

**TOWN OF DARIEN
MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MARCH 19, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Jane Branigan, Chair; Susan Daly, Mark Crouch
Mary Flynn, Kevin Webb.

STAFF: Susan Swiatek, Director.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Branigan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and stated that there was a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting of February 12, 2014

Ms. Daly requested changes as follows:

Page 1, paragraph 3, sentence 2: add 'one' after was.

Page 2: Under Sub-Committees, in the first sentence, change Flynn to Morris, capitalize Tree Conservancy, add representative before Ms.

Page 3: In the first sentence change having to adding. Paragraph 4, last sentence add 'for this fiscal year' after funded.

**** MS. FLYNN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE
FEBRUARY 12, 2014 MEETING AS AMENED WITH CORRECTIONS
NOTED.**

**** MS. DALY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Director's Report:

Ms. Swiatek presented her report as follows:

Administration

Spring and summer registration began. Facility permits are now being submitted. Beach permits sales for cars have begun.

Project Status:

a) Tennis Courts Weed 1-3. We continue to await receipt of the small grant for repairs from the USTA.

b) Mather Center. Project is well underway. No completion date is available. New furniture order is in storage at this time.

Ms. Swiatek stated that a great deal of her time is being focused on the Mather Center. She reported that that as Director she has been involved in wiring planning, security planning, building signage, furnishing, planning the move from the senior center and interviewing for building attendants.

Administration:

1. Maintenance. The crew has continued to perform snow removal tasks in conjunction with DPW roads and prior to any department tasks. It has been a long winter. Overtime account for maintenance will be short funds this year. A transfer will be needed to continue overtime into the spring to perform beach and refuse maintenance on Sundays. One truck was struck by passenger vehicle on the roads, the sander and one plow motor failed and need repair.

February	Continue to check ice thickness	Tilley, Cherry Lawn
	Re-install grills at picnic area	WD, PT
	Repair. paint guard chairs	Beaches
	Interview for summer position	
	Lots Lots Lots snow removal	Roads, sidewalks, courts, parking lots
	Remove debris from building	Senior Center
	Rebuilt deck on riding mower	equipment
	Installing truck tires	equipment

Recreation. See Assistant Director’s Report.

Storm damage. Photos were included to show the Pear Tree Beach Parking Lot Snow from Down Town. There was discussion on a resident request to have this removed.

Assistant Director’s Report

Ms. Swiatek provided the report as follows:

Paddle Court Renovation Program. The two additional heaters that were added to courts #4 and #5 work well. We have been able to purchase two additional units to help courts 1 and 2.

DJST Building Project. DJST fundraising efforts are underway. We are not sure of the status of the efforts at this time.

Budget Fiscal 2015. The operating and capital budget was reviewed by the Board of Selectmen on February 3, and The Board of Finance is scheduled for March 25th The Administrative Officer had cut virtually all of the items relating to maintenance which will have a great impact on our ability to get to our regular duties.

Parks Maintenance Management Plan. The revised plan was completed and presented to the Board of Selectmen during performance measures presentation in January and during the budget in February. It had little impact.

Grant Keep America Beautiful — Containers. On-line application was made to 2014 Dr. Pepper Snapple Park Bin Grant program--unfortunately the request was denied. Bids. Bids are out for security services for the beaches and cleaning services for beaches, Cherry Lawn, Mather and Senior Center. Bids will be publicly opened on March 24th

Report on Paddle Tennis Operations:

After a delay at the printer, the spring and summer brochure was mailed out to all Darien households on Monday, March 3rd and registration as well as beach permit sales began on Wednesday, March 5th. Please see the attached charts for a comparison of program registration and beach permit sales over the past several years.

Program registration is up and beach permits sales are down this year. I believe the decrease in sales is due to the weather and sending out email reminders a bit earlier last year. We will send out monthly reminders this year encouraging residents to purchase permits online.

Thus far we have seen an approximate 20% increase in play and revenue over last season and an approximate 50% increase in play and 90% increase in revenue over the 2011 — 2012 season. We have also seen an increase in paddle tennis parties. We averaged about 2 parties per month this season. I only see this increasing in years to come. We did lose 3.5 days of play due to snow in the month of February and our crew did a great job clearing the courts as soon as possible with all of their other snow responsibilities.

