

Wethersfield Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - May 27, 2004

The Wethersfield Recreation and Parks Advisory Board meeting was called to order by Chairperson Richard Dobmeier at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Manager's conference room in the Town Hall. Members present were

Chairperson Dobmeier, Tom Ragonese, Jackie Pentalow, Peter Kalousdian and Kathleen Bagley, Director, Recreation and Parks Department. Guests were Town Manager, Bonnie Therrien; Christopher Ciolfi from Tower Ventures and Peter Gardow, town resident.

A. Public Comments.

Peter Gardow, 60 Griswold Road, spoke about the previous meeting of the Mill Woods Master Plan sub-committee and the discussion on a possible cell tower in Mill Woods Park. He explained that the committee felt the current location for the cell tower in front of the bathhouse was not an appropriate site. He suggested that it be placed in the back of the park by the proposed new Little League field next to the woods. He thought the view from the neighbors would be less affected and out of the way.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, spoke with the Advisory Board on the possibility of a cell tower being located in Mill Woods Park. She explained that the town was approached by Tower Ventures regarding locating a cell tower somewhere in the area of Mill Woods Park. She reported that the tower would either go on private property in that area or the town could look at putting it in Mill Woods Park. She stated that the Town Council asked her to pursue it with the Recreation and Parks Board. The town would receive revenue from the location of the cell tower in the park and the Town Council would probably be open to the suggestion of a portion of these funds being used to help fund the Mill Woods Master Plan. She explained the revenue would be generated through the lease of the tower location and the personal property placed on the tower by different communications businesses. She also reported that the town could use it as an additional cell tower for their town radio system. She spoke at the Mill Woods Master Plan Committee meeting last week and was aware of the committee's suggestion that the location be reconsidered in the park. Mr. Ciolfi reported that T-Mobile is the company currently looking to improve their coverage in the area. He explained that this type of cell tower would be done so that the tower itself could look like a flagpole in the park or as suggested at the Mill Woods Master Plan sub-committee meeting, if it is relocated it could just be a pole out in the back of the park without a flag. He met with Ms. Bagley at the park today to look at a new location as identified by committee members from the Mill Woods Master Plan sub-committee. He took coordinates at that time and will report to the Town Manager if the new location is feasible for the tower. Board members asked about the type of building that would need to be erected next to the tower. Mr. Ciolfi reported that in the new location it could be something very small and would not be obtrusive in the park. He explained that the town attorney is reviewing a contract possibility between the town and his company and they will be looking at this location as well as other property owners in the general vicinity. The type of area they would need would be approximately 50 x 50. A discussion was held on the health risk associated with the tower. He explained that the federal government sets a standard for the type of emissions from these towers and his company was well below the minimum standard set by the federal government.

At this time, Chairperson Dobmeier asked Town Manager, Bonnie Therrien, if she would give the Board an update on the status of the Cottone football field. Ms. Therrien reported that Rad/Sports Turf received the contract to put the artificial surface on Cottone's main football field and the practice field. She said the town attorney is studying the contract now and looks like the contractor will start sometime in the near future. The schedule is to put the field on line for September 1. The Town Council does have the money in the budget to do the artificial surface, but it does not include lighting the field. However, conduits will be put in the field in case lights are given the okay. The cost for the artificial surface for both the main field and the practice field is 1.2 million dollars and this cost does not include lights. Board members talked with the town manager about their second topic under New Business - Advertising on Athletic Field Fences. Ms. Therrien reported that the Town Council asked the Recreation and Parks Board to look into this issue to determine if revenue could be raised for

allowing advertising signs on the fences on the athletic fields.

Board members said they would consider the issue and would ask the director to research the matter to determine the best approach to this item. Chairman Dobmeier thanked Town Manager, Bonnie Therrien, for attending their meeting.

B. Minutes.

Tom Ragonese moved to approve the [February 26](#) and [March 25, 2004 minutes](#). The motion was seconded by Jackie Pentalow and voted unanimously. There were no minutes for April. The April meeting was canceled.

