

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
Harbor Management Commission  
Minutes - Thursday, April 24, 2014

The meeting was held at Town Hall and called to order by Acting Chairperson Richard Lepore at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Bill Leonard, Richard Lepore and Tom Mull. Also present was Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation. Council Liaison, Mike Hurley could not make this meeting because of Town Council budget meeting.

A. Public Comments.

None.

B. Minutes – March 27, 2014.

Tom Mull moved to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded by Bill Leonard and approved unanimously.

C. Monthly Report – March 2014.

The Monthly Report was reviewed by board members.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Ms. Bagley reminded members that the Memorial Day parade will be held on May 24 at 9:00 a.m.
2. The Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring fireworks on May 31 at Cove Park.

E. Old Business.

1. Condition of Athletic Fields for Spring Use.

Acting Chairperson, Richard Lepore asked Ms. Bagley for an update on field conditions. She reported that the maintenance staff has been working on getting all the fields ready for the different town leagues. Tom Mull reported that Fusco Field (lighted softball field) was renovated last fall and it is in great shape. He also reported that Softball Field #5 is in good shape. Ms. Bagley explained that due to the high school renovation, the high school baseball field is off line along with Cottone Field (spring soccer) and DiCiccio Field (spring soccer). On Cottone Field all the bleachers have been removed for replacement and the target date for the use of this field is for the fall 2014 season.

F. New Business.

1. Nature Center Report from the Association of Nature Center Administrators.

Acting Chairperson, Richard Lepore welcomed Rachael Sunny, the town's Youth Development Director. She oversees the operation of the Nature Center. Ms. Sunny distributed copies of the report developed by the Nature Center Administrators. This evaluation was funded by a grant from the Association of Nature Center Administrators. These individuals visited the Nature Center, observed its operations and met with community members to evaluate the center based on three priorities identified in the grant application. They provided recommendations for future operations in these three areas:

a. Board Recruitment and Training.

- (1) Create an ad hoc committee of key visionaries to identify the skills needed to advance the agenda of the Friends of the Nature Center.
- (2) Restructure the existing board.
- (3) Consider term limits for board members.

b. Review of programs, exhibits and interpretive trails.

- (1) Complete a strategic planning process that is inclusive and professionally facilitated. Create programs, exhibits and interpretive opportunities driven by the mission articulated via the strategic planning process.

c. Community Outreach and Strategies.

- (1) Build strategic collaborative relationships and partnerships.
- (2) Evaluate current activities using a logic model that defines if the activities are fundraisers, friend raisers, mission aligned or misdirected.
- (3) Assess opportunities for various Parks and Recreation properties.

Ms. Sunny explained that she is working with the Friend's Board to review the report and develop an implementation plan. The report provided in depth information on each of the three priorities and concluded that the Nature Center is at an exciting crossroads for the future and it is time to look to sustainable and appropriate growth for the center. Acting Chairperson, Richard Lepore thanked Ms. Sunny for attending the meeting and providing information on the report. The board members look forward to future information on implementing the recommendations and offered their assistance in the process.

2. Loretta's Dream Picnic Pavilion.

Ms. Bagley explained that staff have been developing policies for the use of the picnic pavilion. Staff have been discussing these policies with members from the Loretta's Dream committee. She passed around a draft of the policies. Board members had a concern that alcohol was not allowed at the pavilion. Ms. Bagley explained that the town policies prohibit alcohol in any town park. Board members asked Ms. Bagley to research the process for getting permission to allow alcohol at the picnic pavilion. Members were in favor of allowing alcohol (beer & wine) at the picnic pavilion.

3. Mill Woods Swimming Area.

Board members noted that the swim area will be opening shortly, after undergoing a renovation on the beach in the spring of 2013. The facility was great with the new beach sand and drainage system. Members are looking forward to another good summer at the swim area after all this work was completed.

G. Board Member Comments.

None.

H. Harbor Management Commission.

1. Status of Boating Infrastructure Grant with State.

Ms. Bagley reported that the town has signed the contract and sent it back to the State. Once the State signs it, they will send it back to the Town with all the appropriate instructions for commencing the dock project.

2. Dredging of Cove Channel.

Ms. Bagley reported that the work is completed.

3. Harbormaster Report.

Acting Chairperson Lepore reviewed the Harbormaster report distributed at the meeting with the members. The Harbormaster is still looking to fill the Deputy Harbormaster position. Also he will be talking with the engineering consultant to discuss information on a more secure mooring anchor system that will withstand the winter ice. The Harbormaster boat is being worked on by town mechanics. The Town Manager does not have funds proposed in the upcoming budget year to replace the boat. The Harbormaster has identified that the current boat can make it through this year, but will need to be replaced in the following year. It has reached its life expectancy.

I. Motion to Adjourn.

A motion was made by Tom Mull and seconded by Bill Leonard to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director  
Parks & Recreation Department