by John Rascius and approved unanimously.

G. Motion to Adjourn.

A motion was made by Carmelo Amoddio and seconded by Dan Silbo to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks & Recreation Department