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Representative Town Meeting, Town of Darien
Parks and Recreation Committee
MINUTES, May 4, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:40PM by Chairman Adele Conniff who presided.

Nine members were present: Chairman Conniff, Vice-Chair Cheryl Russell, Chris Conroy, Diane Conologue, Werner Domittner, Dana Fead, Anne Finn, Phyllis Hawkins, and Bill Van Loan

Absent were: Katie Bates, Curtis Butler, and Jennifer Hageney

Chris Conroy, a new RTM and Parks and Recreation Committee member, introduced himself to the committee.

The minutes of the March 2, 2015 meeting were approved.

There was a discussion of the Parks and Recreation Section of the Town of Darien 2015-16 Budget. Chairman Conniff reviewed the specific cuts made to the Parks and Recreation Commission's requested budget. Several committee members emphasized that the Parks and Recreation Department will bring into the town treasury an anticipated \$485,800. for the 2015-16 fiscal year. This number is even higher than last year because of the increase in beach fees.

In spite of some unhappiness and frustration with the budgetary cuts, the committee members who were present voted unanimously to accept the Parks and Recreation Section of the Town of Darien 2015-16 Budget.

Chairman Conniff then gave the chairman's report. She outlined the items discussed at the April 8th Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. She said that most importantly the Commission began discussing a 10 year plan for Darien Parks and Recreation which will continue to be a subject of future meetings.

Werner Domittner then gave an update on the progress of the Shortt Lane Committee. The Committee is in the process of considering a number of suggestions for the property's use which run the gamut from "a town pool to a nature trail."

Mr. Domittner told the committee that the Short Lane Committee has now been renamed the Weed Beach Committee since Short Lane no longer technically exists. Diane Conologue will join Mr. Domittner on the Weed Beach Committee as an additional Parks and Recreation Committee participant.

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A discussion ensued regarding the Parks and Recreation Committee's ideas for use of the Short Lane property. A nature-oriented project continues to get strong support from the committee.

There was then a discussion about beach sand. Several committee members complained that Pear Tree Beach has filthy, oily sand that stains cloths and is impossible to wash off. Frustration was expressed about this issue since Pear Tree will not be getting new sand in the near future.

Vice-Chair Russell then spoke about a letter that she received from First Selectman Jayme Stevenson regarding the sand at Weed and Pear Tree Beaches. Mrs. Stevenson recently requested that a "metric" be created to evaluate Darien's beach sand. She wrote to Mrs. Russell that Jim Flynn, Supervisor of Parks Maintenance, measured the depth of the sand of area beaches and concluded that Darien's sand depths compare favorably with those of nearby towns. The committee then discussed how to respond to the email.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Hawkins, Clerk