

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 15, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Mary Flynn, Chair; Amy Doering, Mary Louise Morgan, Erika Morris, Dennis Conetta, Marc Ioli, Susan Daly, Lorena Bora, Jonathan England

STAFF: Pamela Gery, Parks and Recreation Director, Jim Coghlan, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director

AUDIENCE: Adele Conniff, Chair RTM Parks and Recreation Committee, Diane Conologue, Vice Chair RTM Parks & Recreation Committee

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:34p.m. A quorum was present.

Mrs. Flynn began the meeting by welcoming the Parks & Recreation Commission's newest member, Jonathan England.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Flynn opened the floor for Public Comment.

Adele Conniff reported that the RTM Parks & Recreation Committee would like to see Public Comment after each agenda item and not just at the beginning of each meeting.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 16TH AND MAY 18TH MINUTES

Commission members identified corrections on the March 16th minutes and on the May 18th minutes. These corrections will be made by Ms. Gery and posted as final minutes on the website.

**** MS. MORRIS MOVED TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM MARCH 16th AS AMENDED**

**** MS. DALY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. IOLI MOVED TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM MAY 18th AS AMENDED**

**** MR. CONETTA SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON DRAFT RFP FOR MASTER PARK PLAN

Ms. Flynn opened the discussion by reporting on a meeting she and Ms. Gery held with the First Selectman and the Town Administrator. This was to update them on the Weed Beach Expansion Project. Ms. Flynn shared the Commission's desire to have the BOS set up a Pool Committee to further study possible locations within Darien for a pool. Also discussed was the update of the Master Park Plan. It was determined that the Parks & Rec Commission should work on both the Park Plan and study pool locations rather than having two committees working simultaneously. The First Selectman suggested that we write an RFP that would give a consultant the opportunity to look at all Darien Park Facilities while also looking for a suitable space for a pool.

Ms. Flynn and Ms. Gery also let them know that they might need additional funds, over the original \$25,000 currently in Escrow, to hire a consultant to work on the Master Park Plan. The RFP responders will determine the additional funds needed, and a request can be made to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

Ms. Flynn then asked the Commission members for their opinions on the draft RFP that was in their packets. A lengthy discussion was held. It was requested that the P&R Commission meet with the Board of Selectmen to determine if the BOS support the concept of finding a pool location in town. It was also requested that the Commission ask the Board of Selectmen to broaden the consultant's scope to look at town owned properties other than park properties for potential pool locations.

It was also discussed whether the Weed Beach Expansion plan should be put on hold until after we have the Master Plan completed. It would be problematic if we implement the Boathouse, the boardwalk and other amenities at the park only to later find that the Parks Plan suggests Weed Beach is indeed the best place for the pool facility. Commission members felt we should at least get started with the boardwalk, shade trees, and the Boathouse, as the DJST has been at a loss without the building and it will present various other programming avenues for the P&R department as well.

All Commission members were in agreement that Ms. Flynn should reach out to the First Selectman and ask to be put on an upcoming BOS agenda to publicly present the current Weed Beach Plan and get the BOS support before continuing any further.

REPORTS

Parks & Recreation Director and Assistant Director

Ms. Gery highlighted main events from her monthly report. She clarified the security guard hours – the guards are on duty from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. before Memorial Day. After Memorial Day the guards are on duty from 9 a.m. -10 p.m. at both beaches. She also clarified that only one security guard hut needs to be replaced (at Pear Tree), not the one at Weed Beach as she stated in her report last month. She reported on the improvements being done at Pear Tree included the fresh painting of the bathhouse and the concession stand as well as replacing rotten wood on the gazebo. She shared pictures that she had taken of the park improvements. Ms. Morris also gave our Department a wonderful compliment on how quickly a tree was removed at Sellecks Woods. Mr. Ioli complimented us on how fantastic the fields look in town. Mr. Conetta commented that he has noticed the new volleyball net at Weed Beach and he has witnessed many more people playing. Ms. Gery also reported that she is busy with interviewing for a permanent part time position that is opened in the office as well as working on the job description for the new full time Recreation Supervisor that was approved for the 16-17 fiscal year.

Parks & Recreation Assistant Director

Jim Coghlan, Assistant Director reported on all the activity he has been managing over the past few months. He talked at length about the Lifeguard process and Ms. Gery complimented him on how thorough he is with this process and the town should be very comforted on the amount of time he spends to make sure the beaches are safe. Mr. Coghlan also discussed the new computer software we will be getting in the office and will also be going through training over the next 4 – 5 months and hope to go live by December 2016.

Parks & Recreation Chairman Report

Ms. Flynn updated the Commission on an issue at Fairmead Road that involves the property delineation of Sellecks Woods and a nearby resident. Ms. Gery will be visiting the area with the Town Administrator and Public Works Director to clearly understand the situation. Ms. Gery will follow up with the Commission on the situation at the July meeting.

The next meeting will be July 20th, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. at the Weed Beach Paddle Hut.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. IOLI MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MR. CONETTA SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.
Respectfully submitted by Pamela Gery