

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 12, 2014**

**ATTENDANCE:** Susan Daly, Acting Chair; Mary Flynn, Robert P. Marchesi, Marianne Gutierrez(7:37 p.m.); Erika Morris (7:37 p.m.)

**STAFF:** Susan Swiatek, Director; James Coghlan, Assistant Director

**OTHERS:** Keeley Kriskey, Shawn Swett

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Acting Chairman Daly called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A quorum was not present.

**Presentation from Keeley Kriskey, Shawn Swett - desire to extend paddle tennis season into June.**

Ms. Kriskey explained that the paddle tennis association have now introduced a low bounce ball, which can extend season to June. She said that the men's paddle tennis league has just doubled in size and the womens' teams were not far behind. Courts have become premium. Ms. Kriskey said that she was requesting use of the lights for the matches starting at 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. in the spring.

*Ms. Gutierrez and Ms. Morris joined the meeting at 7:37 p.m. A quorum was now present.*

Ms. Kriskey said that the visiting paddle tennis teams are not Darien residents and would need to get some type of entrance pass to the parks. Ms. Swiatek said that this was of the issues with the beach access. The paddle tennis season would overlap the beach season from mid-May to almost the end of June. Discussion followed about the current budget year and the status of 2014-2015 budget.

Ms. Flynn pointed out that there were two issues, one being the logistics and the second one being the financial aspect. Ms. Swiatek pointed out that the Committee was present to listen. Mr. Coghlan pointed out the lighting would be an expense and unfortunately, the funding is not in the budgeting. Ms. Swiatek pointed out that the season was expanding from six months to nine months. There would also be a reservation system managed. The Commissioners need to discuss what level of service that the department should be delivering. The discussion moved to the number of Darien residents that were members and the number of teams in the clubs.

It was stated that there would need to be a subcommittee formed to study the issue and formulate a plan for adding this to the budget.

Ms. Kriskey commented that last Thursday, the Parks & Recreation staff did a phenomenal job in clearing the courts of snow. She was very appreciative of the staff's hard work.

Ms. Daly thanked Ms. Kriskey and Ms. Swett for their input.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2014.**

- \*\* MS. FLYNN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 15, 2014 MEETING AS SUBMITTED.**
- \*\* MS. MORRIS SECONDED.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO IN FAVOR (DALY AND FLYNN) AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (MARCHESI AND GUTIERREZ).**

**REPORTS.**

**Director** – Ms. Swiatek said that the Mather project continues to move forward slowly. She then reviewed the highlights of her written report. (See Attached)

**Assistant Director** - Mr. Coghlan said that there will be a winter sports camp that will be available to the residents over the school vacation. (See attached)

**Chairman** - No report

**Sub-Committees/study groups** – Ms. Flynn reported that this afternoon she attended a meeting with the tree conservancy with Ms. Morris and Ms. Swiatek about a donation of a spruce tree for the beach. Ms. Morris said the discussion was about the details of the Tree Conservancy program. The Conservancy purchases the trees wholesale, plant the trees and arrange to have it watered by a third party for two years.

Ms. Morris said that the study group would be looking at park maps to select areas that could use additional trees. Ms. Swiatek would have to approve the location of the trees.

The discussion then moved to the issue of allowing memorial plaques. The Tree Conservancy and the Land Trust do not allow plaques. Discussion followed. Ms. Flynn said that the Garden Club has done a small plaque for a daffodil garden. She said that she would contact the Garden Club about the details. This will be discussed again next month

**REPORT ON PADDLE TENNIS OPERATION.**

Mr. Coghlan said that one of the men's leagues had emailed him about using the paddle tennis courts. Ms. Swiatek said that there were many logistics to consider. She added that during the summer, the staff works on the courts and the heaters. There were also concerns about who would be managing the courts.

**BUDGET FISCAL 2015 UPDATE.**

Ms. Swiatek distributed copies of the Operating Budget. She said by having a Facilities Manager, it would relieve the stress on the programs' directors and the senior center directors. However, this position was cut by the Board of Selectmen. She then reviewed the remaining items in the budget with the Commissioners.

Ms. Swiatek then distributed copies of the Capital Budget. Discussion followed.

Ms. Gutierrez then pointed out that the Mather Center was included in Parks and Recreation budget and that the Mather Center should have a separate budget.

Ms. Daly requested that Ms. Swiatek document her tasks. Ms. Swiatek said that she needed the Commission's support. Almost none of the Capital projects were funded.

**PUBLIC COMMENT.**

There was no one from the public to comment at this time.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS (TWO THIRDS VOTE)**

There was no additional business to discuss at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT.**

**\*\* MR. MARCHESI MOVED TO ADJOURN.**  
**\*\* MS. GUTIERREZ SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services

Town of Darien  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Regular Meeting  
February 12, 2014