C. Monthly Reports.

Board members accepted the March and April monthly reports.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Board read the resignation letter from Damon Herring from the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. They reviewed the status of members of the Board and will look to have this vacancy filled in the near future.
2. 2004 Summer Brochure.

Board members reviewed the summer brochure.

E. Old Business.

1. Moeller Home Update.

Peter Kalousdian reported on the status of the Moeller Home project. He explained that the architect is in the final stages of preparing the plans for the bidding process and these plans were approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Ms. Bagley reported that the Town Council authorized \$50,000 towards this capital improvement project in the upcoming year. The total funds available for Moeller Home is \$600,000. The Friends of the Nature Center are still continuing their fundraising and anticipate more dollars for the completion of the project. He reported that the Building Committee is looking to move the log cabin with volunteer help.

2. Skate Park Update.

Ms. Bagley included a budget for the skate park in the Board packet. She feels if the town receives a state grant of \$20,000 and if the committee raises approximately another \$12,000 they will have reached their goal to be able to install the skate park equipment in the near future. Hopefully, the state grant will be coming through in June. She also reported that the committee has another fundraiser scheduled for June and is hoping this will bring in the dollars for the skate park.

3. Mill Woods Master Plan Committee Update.

Tom Ragonese reported on the status of the Mill Woods Master Plan sub-committee meeting. He explained how they received a proposal from Bill Dest to provide soil testing in Mill Woods Park. This test would give the committee an idea on the type of design to be used throughout the park for the different facilities. He explained that this is a critical part of the project and they are hoping to get this on target. Mr. Dest's fee was \$8,850 to do this work. Mr. Ragonese reported that the committee is looking at a \$5,000 match from the town along with \$5,000 from the sports leagues to begin the funding for this process. Mr. Ragonese reported that the committee is moving forward with the timetable for the implementation of the Master Plan. Ms. Bagley reported that the Recreation and Parks Department has received rental fees for the use of some of their athletic fields and outdoor facilities. She reported that the rental fees to date are approximately \$4,000 and this money is being placed in the Mill Woods Master Plan fund. This money can be available to help with the Bill Dest report if the committee decides to go

forward in that manner. Mr. Ragonese reported that the committee has set up a fundraising committee and will be looking at different projects throughout the upcoming year for fundraising for this project.

4. Budget Update.

Ms. Bagley reviewed the summary sheet enclosed in the packet for Board members. Budget reductions included cutting summer programs one week, closing Mill Woods pool August 30 instead of Labor Day, eliminating six weeks from the indoor pool and opening four days per week instead of five. Also, the Teen Center will only operate Friday evenings and the activity room at the Community Center was eliminated. She reported that the Town Council did put money back into the Recreation and Parks budget to keep Mill Woods pool open weekend evenings and through August 30. The original proposal was to close all outdoor pools on August 20. She reported that the Town Council worked with the Town Manager to fund the appropriate services in the Recreation and Parks budget.

5. Cottone Field Update.

This update was provided by the Town Manager.

6. Update on Use of Schools for Summer Programs.

Ms. Bagley reported that the school department was very cooperative in working with her for the location of the summer recreation and parks programs due to all the construction going on in the schools over the summer. The Dance and Drama program will be relocated to the high school and the Therapeutic Recreation program moved to Hanmer School.

F. New Business.

1. Flag Pole Proposal for Mill Woods Park.

Board members told the Town Manager they would be supportive of the proposal. The Town Manager reported that she will give them further information as more details are worked.

2. Advertising on Fences at Athletic Fields.

Board members would support this idea and asked Ms. Bagley to get information concerning the process.

3. Tom Ragonese reminded Board members that in a previous meeting he asked that representatives of the different sports leagues in town be invited to Board meetings to discuss their operation with the Board. He asked Ms. Bagley to begin to invite representatives from each league to a different meeting to the Park Board. Board members concurred to invite them when they are out of season.

4. Ms. Bagley reported that Stillman baseball field still has no protective fence approved for separating the ballfield from the parking lot. She continues to work on this issue.

G. Motion to Adjourn.

Tom Ragonese moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Seconded by Peter Kalousdian and voted unanimously.