

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes - Thursday, December 17, 2009

The meeting was held at the Solomon Welles House and called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Tom Ragonese. Members present were Tom Ragonese, Kevin Rogers, Dan Silbo, and Charlie Wood. Also present were Michael Hurley, Council Liaison, Kathleen Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation and Martin Sitler, Recreation Supervisor.

Chairperson Ragonese welcomed Town Councilor, Michael Hurley to the Parks and Recreation Board. Mr. Hurley thanked Mr. Ragonese and looks forward to working with Board members. Chairman Ragonese noted the holiday decorations around the house. Ms. Bagley explained that each year a different garden club in town decorates the house for the holidays.

A. Public Comments.

No comments.

B. Minutes – November 19, 2009.

Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the minutes with members. Kevin Rogers had one correction under New Business, item 1. During the discussion of Capital Improvement Projects, he thought the Cove Docks should be considered for a higher priority, but not higher than the Mill Woods parking lot. He wanted the docks to be moved to a higher priority next year. Dan Silbo moved to approve the minutes of November 19, 2009 with one correction. Kevin Rogers had suggested that the Cove Dock Project be considered for a higher priority in the upcoming 2010-11 Capital Improvement Projects budget. The motion was seconded by Kevin Rogers and voted unanimously.

C. Monthly Report – November, 2009.

The Monthly Report was reviewed by Board members. Chairperson Ragonese reported that he attended the Town Carol Sing and Tree Lighting ceremony. A large crowd of families gathered at the Solomon Welles House on December 14th for the event. It was a great evening and Santa arrived by Fire Truck. The young children in the crowd were very excited when Santa showed up. The evening was warm for December so people enjoyed singing songs outside, lighting the tree and then moving indoors for refreshments and a visit with Santa. Chairperson Ragonese enjoyed the evening.

Chairperson Ragonese also noted that the Parks and Recreation Department held their annual Santa's Pancake Breakfast at the Community Center. Ms. Bagley reported that the event was very successful and they served over 600 breakfasts.

Charlie Wood asked about the condition of the High School pool. He noted that the pool had to close for a few days and asked for information on that closing. Ms. Bagley reported that the pool closed due to a mechanical problem. A chlorinator pump had failed and needed to be fixed. The pool was closed because the pool water needed to be chlorinated. This pump was fixed over a weekend and the pool water was balanced that following Monday, so the pool reopened to the public on Tuesday. Board members asked about the general condition of the pool. Ms. Bagley explained that the Board of Education maintains the pool and they work to keep the pool in good condition for school use and public use. Mr. Wood mentioned that some of the pool tiles were loose or had popped up. The maintenance staff are aware of these issues and are working to fix them. Board members concurred that they hope the Board of Education will continue to maintain the pool for the public.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Vacation Flyer.

Ms. Bagley distributed the Christmas vacation flyer to Board members. They noted the activities for the week included a movie night at the 9/11 Sports Center, a super athletes program at Highcrest School and trips to bowling, laser tag and nature field trips.

E. Old Business.

1. New Little League Field – Press Box Status.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the press box construction is moving along. Mr. Sitler reported that the overhead door for the front window of the press box will be installed on Monday. The electrical service and the lift installation will take place after the holidays. The lift is installed, but needs all the electrical hook ups. Once the weather warms up in the spring, the town painter will paint the exterior of the press box to match the color of the dugouts. The goal is to have the press box ready for the first game.

2. Cottone Field Lights

Board members asked about the status of the lights for this field. Chairperson Ragonese reported that the group is fundraising because they still do not have enough funds. Ms. Bagley reported that the Town Manager had submitted a grant application for the lights and is waiting to hear the results of this application. Currently a contractor is installing the underground service to the lights and the bases for the light poles.

F. New Business.

1. Capital Improvement Projects for 2010-11 Budget Year.

Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the projects with Board members for the upcoming budget year. Board members expressed their concern that Mill Woods Park should be the Town's jewel park and improvements should continue to be made at this facility. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to review the list of projects developed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Ms. Bagley explained the projects and noted that the Mill Woods beach design is the department's #1 priority. She explained that the beach is having more frequent washouts due to rain storms and they lose the pond from 2-4 days while they clean the water from the sand and debris. Charlie Wood asked why the department was only asking for the funds to design a new beach to prevent washouts and not asking for the funds for construction to correct the problem. Ms. Bagley responded that she is asking for construction funds in the next year of the CIP plan. Board members discussed this issue and Chairperson Ragonese suggested moving the construction funds into the 2010-11 budget year. He suggested labeling them the Board's #1A and #1B priorities. Board members concurred with this suggestion. Board members discussed the remaining projects and their priority on the list. Kevin Rogers suggested moving the Cove Docks up to #4 on the list. Board members agreed. After discussing all the projects, Board members voted on the priority order for them. Kevin Rogers moved to approve the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board's priority list for Capital Improvement Projects for 2010-11 budget year. Priority #1A is Mill Woods Park Beach Design, priority #1B is improvements to Mill Woods Beach; #2 is Mill Woods Little League Field Parking Lot; #3 is Mill Woods Soccer Field; #4 is Cove Park Docks; #5 is Nature Center Generator Replacement; #6 is Community Center Renovation of Ladies Main Bathroom; #7 is Solomon Welles House Parking Lot; #8 is Mill Woods Park Softball Fields 3 & 4 Renovation; #9 is Standish Sidewalks; #10 is Mill Woods Park Bleacher Replacement at Softball Field 1 and #11 is Mill Woods Park Tennis Courts and Basketball Court Repair. The motion was seconded by Charlie Wood. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Mill Woods Park Road.

Charlie Wood discussed some potholes on the main road in the park. Ms. Bagley will send a work order to maintenance to have them fill the holes. Mr. Wood also inquired on the status of the road sign in Dick Dobmeier's memory. He noted the road sign is not up yet. Chairperson Ragonese is concerned about the amount of time it is taking to install this road sign at the park entrance. Ms. Bagley will work with maintenance staff to get this road sign installed as soon as possible.

3. Soccer Club Tournament.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the George D. Ritchie Youth Soccer Club is interested in holding a soccer tournament in Town. He explained that Marty Sitler has been working with the Soccer Club and had information for the Park Board. Mr. Sitler distributed informational sheets on this tournament. He told Board members that the Soccer Club is looking to hold a tournament June 26th at Mill Woods Park. It would be a 3 on 3 Tournament and would use fields in the park. The Soccer Club has discussed this event with town police, maintenance staff and Parks and Recreation staff. Mr. Sitler sees no conflict with other sports groups in town. In the event of rain, the tournament would be cancelled. Board members had no problem with this tournament. Chairperson Ragonese thought it was a good idea. Charlie Wood moved to grant permission to the George D. Ritchie Youth Soccer Club to hold a soccer tournament in Mill Woods Park on June 26, 2010. The motion was seconded by Dan Silbo and passed unanimously.

4. Recognition of Town Staff by the Town Council.

Ms. Bagley reported that staff at the Community Center: Mary Thibeault, Recreation Supervisor II, Natalie Morrison, Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor and Donna Mattison, Senior Center Coordinator handled an incident at the Community Center. A senior citizen collapsed at a program and Mrs. Thibeault and Mrs. Morrison administered CPR and utilized the AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) to assist the victim. Mrs. Mattison helped to control the crowd and get all the necessary information. Police and ambulance were called and when the individual left by ambulance she was breathing. Due to their exemplary work, these staff will be recognized by the Town Council on December 21st. Chairperson Ragonese and other Board members commented on the great work by the staff.

G. Motion to Adjourn.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks & Recreation Department