

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Jane Branigan; Susan Daly; Andy Hunter; Bob Marchesi;
Mary Flynn

STAFF: Sue Swiatek, Director; Jim Coghlan, Assistant Director

OTHER:

Ms. Branigan called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 11, 2012

The changes to the minutes of the April 11, 2012 meeting are as follows:

On page 2, 2nd paragraph, the 5th sentence should read: "Ms. Branigan said she will contact Town Counsel and Ms. Swiatek to see if they can change the Ordinance to reflect the Committee's recommendation of year round hours from dawn until 8:30 a.m., if approved by the Commission".

On page 2, last paragraph, the 3rd sentence should read: "All fields had lime added based upon soil tests."

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 11, 2012 AS AMENDED.**

**** MS. FLYNN SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

UPDATE ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN PROJECT

Ms. Daly reported that as of the last meeting, Mr. John Ryan, the project manager, said that the project is 82% complete and paid for, and will be under budget. She said that Ms. Parnon spoke about the commemorative gift program, including 10 benches, 12 adirondack chairs, and display cases.

Ms. Branigan reported that the beach is currently closed to vehicular traffic due to the last of the paving work being done. The beach is expected to reopen the middle of next week, in time for the Memorial Day weekend. Pedestrians can still use Weed Beach while the paving work is being completed, or they can go to Pear Tree Point Beach.

Ms. Daly spoke of the artwork poster that was prepared by a graphic artist for the Grand Opening

of Weed Beach, to be held on Saturday, June 2 with a rain date of Sunday, June 3. The ad will run in the New York Times. Overflow parking will be at the Hindley School. She and co-chair Courtney Darby report that they are short on teen volunteers due to the SAT testing and wanted to ask for any other volunteers, 8th grade and up, that are available to help out with arts, crafts, games, etc. She said that local businesses have been very generous with donations, sponsorships, etc.

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON IRRIGATION SYSTEM FOR WEED BEACH

Ms. Swaitek explained that a local contractor, Dobson Irrigation, offered to install the irrigation system at the traffic island and berms at his cost. The estimate is between \$6,000-\$10,000. She wanted to stress the fact that there is an operational cost to the gift, as they had not budgeted for the cost of watering and do not know what costs to expect. The irrigation system will be on a timer and will ensure that the planted flowers, bushes, shrubbery, etc. remain watered.

- ** MS. FLYNN MOVED TO APPROVE ACCEPTING THE GIFT FROM DOBSON IRRIGATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM UP TO \$10,000.**
- ** MS. MORRIS SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON DONATION OF FLAG POLE – DARIEN FOUNDATION, REQUESTED BY WEED BEACH BUILDING COMMITTEE

Ms. Swiatek explained that the old flagpole had to be removed due to the re-configuration of the island. She said that Ms. Parnon had reached out to the Darien Foundation to donate a yardarm flagpole. Darien Foundation graciously acknowledged the request, and the flagpole has been installed. It will be illuminated so that it can stay up all the time. The total cost is \$3,100.

- ** MR. HUNTER MOVED TO APPROVE ACCEPTING THE YARDARM FLAGPOLE AS A GIFT FROM THE DARIEN FOUNDATION. TOTAL COST \$3,100.**
- ** MR. MARCHESI SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSS BUDGET PROPOSAL FISCAL 2013

Ms. Branigan said the budget has been approved as submitted and sent to the RTM by the Board of Selectmen. She said they have received requests for use of the paddle tennis court warming hut. She said they will keep a list of the requests and review it prior to the start of the paddle court season.

REPORTS

Ms. Swiatek explained that she has been busy with the Weed Beach project. The maintenance crews have gotten all the fields ready, and the great shape that they are in is due to the conditioning they received. The tennis courts are operational. They have refurbished old equipment into equipment they can use. The Gallagher Field Renovation Project work will begin now that it has been approved. P&Z changed the original request for a chain link fence to a split rail fence on Brookside Road. She said they are working on specs to address work to be done at all the tennis courts. Work on the gym floor at Town Hall and divider door will be done during August.

b) Assistant Director

Mr. Coghlan said that the feedback from people participating in programs has been positive. He said they will be hiring lifeguards and conducting training and orientation. He explained the block tennis graph from his provided report. The participation rate has decreased, and it was suggested that it was due to a "first-come, first-serve" basis for participants. In the past, court time was reserved in block form.

c) Chairman

Ms. Branigan spoke about the jars of honey she received from Ms. Dorothy Chagallis. It was the first harvest of honey that was produced from beehives at Cherry Lawn Park that were approved by the Parks & Recreation Department two years ago. It was mentioned that other plants, shrubs, flowers, trees and vegetables have benefited from the beehives.

She mentioned a press release from Ms. Shirley Nichols of the Darien Land Trust, announcing a Woods & Streams event on Sunday, June 10. It is a grant funded study for Long Island Sound. The event will be held from 11-4, is open to all ages of children, and plenty of parking will be available on Parkside Drive.

Lastly, she spoke of the invitation to the Weed Beach Project completion cocktail party on Thursday, 5/24/12 from 5-8 p.m. at the new warming hut. There will be a \$5.00 cover charge for the adults-only event.

d) Sub-Committees

DISCUSS ANY OTHER BUSINESS (TWO THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED)

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA, DARIEN BOAT CLUB'S REQUEST TO EXPAND THEIR FINGER PIERS BY 100 SLIPS, ADDING TO THE EXISTING 250 SLIPS.**

**** MS. MORRIS SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Swiatek, Ms. Branigan and the Commissioners then discussed the Public Notice NAE 2010-1277 US Army Corps of Engineers that Mr. Sandy McDonald, Chairman Darien Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters, wrote to her in a letter. Mr. McDonald's letter explains that the Darien Boat Club's permit application requests to expand their finger piers by 100 slips, adding to the 250 slips they now have. Ms. Swiatek said the Parks & Recreation Commission doesn't have any jurisdiction on anything below mean high water. It was suggested that there could be an impact on the parking if 100 additional are added. The parking capacity at Pear Tree Point beach is approximately 225, without any room to expand.

Ms. Swiatek explained that the Darien Boat Club currently has a lease with the Board of Selectmen for the use of Pear Tree Point's property. They currently have 250 slips. The membership total is greater than that, as not every member has a boat.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO ISSUE COMMENTS ON PUBLIC NOTICE NAE 2010-1277 US ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS THAT THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF DARIEN IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL ADVERSE AFFECT OF ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC AND RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS A TRAFFIC STUDY TO DETERMINE IMPACT ON PEAR TREE POINT BEACH PARKING.**

**** MS. FLYNN SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN MEETING

**** MR. MARCHESI MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

**** MS. FLYNN SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr
Telesco Secretarial Services

NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting June 20, 2012, 7:30 pm; Room 119, Darien Town Hall

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