

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2010**

**ATTENDANCE:** Jane Branigan, Chairman; Charles Goodyear; Susan Daly; Bob Marchesi;  
Susan Graham

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

**OTHER:** Patricia Bumgardner, DDOG;  
Cecelia Mundt, Parks & Rec RTM Member; Julie Frank;  
Tony Imbimbo, RTM Member; Erica Morris

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Branigan called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 17, 2010**

The correction(s) to the regular meeting of November 15, 2010 are as follows:

On page 4, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, change “wanted” to “deserved”.

On page 4, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, the 6<sup>th</sup> sentence should read: “He said this week the deer culling should be over soon, as the first day they had culled 4 deer, with 4 more to be culled shortly afterward.”

**\*\* MR. MARCHESI MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 17, 2010 AS AMENDED.**

**\*\* MS. DALY SECONDED.**

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

**DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON GIFT OF FUNDS TO COVER COST OF SOD AT  
BAKER AND CASEY FIELD DARIEN SOCCER ASSOCIATION**

Ms. Swiatek explained that the Darien Soccer Association has offered to cover the cost of replacing the sod at Baker and Casey Fields. The cost is just under \$1,000.00.

**\*\* MR. GOODYEAR MOVED TO APPROVE THE GIFT OF FUNDS TO COVER COST OF SOD AT BAKER AND CASEY FIELD BY THE DARIEN SOCCER ASSOCIATION.**

**\*\* MS. DALY SECONDED.**

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

**DISCUSS BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR FISCAL 2012**

Ms. Swiatek distributed copies of the budget, explaining that she has been given further directives since the Commission's last meeting. The directives were sent to each Department Head on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. She said that there is uncertainty, and chaos in Hartford. As a result, there is pressure felt locally due to problems with State funding. The directives are summarized as follows:

No new programs or initiatives should be proposed that have no offsetting revenue;  
Further cuts and retrenchments will be sought;  
Reorganization of functions that may be necessary to deliver savings with the possibility of further staff reductions being warranted;  
Modification of services or their elimination to cut costs and requests for capital expenditures should focus on high priority needs only and ranked from highest to lowest;  
The target for budget requests should not exceed 2%.

She reminded the Commissioners that for the past 2 or 3 years, she has gone in with a 0% or just under 2% budget. The initiatives to consider are additional cleaning at the Weed Beach bathhouse. It is currently being cleaned once a day, which is not enough for the use that it has. Also, a tie-in with the Weed Beach Master Plan to have possible revenue from the warming hut can be another initiative.

Ms. Swiatek continued to discuss the budget, saying that some money had been saved on water usage during the last 12 months with regard to doing a better job irrigating the fields. The budget has to be submitted by December 27, and she said she is aiming for 0%-2%.

She distributed copies of the 5 year Capital Plan, explaining that the beach sand replacement project at Weed Beach was last done approximately 4 years ago. She further explained that some items on the budget need to be prioritized or shifted to the following year, or years, especially with regard to the Weed Beach Master Plan project. The resurfacing of the front tennis courts needs to be done due to problems with weathering. She said there is a warranty with the product that has been used, and she would like to see how Weed Beach holds up to weathering issues before Cherry Lawn is done. She said they are funded now for Cherry Lawn. She said the issues could be related to the product and installation, not necessarily the weather. They have to go out to bid with a new company and possibly a new product. It was decided to move the Weed Beach tennis court resurfacing project back to year 2012-2013.

Ms. Swiatek then discussed budget and repair issues at Pear Tree point, saying that the gazebo repairs will be moved back to year 2012-2013. The seed money for the dog park that was cut last year is now in this year's budget. She said the cost of the backstop replacement at Holahan Field is \$20,000, which is considered to be within realm. It is a large backstop with an outreach to protect the parking lot behind it. She said that they won't be funded to regrade the field. It is a big job and she recommended that they move it off to year 2012/2013.

Ms. Swiatek said that she will email the Commissioners a copy of the budgets and they will review them in January.

She then discussed fees, saying it was not on the agenda and there has not been a public hearing. She distributed the fee schedule, which has been in effect for the last 5 years, and she suggested they start thinking about the fee schedule and possible increases. If fees are raised, a public hearing needs to be held. Some discussion took place regarding fees and usage, etc., and the Commissioners decided to hold a public hearing in January to discuss raising fees.

### **UPDATE ON WEED BEACH MASTER PLAN PROJECT**

Ms. Swiatek said the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance approved the bonding request, and they are waiting to hear from the RTM. She said she has been working the architect to get contracts for the construction phase. She has met with the construction manager, John Ryan.

### **REPORTS**

a) Director

Ms. Swiatek said her report is submitted in the Commissioner's packets. She said winter program registration continues. The Town is seeking an architectural team for the Senior Center project. A building committee has been formed and has met several times. The large area mower is up for replacement, and they hope to purchase off of the State of CT bid for equipment.

b) Assistant Director

Mr. Coghlan said the usage of the paddle courts is up. He said they are in the process of re-certifying supervisors in CPR and AED. He reviewed the program usage graphs from his report. The software will be updated in January.

c) Chairman

There was no report from the Chairman.

d) Sub-Committee

Ms. Graham, Parks & Recreation Commission Liaison for the DDOG (Darien Dog Owners Group) Committee, said a meeting was held recently with Cecelia Mundt and Patty Bumgardner, and she thanked them for all their efforts so far. She presented some information from the minutes, and a draft from the Parks & Recreation Commission regarding on-leash rules and regulations, and a summary of Terms & Conditions for the 10 parks and beaches in Darien. She explained that she would be the Parks & Rec liaison for Woodland Park; Ms. Daly would be the liaison for Weed Beach; and Mr. Goodyear would be the liaison for Stony Brook park. It was suggested that the liaisons walk the respective parks/beaches with a member of DDOG to record usage.

Ms. Graham continued on with more information, saying that Cherry Lawn Park and Woodland Park are the two main areas that DDOG is placing emphasis on. A meeting was held with Chief Lovello. It was confirmed that the rules for each park and beach are on the town's website. Ms. Swiatek confirmed that there are no off-leash areas in Darien for dogs. Another suggestion was made to have dog socialization classes offered for town residents, for a fee. Ms. Swiatek said that any person interested in offering dog training should contact the Parks & Rec Commission Department. Dog Day in Darien will be held this year at the Darien and Noroton fire stations, with free rabies shots being offered, as well as the availability to renew dog licenses. Ms. Swiatek said that Woodland Park does not need dog bags, as it is heavily wooded. Cherry Lawn would need dog bags, but it cost the Town money to provide them, and they were not being used by residents at the park.

More information was discussed among the Commissioners and members of DDOG, with suggestions made to raise money to offset expenses, and having Eagle Scouts do projects to offset expenses. Members of DDOG remained committed to their goal in working with the Town to find a fair and equitable compromise between the public and the Darien Parks & Rec Commission.

### **OTHER BUSINESS (TWO-THIRDS VOTE)**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no Public Comments.

**NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting Wednesday, January 19, 2011 7:30 p.m.  
Darien Town Hall, Room 119**

**\*\* MR. GOODYEAR MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. GRAHAM SECONDED.**

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

The meeting ended at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr  
Telesco Secretarial Services

