

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 9, 2014**

**ATTENDANCE:** Jane Branigan, Chair; Mark Crouch, Robert P. Marchesi, Mary Flynn, Marianne Gutierrez, Susan Daly

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

**OTHERS:** Pamela Stevenson, Jennifer Burgess, Darien Jr. Sailing Program

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Acting Chairman Daly called the meeting to order at 8:20 p.m. A quorum was present.

**DARIEN JR. SAILING TEAM: UPDATE.**

Ms. Stevenson and Ms. Burgess came forward to greet the Commissioners. Ms. Burgess said that there were plans drawn up by the architect. They have started their fundraising and met with grant providers regarding the project. Ms. Swiatek said that the project would not be ready to start by the summer. Ms. Burgess said that the team will use the same operating format from last year, but that the team will need to add a construction office trailer. It would be good to have two PODs, one to lock up the equipment overnight by where the old shed used to be. Ms. Swiatek pointed out that the Town was not doing the demolition of the blue house and that she believed the equipment would arrive via Short Lane. She added that any temporary storage trailers would have to be presented to Planning and Zoning for an amendment. Discussion followed about the details of access, and where the PODs would be placed along with the items needed for the Planning and Zoning application.

The discussion then moved to the tent structure and where it would be erected when the program started.

**\*\* MR. CROUCH MOVED TO SUPPORT THE TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF THE DARIEN JR. SAILING TEAM FROM THE PADDLE HUT TO THE JUNIOR SAILING AREA AT WEED BEACH.**

**\*\* MS. GUTIERREZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**APPROVE MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2014.**

Page 2, under Administration, first line underneath table: please remove the words:

“See Assistant Director’s Report.”

Page 2, under Administration, please delete the first subheading “Assistant Director’s Report” underneath table.

Page 3, paragraph 1, line 3, please change the following from:

“the need for a sub-committee to look into this along with the Paddle Court rental application process.”

To:

“the need for the sub-committee to look into this, along with the Paddle Tennis operations.”

Page 4, under New Business, please change the following motion from:

**\*\* 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.**

To:

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

**BOAT RAMP AT PEAR TREE BEACH  
BUDGET TRANSFERS**

**\*\* MS. FLYNN SECONDED THE MOTION**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* MS. DALY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 19, 2014 MEETING AS CORRECTED.**

**\*\* MR. MARCHESI SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **REPORTS.**

#### **a) Director’s Report.**

Ms. Swiatek reviewed the following report with the Commissioners.



- d) **DJST Building Project.** DJST fundraising efforts are underway. We are not sure of the status of the efforts at this time.
- e) **Budget Fiscal 2015.** The operating and capital budget was reviewed by the Board of Finance on March 25th. No additional questions have been raised at the time of this report.
- f) **Bids.** Bids are out for security services for the beaches and cleaning services for beaches were opened March 24<sup>th</sup>. The apparent low bid for security is a new service. We are in discussions to begin operations at this time.

Mr. Marchesi asked for an update on the Mather Center status. Ms. Swiatek said that the project was delayed because the Town had to re-bid the construction. The latest moving date was April 15th, but this will not happen.

**b) Assistant Director.**

Mr. Coghlan presented the following report to the Commission.

**Paddle Courts**

The 2013 - 2014 paddle court season concluded on Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. Revenue was approximately \$61,000, an increase of over 18% from last year and almost 200% from over just six years ago. A financial analysis of the season will be distributed at the May meeting. We will take a more in-depth look at expenses, including maintenance crew hours/pay required during snow storms.

**Summer Staff Recruitment**

Interviews for lifeguards are starting up. We have received very few applications and will have to hire seven or eight lifeguards to have a full staff for Memorial Day Weekend. The Human Resources Department will be running an advertisement for lifeguards in the local papers the week of March 31<sup>st</sup>. I have also emailed our current guards to encourage them to send certified lifeguards our way. If we don't start receiving applications over the coming week, I will send an advertisement through our database. There are also some other ways we can recruit guards if the applications continue to be slow. I am cautiously optimistic we will have a full staff in mid-May.

