

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes - Thursday, September 23, 2010

The meeting was held at Town Hall and called to order by Chairperson Tom Ragonese at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Chairperson Tom Ragonese, Tom Pentalow, Carmelo Amoddio, Kevin Rogers and Dan Silbo. Also present was Kathleen Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation. Members from the public were Earle Munroe, Town Harbor Master and Charlie Forsdick, Town Deputy Harbor Master.

A. Public Comments.

Chairperson Tom Ragonese recognized Earle Munroe, Town Harbor Master and Charlie Forsdick, Town Deputy Harbor Master. He noted that they attended the meeting to discuss with Board members the creation of a Harbor Management Commission.

Chairperson Ragonese entertained a motion to move agenda item F.1. - Proposal on a Harbor Management Commission from New Business to the first item on the agenda. Dan Silbo made a motion to move agenda Item F.1. - Proposal on a Harbor Management Commission from New Business to the first item on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Kevin Rogers and voted unanimously.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to provide information on this proposal. Ms. Bagley noted that included in the Board packet was a memo from her about this proposal. She explained that the Parks and Recreation staff have been discussing development of a Harbor Management Plan for Wethersfield Cove. The creation of this plan would help to manage the facility and assist in grant applications for improvements to Wethersfield Cove and the Boat Launch facility. In order to develop this plan a Harbor Management Commission must be in place. By State Statue (Section 22a-113K), to establish a commission, a municipality can either designate an existing commission or create a new one. She is suggesting that the Parks and Recreation Board consider being designated as the Town's Harbor Management Commission.

Harbor Master Earle Munroe supported this proposal and explained that the commission would help manage the Cove and identify improvements necessary to provide safe access for boaters in the Cove and through the channel out to the Connecticut River. Deputy Harbor Master Charlie Forsdick also supported the proposal and gave the Board additional information on how this commission could help the Town. He said that the Town could request assistance from the Army Corps of Engineers for dredging the Cove and channel to provide better access. He explained that the creation of the Harbor Management Commission would demonstrate the Town's commitment to the management of the Cove and give it added clout in getting assistance from the State and Federal Government. It would even help in soliciting grant funds for improvements to the docks and boat launch area. Ms. Bagley noted that the Board already is responsible for Cove Park and the Boat Launch facility and these responsibilities would parallel the Harbor Management Commission responsibilities.

Chairperson Ragonese asked what the responsibilities are of the Harbor Management Commission. These responsibilities include directing the development of a municipal harbor management plan. This responsibility is similar to the Park Board creating the Master Plan for Cove Park and soliciting public input for that process. The commission's jurisdiction is generally the Wethersfield Cove and the channel within Town boundaries (State of CT language – jurisdiction within the area located in or contiguous to the waters of the Town as delimited by the jurisdiction of the Town Council and bounded by the projection of the boundary line of neighboring towns).

Other responsibilities the commission may choose to exercise (per State guidelines) are detailed in the memo included in the Park Board packet. Listed below is a summary of these responsibilities.

- a. To recommend ordinances to the Town Council which implement the harbor management plan.
- b. To provide input to the harbor master and staff in the management of the boat launch area and docks.
- c. To assist in the coordination of agencies and other organizations which have interest in the harbor area.
- d. To review and make recommendations on proposed land and water use activities.
- e. To review for consistency with the harbor management plan any application taking place within their jurisdiction.
- f. To conduct studies of the conditions in Wethersfield Cove and present proposals to the Town Council.
- g. To request a general permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers and/or state authority.

Park Board members discussed this proposal. They noted the similarities with their current responsibilities for Cove Park and they agreed with Mr. Munroe and Mr. Forsdick that these responsibilities could be handled by the Board. Ms. Bagley explained that the Park Board could request that the Town Council authorize the Board to serve as the Harbor Management Commission. Chairperson Ragonese asked if Board members were ready to make a motion for this proposal. Tom Pentalow moved to request the Town Council appoint the Parks and Recreation Board as the Harbor Management Commission. The motion was seconded by Dan Silbo and voted unanimously. Chairperson Ragonese thanked Mr. Munroe and Mr. Forsdick for helping the Board with this proposal. Mr. Amoddio suggested that town staff and the harbor masters begin the development of a draft harbor management plan as the Board goes through the appointment process with the Town Council. Everyone agreed that this was an excellent suggestion and Ms. Bagley will follow up with the harbor masters.

B. Minutes – August 26, 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 – August 2010.

The Monthly Report was reviewed by Board members. Mr. Amoddio asked how successful programs were in the summer. Ms. Bagley responded that the programs matched last year's registration numbers, however due to the hot weather attendance was up at the pools.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Ms. Bagley reported that the Town Clerk received a letter of resignation from Mr. Peter Kalousdian, Jr. from the Park Board due to his job responsibilities. Chairperson Ragonese thanked Mr. Kalousdian for his service and explained that this vacancy will be filled by the Town Council.

E. Old Business.

1. Loretta's Dream Water Playground – Chairperson Ragonese reviewed this proposal with Board members. He recognized that it would be a nice project and the nonprofit group would need to be successful at fundraising. Board members concurred with him. He asked Ms. Bagley to keep the Board updated on this project.

F. New Business.

1. Cottone Football Field Lights.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley for a status report on the lights. She explained that members of the public submitted a petition to the Town Council asking the Council to use Town funds to pay for the remainder of the light costs for this field. The volunteer group spearheading this project is lining up donations to help with this process. Board members commented that they are supportive of the lights and hope this project can be completed.

2. Study of Certain Park Land by the Town Council.

Ms. Bagley gave Board members information on two parks being considered by the Town Council for potential sale. One is the Col. Chester Park on Crest Street and the other one is Savage Park, which is the open space adjacent to Corpus Christi Church on Silas Deane Highway. Ms. Bagley explained that the Town Council is currently studying these parcels and other parcels in Town to determine if the Town should sell them and reduce the maintenance costs associated with the properties. Board members discussed this report and asked Ms. Bagley to keep them updated on this issue.

G. Motion to Adjourn.

A motion was made by Tom Pentalow and seconded by Carmelo Amoddio to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks & Recreation Department