

Wethersfield Advisory Parks and Recreation Board
Harbor Management Commission
Minutes - Thursday, January 28, 2016

The meeting was held at Town Hall and called to order by Chairperson Tom Ragonese at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Michael Bisi, Bill Derech, Rich Lepore, Tom Mull, John Rascius, Tom Ragonese and Dan Silbo. Also present were Tony Ruggiero, Deputy Harbormaster, and Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation.

A. Public Comments.

Jack Guilmartin, 9 Meggat Park, Wethersfield spoke to board members about concerns from the Wethersfield Cove Yacht Club. He is chairman of the Trustees for the Yacht Club and is looking to confirm information on the status of agreements between the Yacht Club and the Parks and Recreation Department. He identified four items:

1. Currently, the Yacht Club pays for one resident season pass at the Cove boat launch area for Yacht Club members that are slip holders to launch their boats for the season. Is this policy still in effect?
2. Are Yacht Club members still paying the resident rate for renting moorings in the Cove?
3. Has the rate changed for using mooring tackle for mooring spaces in the Cove? Is it still the same reduced rate?
4. The Yacht Club has nine moorings in the mooring field with mooring tackle. Do they have to pay for any of these nine moorings if they are unoccupied in a season?

Chairperson Ragonese thanked Mr. Guilmartin for attending the board meeting to discuss these issues. It is a good time to review policies and discuss any concerns. The board is always willing to listen and work with the Yacht Club. Chairperson Ragonese explained that items #1-3 did not change. He asked Ms. Bagley to review these policies with the board. Ms. Bagley explained that unless the board changes these policies, they are still in effect. The board approved these policies because of the assistance provided by the Yacht Club to the Wethersfield Police and Fire Departments, town staff and to the Harbormasters.

1. Yacht Club pays for one resident season pass for use by their members that are slip holders to launch their boats.
2. Since the Yacht Club is in Wethersfield, its members can purchase a season mooring rental at the resident rate.
3. The rate has not changed for mooring tackle placed in a designated mooring location. It is still \$100.00

A discussion ensued on item #4 for payment of moorings in the designated mooring field. Mr. Guilmartin explained that if the moorings are not used, the club should not have to pay for them. They would use them if a storm approached and they needed to anchor boats away from their docks or if more members needed a mooring. Chairperson Ragonese reminded board members of Harbormaster Forsdick's email to them. Ms. Bagley had copies of the email with background information if anyone had not seen it. Ms. Bagley explained that the Army Corp has policies related to moorings in a designated mooring field. All persons having a mooring must be charged an equitable fee. The Army Corps allows the Town to charge a different rate for non-residents based on the Town's maintenance costs for the Wethersfield Cove Boat Launch area. After much discussion, Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to contact the Army Corps to get clarification from them about their policies on moorings.

Carl Zaparanick introduced himself and explained that he is a new resident in town and saw the announcement of the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board/ Harbor Management Commission meeting on the town website. He attended their meeting because he is interested in what's going on in town. Chairperson Ragonese welcomed him to the board meeting and thanked him for his attendance. If he has any questions, just let them know and they will provide him with information.

B. Minutes – December 17, 2015.

Mike Bisi moved to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Bill Derech and approved unanimously. Tom Mull asked for information on a complaint from a resident about the Nature Center program. Since he was not at the meeting last month, he asked for a copy of the resident letter. Ms. Bagley will get him a copy of the letter. Chairperson Ragonese explained the issue from last month and noted that Ms. Bagley has sent a letter to the resident responding to her concerns about the Nature Center program and offered a refund. Mr. Mull also asked about the minutes noting a suggestion to discuss funding assistance for bleacher replacements at Mill Woods Softball Field #1 with Men's Softball. Chairperson Ragonese explained that board members suggested having this discussion with the Men's Softball League. Mr. Mull will follow up on this board suggestion with Ms. Bagley.

C. Monthly Report – December 2015.

Board members reviewed the monthly report. Chairperson Ragonese noted the different programs held over the holiday school vacation break.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Ms. Bagley distributed a membership list and asked members to review their contact information and make any changes. She will have an updated list at the next meeting.

E. Old Business.

None.

F. New Business.

1. Discussion with Representatives from Wethersfield Cove Yacht Club.

This discussion was held under public comments.

2. Budget Process for Fiscal Year 2016-2017.

Ms. Bagley explained that she is working with staff to develop the department's budget request for fiscal year 2016-2017. Councilor Hurley reviewed the timetable for the budget process. This budget will be in effect from July, 2016 to June, 2017. The Town Council will approve the budget by May 15.

Department heads submit their budget to the Town Manager who reviews it and then presents his budget to the Town Council. It will then go to the Town Council with a public hearing in April. Ms. Bagley will have the budget on the agenda for the February meeting.

G. Board Member Comments.

1. Lacrosse Program – members have seen the publicity on this program. It was in Wethersfield Life and the Hartford Courant.
2. High School baseball field batting cage – John Rascius mentioned that the batting cage looks good and will be ready to go in the spring. Ms. Bagley reported that town staff had installed the cage. He asked about an outfield fence at Stillman and Webb baseball fields. Ms. Bagley explained that both those fields are multi use fields and cannot be fenced. Also the schools use the fields for their outdoor events and programs.

H. Harbor Management Commission.

1. Report on Use of Harbormaster Boat.

Chairperson Ragonese explained that the current Harbormaster boat is not in good condition. Deputy Harbormaster, Tony Ruggiero, had talked with Harbormaster Charlie Forsdick and informed the commission that the engine is having problems. Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the report prepared by Ms. Bagley about how the boat is used by the town and the Harbormasters. He also went over the information provided by Harbormaster Charlie Forsdick. He noted that the reports identify similar uses for the boat. John Rascius asked if a boat could be shared with the Police or Fire Department. Chairperson Ragonese explained that it cannot be shared because police and fire must have their boat available to them for emergencies. Tony Ruggiero suggested if the police or fire boat gets replaced maybe we could look at their getting their old boat. Chairperson Ragonese explained that the police are replacing their boat but it is not in good shape. Ms. Bagley explained that she has had a conversation with the Town Manager to look into the purchase of a used boat. Mike Bisi said that there is a market for used boats and the town might be able to get something to meet their needs. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to keep the commission informed on the boat search. The commission supports the need for a boat and sent correspondence to the Town Council to ask them to consider the purchase of a boat. Something needs to be done for the upcoming boating season.

I. Motion to Adjourn.

Tom Mull moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Motion was seconded by Richard Lepore and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks and Recreation Department