

**Phyllis Hawkins**  
14 Beach Drive, Darien, CT 06820  
203-655-3271 - Fax 203-655-0799

RTM Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes for January 9, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Adele Conniff who presided.

Eight members were present: Chairman Conniff, Vice-Chair Diane Conologue, Curtis Butler, Chris Ezbiansky, Ken Fiveson, Phyllis Hawkins, Harry McLachlan, and Bill Van Loan.

Absent were: Carlo Cantavero, Susan Lauritzen, Andrew Millar, and Cheryl Russell.

Also in attendance were: Pam Gery, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department and Mary Flynn, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Chairman Conniff introduced Pam Gery and Mary Flynn, and the members of the Parks and Recreation Committee then introduced themselves, this being the first meeting after the November 28th RTM organizational meeting.

Pam Gery reviewed the projected 2017-2018 operational and capital Parks and Recreation Department budget. Expenses resulting from Darien's expected purchase of the Ox Ridge Hunt Club property were also included in the proposed budget.

There was then a discussion of the planned purchase of the Ox Ridge Hunt Club property consisting of 16.296 +/- acres. Mary Flynn told the committee that this property will be included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. She said that the Parks and Recreation Commission has no issue with the restrictive use of the property. A discussion followed regarding the specifics of the restrictive use.

Mrs. Flynn also told those present that the Ox Ridge property will not be dedicated as parkland. Chairman Conniff added that she had met with First Selectman, Jayme Stevenson, regarding this topic. According to Chairman Conniff Mrs. Stevenson preferred not to be bound by state restrictions of parkland (7-131N of Connecticut General Statutes) and wanted to maintain a more flexible use of the property.

Mrs. Flynn then explained that any future parking lot built by Darien on the Ox Ridge property would consist of grass pavers that would look like a lawn and provide drainage. She also said that upon purchase, the use of the property would be immediate as a picnic and walking area. She only foresaw low-impact athletic fields for young children and did not anticipate Darien High School's use of the property. Any other potential uses would have to receive a 'special use permit' through the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mrs. Flynn added that Darien's purchase of the Ox Ridge Hunt Club parcel of land 'opens up amazing possibilities for Parks and Recreation.'

**Phyllis Hawkins**  
14 Beach Drive, Darien, CT 06820  
203-655-3271 - Fax 203-655-0799

There was then a discussion regarding the 'adverse possession' by a Middlesex Road neighbor regarding a 3,000 square foot parcel of the Ox Ridge Hunt Club property that the said neighbor has gardened and fenced. Mrs. Flynn was confident that this issue was the problem of the Ox Ridge Hunt Club and would not affect the town's purchase of the property.

There was then a motion made to vote on the Ox Ridge Hunt Club acquisition at this meeting. Seven committee members voted 'yes' to vote at this meeting, and one voted 'no.'

There was then the vote to purchase the Ox Ridge Hunt Club property. Seven members voted 'yes,' and one abstained.

There was then a vote to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2016 minutes. The five returning committee members voted to approve, and the three new members abstained.

Chairman Conniff and Mary Flynn updated the committee on the Master Plan process. The Commission received two bids from its RFP - Request for Proposals - which they are now reviewing.

There was then a discussion of the possibility of a town pool. Mrs. Flynn said that Cherry Lawn, Baker Field, and the Edgerton property would be considered.

Mrs. Flynn also mentioned that there are rumblings for a town ice rink. Since the Darien Ice Rink has been purchased by a few members of the New Canaan Winter Club, it is no longer available to Darien hockey teams.

Chairman Conniff also reported that there will be a video camera installed at Pear Tree Beach by the Harbor Master to provide residents with a remote view of Long Island Sound conditions.

The committee then voted unanimously to support an amendment (Chapter 42, Article 11) to the Darien Code of Ordinances to allow the Parks and Recreation Commission to revise their resolutions with only a 30 day delay before they go into effect.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Hawkins, Clerk