**Beach Security**

Bids were opened on Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup> for beach security services. The bids have been reviewed and the work has been awarded to Aron Security, Inc. This is the first time they have bid on services. I will be meeting with their management and supervisory team to review our procedures and regulations on Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. Beach security is scheduled to begin work at Weed Beach on Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup> and Friday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at Pear Tree Point Beach.

### **Beaches, Cherry Lawn Park & Senior Center Cleaning Services**

Bids were also opened for cleaning services for the Senior Center as well as restroom cleaning services at both beaches and the comfort station at Cherry Lawn Park. American Janitorial Services of East Norwalk has been selected as our cleaning service provider. They are the current vendor providing these services. They will transition over to the new Mather Center when it opens later this spring. They are currently cleaning the paddle bathrooms at Weed Beach until we open the bathhouse on April 21<sup>st</sup> and are cleaning the Cherry Lawn facility daily. The Cherry Lawn Park comfort station will be cleaned every day during the spring, summer, and fall months and three days per week during the winter. They will commence on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at Pear Tree Beach.

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The discussion moved to the increased use of the paddle tennis courts and some requests from leagues to use the courts at night.

Ms. Swiatek said that this year, she would be working with Mr. Coghlan to prepare a more accurate financial picture on the paddle court fees and costs for the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Coghlan said that there were still some open positions for lifeguards at the beaches, which they are trying to fill. He listed a number of recruitment efforts. Discussion followed.

#### **c) Chairman.**

Mrs. Branigan said that she had met with Ms. Debbie Bussey of the Darien Garden Club recently regarding a potential gift to the Town of Darien for Cherry Lawn. This is a result of the fundraiser from last fall. This gift will have to be presented for approval by the Board of Selectmen. After reviewing the site, the Garden Club is interested in removing or grinding down some of the stumps in the Park. They also would like to create a low maintenance native garden on either side of the entrance gates. Discussion followed about the potential plantings.

Mrs. Branigan said that this donation will be approved by the Garden Club's Board first and then come to the Town. She suggested to Ms. Bussey that the Garden Club consider planting something around the Gallagher stone.

Mrs. Branigan said that she had received a memo from First Selectman Stevenson suggesting the Committee consider the current fees. Ms. Swiatek forwarded this memo to all the members of the Parks and Recreation Committee. Ms. Branigan said that in her response to the memo, she had contacted First Selectman Stevenson regarding tearing down the house that the Committee had hoped would be completed before the summer. First Selectman Stevenson said that the Town was in the middle of the hazardous material assessment. This will be followed by the abatement of the material before the demolition

goes out to bid. Ms. Swiatek then reviewed all the steps involved in this type of project. Discussion followed.

Ms. Branigan said that both her term and Mr. Marchesi's expired at the end March and neither of them will be continuing on. She then suggested that in May that the Committee elect a new chairman. At that point both she and Mr. Marchesi will continue on until a replacement is appointed.

**d) Sub-Committees/study groups.**

**Paddle Group** – Mr. Crouch said there was no report because the group has not had a chance to meet. There was a brief discussion about someone who was dismayed that the Town could not just open up the courts right away. Ms. Daly said that she had referred someone who had asked her about this to Kevin. A discussion followed.

**Gifts and Donations** – No report.

Ms. Branigan said that it was her understanding that the Tree Conservancy would be putting in markers. Ms. Flynn said that for the bushes and other plantings, there is a policy, but the trees go to the Tree Conservancy.

**4. Report on Paddle Tennis operations 2014.**

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**5. Budget fiscal 2015 Update.**

Ms. Swiatek said that the budget was going before the Board of Selectman. Ms. Flynn said that the Board has passed the budget with no cuts but a 5.89% increase. Ms. Swiatek reviewed the approved items, including the backstop, replacing the pumps and other items. She said that the administration was looking at bringing a facilities manager.

**6. Public Comment.**

There was no one present from the public at this time.

**7. Any other business (two-thirds vote)**

**ADJOURNMENT.**

**\*\* MS. DALY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. GUTIERREZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services