

## Minutes from the Darien Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

May 9, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:34p.m.with the following committee members present: Adele Conniff, Diane Conologue, Sue-Ellen Mitchell, Patti Bumgardner, Curtis Butler, Susanne Handler, Cheryl Russell, Jennifer Moller, Emily McDermott and Bill Van Loan.

Adele opened the discussion on the budget by mentioning the slight increase in the operating budget. This was due to the seasonal front desk position in the Parks and Recreation Department Office with the minimal increase in hours from 30 hours a week to 35 hours a week during the summer season.

Mention was made of the five year outlook. One significant change is that there will be no cash accepted at the beach gates, only credit or debit cards. Also mentioned was the clearing out of brush from the Short Lane property which will provide additional space for enjoyment. Also the increase in revenues will continue to offset the budget.

Revenues increased by \$15,000 resulting from paddle courts, hut and beach parking stickers.

Facilities and maintenance was discussed as there was a lost parks maintenance position that moved to DPW. However a seasonal position was added in the current fiscal year.

Some of the highlights of the department was a request that \$3,600 be added as an expense for the possible purchase of a dog on staff to handle the geese issue; there was an increase in park permits by \$8,000 this year.

On the capital side of the budget there was a \$40,000 charge for the surveying of Woodland Park, \$150,000 fee for the construction drawings of Pear Tree Beach and \$25,000 for improvements on Short Lane. There was a \$5,000 charge for tree replacement, \$20,000 charge to update broken play equipment on various town playgrounds and a charge of \$25,000 for electrical work at Cherry Lawn Park totaling \$287,000.

A vote was taken and the 2018-2019 operating and capital budget was unanimously approved.

On further discussion it was mentioned that the five year plan and current budget seemed modest. The community pool conversation continues to be reviewed and discussed.

Discussion moved to the Pear Tree Beach Concepts A and B. Committee members unanimously agreed that the concession stand and bathroom should be completely

rebuilt and stay in its current location but would like to see the patio deck facing the water and not the parking lot. A committee member commented that another reason to keep the concession stand in its current location is that people often eat lunch in the gazebo and if the concession stand were to be moved, beach goers would have to be crossing the parking lot. Beach sand replacement was also mentioned as the town looks for a way to hold back the sand from washing away. The committee agreed that they did not want views obstructed by walls or grasses. Construction of a wall may decrease the size of the beach or parking and accessibility to beach through wall was also discussed. There was discussion about a low type of vegetation that could keep the sand on the beach.

Shade structures were not endorsed and would add unnecessary expense. There was concern over the fishing pier. The location on back beach had mild support but safety concerns with fishing hooks and bare feet were voiced. It was mentioned that the gazebo has a large crack in the floor which needs to be re-cemented. The committee did not see the need for a boardwalk on back beach. All agreed that there need to be new grills and picnic tables installed in picnic area and also supported the reconstruction of the boat ramp. There was discussion about a replacement fence that would run along Pear Tree Point Road from the entrance of the parking lot to the corner of the picnic area to secure the beach area and to discourage dog walkers. Also mentioned was more attractive signage.

In the chairman's report Adele mentioned that TGS&A would like us to look at the charter, in particular Appendix B, for comment and to review our procedures and if they match our practices.

Also mentioned was a donation of Purple Martin and Tree Swallow birdhouses that will be installed at Weed Beach and Cherry Lawn.

There will be a public hearing on May 15, 2018 at 8:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Auditorium to discuss the Ox Ridge Permit.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sue-Ellen Mitchell