

## RTM Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

November 6, 2017

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

Twelve members were present: Chairman Conniff, Vice-Chair Diane Conologue, Carlo Cantavero, Chris Ezbiansky, Ken Fiveson, Phyllis Hawkins, Susan Lauritzen, Harry McLachlin, Sue-Ellen Mitchell, Heather Pommernelle, Cheryl Russell, and Bill Van Loan

Absent were: Curtis Butler, Tim Goertel, and Andrew Millar

The committee voted unanimously to approve the Darien Parks and Recreation Committee minutes for meetings on 5/1/2017, 6/5/2017, and 9/25/2017.

There was then a discussion of the 2017 Weston and Sampson/GreenPlay Master Parks Plan. The committee voted to approve the Baker Park, the Diller Parcel, McGuane Park, and Selleck's Woods Concepts. Although the vote was unanimous, there were some reservations regarding the nature-themed playground and parallel parking stalls proposed for the Diller property.

Although the committee agreed that Stony Brook Park definitely needs improvements, there was a split of opinion regarding some of the components of the Stony Brook Park Concept. A number of committee members were concerned about the proposed cost.

There was no agreement on the Woodland Park Concept. The concern of a few committee members had to do with the 'nature preserve' status of the property and the effect that a new dog park would have on birds and their habitat. Others strongly supported the dog park.

Next the Frate Park Concept was discussed. The committee agreed that the park is located at a dangerous traffic intersection. Encouraging foot traffic could present a hazard. There was support for more trees but no support for added foot paths and seating.

The Tilley Park Concept was then discussed. There was general agreement that the park is beautiful as it is. The improvement of its existing features - enhancing the pathways and restoring existing structures - was unanimously supported. There was also unanimous support for striping the parking spaces along Lakeside Avenue. The committee unanimously agreed not to support a new playground or new shade pavilions.

Next the three Cherry Lawn Park Concepts were discussed. Although there was no consensus, the committee supported many aspects of Concept A. There was general agreement to keep the tennis courts at Cherry Lawn, and no objection to a basketball court at either Cherry Lawn or Baker Field. There was an acknowledgment of the need for the soccer field unless it could be replaced elsewhere. There was no consensus on the proposed dog park.

## RTM Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

November 6, 2017

There was no support for Cherry Lawn Park Concepts B and C which include a pool.

Next on the agenda were Pear Tree Beach Concepts A and B. Concept A was not supported because the committee unanimously agreed that moving the concession stand/lifeguard station/restroom/shower building from its present location was a bad idea. Concept B had unanimous support for keeping the building in its present location. There was unanimous agreement, too, that the old building should be razed and completely rebuilt.

The committee also supported a low beach wall as well as a picnic plaza with new grills and more shade trees on the beach. There was no consensus regarding dunes with beach grass and a fishing pier. There was particular concern that a fishing pier, in either of its planned locations, would be a dangerous safety hazard - especially so near beaches heavily used by young children.

The committee unanimously supported Concept A for Town Hall and Holahan Field. Concept B received no support, and there was no consensus regarding the need for an indoor versus outdoor pool for the town of Darien. There was also concern over the loss of fields that a pool at Holahan Field would create. Several members felt that the best place for a pool was on the Darien High School campus.

Concept A for Weed Beach, the plan with a pool, was struck down unanimously by the committee. Though an amphitheater appears to have been removed from the original plan, several committee members emphasized that they did not want an amphitheater at Weed Beach. There was strong support for two additional paddle courts, but no consensus for a splash pad. No one, however, liked its proposed location on the southeastern side of the parking lot. A few committee members suggested that a splash pad would make more sense closer to the playground.

Throughout the meeting some committee members expressed frustration over having to make decisions about certain items in the plan without knowing all of the 'pieces of the puzzle' (the status of the Edgerton and Ox Ridge Hunt Club properties).

There was also a suggestion that the Parks Master Plan be appended to the 2016 Town Plan of Conservation and Development. This was done in the past.

Chairman Conniff then delivered the Chairman's Report. She told the committee that the Parks and Recreation Commission, at their last meeting, approved the Eagle Scout project to build kayak and paddle board racks at Weed Beach.

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Hawkins  
Clerk