

## **Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes - Thursday, January 24, 2008**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Tom Ragonese at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in conference room #1. Members present were Tom Ragonese, Dan Silbo, Charlie Wood and Rich Lepore. Also present was Kathleen Bagley, Director, Parks and Recreation Department.

A. Public Comments.

No public comments.

B. Minutes - November 15, 2007.

Rich Lepore moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Dan Silbo and voted unanimously. The December meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. There were no minutes from the December meeting.

C. Monthly Reports - November and December 2007.

Members reviewed the reports.

D. Letters and Announcements.

Ms. Bagley reported that current board member and past chairman of the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board, Dick Dobmeier, passed away last Saturday. His wake will be tomorrow night at 5:00 p.m. at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home. Chairperson Tom Ragonese thanked Ms. Bagley for the information and recommended that the Parks and Recreation Board do something in memory of Mr. Dobmeier. Ms. Bagley explained that the obituary recommended donations to the Parks and Recreation Department. She suggested that a memorial town bench be purchased with these donations, and be placed in Mill Woods Park with the plaque recognizing Dick Dobmeier. Board members agreed with this idea, and Chairperson Ragonese directed Ms. Bagley to go ahead with this suggestion. Charlie Wood asked Ms. Bagley to check on members attending the Board meeting by telephone. She will check with the Town Clerk.

E. Old Business.

1. Mill Woods Park Building Committee.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the building committee held a meeting last Thursday.

They discussed the review process for the design plans for the Inland Wetland Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Ragonese also reported that he attended the council meeting in December requesting the approval of phase 2 design work for the architect.

He reported that the Town Council approved this additional work at a cost of \$57,000. This work would include the development of bid specifications, the bidding process and permitting process for both fields - the Little League Field and the Soccer Field and construction administration for the Little League Field. Ms. Bagley explained that one of the issues for the Planning and Zoning Commission will be parking in the park. She explained they will want to know how parking will be handled. Committee members discussed this issue and decided that for the Soccer Field they are eliminating one field and building a Soccer Field; therefore, there will be no increase in parking in this respect. Ms. Bagley reported that for the Little League Field they have counted up all the parking spaces in the general vicinity of the lighted Little League Field, and there are approximately 100 parking places in that area. There is a stone dust parking area that will have 40 spaces, and then there are other paved parking areas that will have approximately 60 spaces. Committee members felt that

this was sufficient parking for the activities in that area. They recognized that the lighted Softball Field will have approximately 11 players on each team for a total of 22 players or 22 cars. The lighted Little League field will have approximately the same for another 22 cars bringing it to a total of 44. There will be an overlap between the games bringing that number up to 88, still leaving room for other activities in the park. They also explained that overflow parking for these fields will still be in Mill Woods Park and people will just have to walk a short distance to get to the fields. Chairperson Ragonese reported that the Building Committee timetable is on track and they anticipate the review process in February for the fields with town commissions, going out to bid in March, getting the town approvals in April with construction happening in May. He also reported that the Building Committee has recommended hiring Dr. Dest as a consultant to review the design plans and bid specifications, and to watch during the construction process to make sure the field is built correctly. Board members concurred with this suggestion and look to take advantage of Dr. Dest's experience in building these fields.

## 2. Community Center Renovation Project Status.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to give a status report on this project. Ms. Bagley reported that construction is underway at the Community Center. They have demolished the stage, the walls around the stage and removed the floor. The asbestos abatement work is almost completed and the contractor is working with his electrician to begin his work. She reported that the project is on schedule and moving forward.

## F. New Business.

### 1. Review of Capital Improvement Projects.

Members reviewed the capital improvement projects in their packet and discussed the priority list for these projects. Chairperson Ragonese asked committee members what their priority projects were for the upcoming year. He explained that since the Community Center Renovation Project of the 9/11 Memorial Sports Center is currently underway, that it made sense to have that project as the #1 priority of the board. Board members concurred with this approach. He also recommended that the Mill Woods Park athletic fields be the #2 priority because that construction will be underway in May, and additional funds are needed to build the Little League Field with a substantial amount of money needed for the Soccer Field construction. Committee members reviewed the list and identified their projects in priority order. This priority order is:

1. 9/11 Memorial Sports Center - \$404,000.
2. Mill Woods Park Athletic Fields: Little League Field construction - \$125,000, Soccer Field construction - \$556,596
3. Willard Pool Caulking for Instructional Pool and Pool Deck - \$25,000
4. Community Center - Renovate Main Lobby - \$37,000
5. Renovate Standish and Greenfield Baseball Field Infield - \$25,000
6. Repair four School Basketball Courts - \$25,000
7. Solomon Welles House Parking Lot - \$170,000
8. Cove Park Docks - \$270,000
9. Farms Village Park - Replace Shelter, Spring Animals and Swings - \$30,000

This priority list will be submitted to the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee for their review at an upcoming meeting. A motion was made by Charlie Wood to authorize this priority list be sent to the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Rich Lepore and voted unanimously. Ms. Bagley reported that the town was looking at submitting a grant application

for federal money to help with the 9/11 Memorial Sports Center. Richard Lepore suggested adding in the Community Center project for the renovation of the main lobby into this grant application. Ms. Bagley will check to see if that is possible to do and will report back at the next meeting.

2. Planning and Zoning Approval of Sponsor Signs at Little League Fields.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that he attended the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting in January and spoke in support of allowing these signs on baseball and softball fields in town with outfield fences. He explained to board members that volunteers from the Little League association came and spoke in favor of the signs. The Planning and Zoning Commission did approve these signs for a period of up to four months. The athletic fields for approved sponsor signs include Mill Woods Little League Stadium, Greenfield Stadium and Mill Woods Softball Field #1. Pending school department approval, the other fields on school property include Highcrest Stadium, High School Baseball Field and High School Softball field. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to get a copy of the forms Wethersfield Little League will use to sell the sponsor signs.

3. Donation to Mill Woods Park Master Plan Fund.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that Council Liaison Jeff Kotkin's employer, Northeast Utilities, donated \$300 to this fund. This donation was given because of Mr. Kotkin's volunteer work with the town, especially with the Park Board and the Mill Woods Building Committee. Chairperson Ragonese was very appreciative of this donation and will thank Mr. Kotkin.

G. Motion to Adjourn.

Charlie Wood moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Motion seconded by Rich Lepore and voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director  
Parks and Recreation Department