

DRAFT

**TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 20, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Mary Flynn, Chair, Mary Louise Morgan, Erika Morris, Marc Ioli, Susan Daly, Lorena Bora, Jonathan England

STAFF: Pamela Gery, Parks and Recreation Director, Jim Flynn, Parks Supervisor

AUDIENCE: Adele Conniff, Chair RTM Parks and Recreation Committee,

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. A quorum was present.

Mrs. Flynn began the meeting by acknowledging the untimely passing of Parks and Recreation employee, Jack Whitehead. He gave 40 years of his life to the Town of Darien – RIP.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Flynn opened the floor for Public Comment.

No comments were made.

APPROVAL OF June 15TH MINUTES

Commission members identified minor corrections on the June 15th minutes. These corrections will be made by Ms. Gery and posted as final minutes on the website.

**** MS. DALY MOVED TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM JUNE 15th AS AMENDED**

**** MR. IOLI SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

UPDATE FROM PARKS SUPERVISOR JIM FLYNN

Jim Flynn gave the Commission members an update on the improvements that have been done at the parks over the last few months including the complete repair of the Pear Tree Gazebo, painting of the concession stand at Pear Tree as well as landscaping work being done at the Police Department. Mary Flynn asked about the culvert that the Commission had previously asked Ms. Gery to look into with him and Ed Gentile. Mr. Flynn reported that the Public Works Director, Ed Gentile, and Ms. Gery all went out to take a look at the culvert in question at Weed Beach. Mr. Gentile determined that the culvert seemed to be in working condition and not blocked. Mr. Flynn let the members know that extensive work has been done over the years by clearing out high grass and mowing. The area is now very assessable to walk through and there are very few bugs.

DJST UPDATE FROM LINDA HANNETT

Ms. Hannett introduced herself to the Commission as a volunteer that has come back into the DJST program after being involved for many years. She was asked to come and give a summer update. She decided to take this opportunity to give the new Commission members history behind the program from its inception in 1976 to where they are today in 2016. Ms. Hannett discussed the history of the Town partnership that has been in place all these years and how important it is to the program to keep this support. She reiterated that DJST has had its best overall years when the Commission is supportive and asked that they continue this partnership so that they can keep offering affordable sailing lessons to the children of Darien. Ms. Daly and Ms. Morris agreed that the program is very valuable to the Town and they would like to see DJST get the support it needs from the Commission. Ms. Hannett discussed the confusion that has happened over the last few years with changing of volunteers heading the program and that she was here to tell them that DJST is doing well and invited members to go online and look at their tax reports that will show they have always managed to pay their bills and stay in the black. Ms. Bora stated that during the time she was the Weed Beach Expansion Committee Chair, she didn't see any interest by DJST with regards to coming and asking questions during any meetings or reaching out to anyone about their concerns getting a storage facility as they had proposed in the past. Ms. Hannett said due to all the change in leadership - new P&R Director, new Town Administrator, new Commission Chairman and new leaders of DJST that no one was communicating with each other and they got disconnected. This lengthy discussion ended with Ms. Bora suggesting to Ms. Hannett that someone from DJST should be at the Board of Selectman meeting on August 8th when the Commission will be proposing the park design elements for the Weed Beach Extension Plan, which are: The Waterfront Aquatic Building, Boardwalk, Walking Trail, Picnic Area and Shade Trees. Ms. Morris and Ms. Daly agreed that it would be important to address any questions that may come up about their program needs.

**DISCUSSION AND TAKE ACTION ON THE PADDLE HUT RENTAL
AGREEMENT**

Ms. Gery told the Commission members that due to the increase in the rentals for the Paddle Hut during the spring and summer season it was important to clarify some of the Parks & Recreation Rules and Regulations. In particular a question in regards to designated areas where alcohol is allowed. Currently, a party of all age groups can rent the picnic area and have alcohol with no supervision. Yet, at the Paddle Hut, you cannot have alcohol if there are kids amongst the party. The Paddle Hut Rental comes with an attendant and is supervised. The Commission agreed that the Rules and Regulations need to be better clarified so no action was taken but agreed by all that the August meeting should be scheduled (not canceled as previously planned) so the language of the Rules and Regulations can be updated and hopefully voted on during the September Commission meeting. Ms. Gery will talk to the office, get their feedback and return with suggestions during the August meeting.

REPORTS

Parks & Recreation Director and Assistant Director

Ms. Gery highlighted main events from the month of June. She noted that she has consolidated both her report and the Assistant Director's report to make it less lengthy and easier to read. She incorporated improvement pictures and many graphs to depict the increases in all the programs and rentals that the department has had. The Commission agreed that they all liked the new format.

Parks & Recreation Chairman Report

No report from the Chairman.

The next meeting will be August 17th, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. at the Weed Beach Paddle Hut.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.
Respectfully submitted by Pamela Gery