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Representative Town Meeting, Town of Darien
Parks and Recreation Committee
MINUTES, March 2, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:35PM by Chairman Adele Conniff who presided.

Nine members were present: Chairman Conniff, Vice-Chair Cheryl Russell, Katie Bates, Curtis Butler, Diane Conologue, Werner Domittner, Jennifer Hageney, Phyllis Hawkins, and Bill Van Loan

Absent were: Dana Fead, Anne Finn, and Carol Matton

Also in attendance was: Mary Flynn who serves as the Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Chairman Conniff introduced Curtis Butler, a new RTM and Parks and Recreation Committee member, to the rest of the committee.

The minutes of the October 6, 2014 meeting were approved as amended. The name of the interim director of the Parks and Recreation Commission, James Coghlan, had been misspelled.

There was a discussion of the Darien Parks and Recreation Commission's 2015-2016 budget and where it stands in the budget process. It was observed that much of the Parks and Recreation requested capital budget has been cut. The cuts included \$40,000. for sand at Weed Beach, which has not received new sand for almost seven years, and \$25,000. for a "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan," which was last written nearly twenty years ago. Disappointment and frustration were expressed that in spite of the fact Parks and Recreation fees and permits bring over \$450,000. into the town's budget, Town Administrator Karl Kilduff chose to strike these items, and the Board of Selectman did not reinstate them. Mrs. Conniff and Commission Chair Flynn told the committee that the Board of Selectmen did decide to list sand for Weed Beach and the "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan" for possible contingency funding.

Mrs. Conniff then gave the Chairman's Report. It included the status of the Junior Sailing Program and various Eagle Scout projects as well as information about the December 2014 and January 2015 Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. She also told the committee that during the January meeting a Parks and Recreation permit and fee increase was voted on and accepted unanimously by the Commission members present.

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Werner Domittner, the committee's representative on the Short Lane property sub-committee, then gave an update. There will be a public hearing regarding the property's potential use at 7:30pm on March 10, 2015. Included in the town budget is \$30,000. for the process of getting public opinion and narrowing the possibilities to the best use of the land.

Vice-Chair Russell then brought up the importance of a new "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan" especially since a new "Town Plan of Conservation and Development" is in the process of being written. She said the the "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan" has always served as an essential appendix to the "Town Plan." She hoped the \$25,000. for funding a new plan would be reinstated in the budget process.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Hawkins, Clerk