Beach: Letters were sent out in mid-February to seventeen of our lifeguards asking them their interest in returning for the summer of 2014. I have thus far received eleven responses, with nine of the guards desiring to return. We have received three applications from certified lifeguards looking to work for the Department this summer. I will be conducting interviews starting the week of March 17th. We typically have nineteen or twenty lifeguards on staff each summer. It looks like we will have a large changeover in guards this summer:

- Jackie Morgen & Meghan Varley will be returning as Waterfront Coordinators. Their responsibilities include supervision of lifeguards, payroll, and preparing the weekly lifeguard schedule.
- Aimee Rich will be returning as a head lifeguard & Red Cross Water Safety Instructor for swim lessons. Lessons run Monday-Thursday from 10 AM 2:30 PM at Weed Beach for 6 weeks starting June 23rd

Chairman Report

Chairman Brannigan reported that the RTM approved the land acquisition for Short Lane and there is a recommendation from the Board of Selectman for demolition of the building as soon as possible.

She reported that there was a request from the office for a beach sticker for an RTM member that was storing his parent's car that resides in New York.

Ms. Branigan added that the applicant since bought a sticker on line, but this issue highlights that the process needs to be revamped and the policies amended. There was discussion on the need for a sub-committee to look into this along with the Paddle Court rental application process. Mr. Webb and Mr. Crouch agreed to serve on the sub-committee.

Sub-Committees/Study Groups –

Ms. Flynn reported that there was a signage recommendation from the Tree Conservancy group. She explained that there is plaque that can be done by the vendor that is engraved in stone and can be embedded into the tree. It was agreed to approve this as signage for tree dedications that are donated to the parks.

Budget Fiscal 2015 –

Ms. Swiatek referred to the budget report contained in the packet. She stated that as included in her report the Board of Finance is scheduled for March 25th. She spoke on the process where the cut of virtually all of the items relating to maintenance will have a great impact on our ability to get to our regular duties. There was further discussion on the need to not take on additional areas of responsibility until there are manpower services added to the budget. Mr. Webb asked about the rankings that were assigned and reviewed with the Town's Administrative Officer on the performance measures and priorities. Ms. Swiatek noted that she would provide a summary of the ranking and results but to keep in mind that the document had no bearing on the decision to cut the parts of the budget from the recommendation.

New Business:

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA UNDER NEW BUSINESS:**

Boat Ramp at Pear Tree Beach

Budget Transfers

**** MR. MS. FLYNN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Boat Ramp at Pear Tree Beach

Ms. Swiatek noted that there was a letter from the Darien Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters retarding the boat ramp at Pear Tree Beach. She reviewed the history on this ramp that was renovated ten years ago and the application process that was lengthy and involved through the DEEP with state approvals. She spoke about the pitch or grade and that there was no permission to dredge or increase the pitch.

Ms. Swiatek continued and further explained that this is now being revisited because of larger boats wanting to dock and the problems with low tide. There was discussion on the issues of non-residency usage and hours of operation in relation to low-tide. She noted that this was discussed at a Board of Selectmen meeting and it was decided that this was not a project that the Town wanted to take on at this time.

Budget Transfers

Ms. Swiatek explained that there are needs for in-budget transfers to cover estimated overages in the maintenance-overtime accounts as follows:

Spring beach clean-up and refuse removal:	\$ 7,500
Beach Security services from April – June 30–	\$ 5,000
Park Materials/Supplies - Seed/ Fertilizer	\$10,000
Water charges for irrigation at Cherry Lawn/Gallagher	\$ 3,000

- ** **MR. WEBB MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET TRANSFER REQUEST OF UP TO \$30,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO COVER OVERAGES IN MAINTENANCE-OVERTIME OBJECT ACCOUNTS.**
- ** **MS. DALY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** **MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

It was noted that the above information needs to be put into the budget recommendation for next year.

NEXT MEETING:

April 9, 2014: Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m. Room 119 Darien Town Hall.

Adjournment

- ** **MR. CROUCH MOVED TO ADJOURN**
- ** **MS. FLYNN SECONDED.**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Knox,
Telesco Secretarial Services