

## **RECREATION & PARKS COMMITTEE**

### **SPECIAL MEETING**

Minutes

Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

7:30 am

Via Zoom Meeting

- I. Swearing in of Members – Nick Hogan, Town Clerk: Mr. Hogan asked Mr. Farrell, M. McNeill, Dr. Sondheimer, Ms. Willis, and Mr. Yass to raise their right hand and he administered the oath. The members were officially sworn in.
- II. Call to Order - Ruth Checko, Director of Recreation and Parks: Mr. Yass, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.
- III. Attendance - In attendance were Ms. Checko, Mr. Farrell, Dr. Gurtman, Dr. Sondheimer, M. McNeill, Ms. Willis and Mr. Yass.
- IV. Nomination and Election of Committee Chair: Dr. Sondheimer nominated Mr. Yass as the committee chair, second by M.Mcneill. All in favor.
- V. Nomination and Election of Committee Vice-Chair: Mr. Yass nominated Dr. Gurtman as the vice-chair, second by Dr. Sondheimer, all in favor.
- VI. Minutes of Preceding Meeting – December 12, 2023: M.McNeill made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Mr. Farrell. All in favor.
- VII. Committee Member Communications: Ms. Checko presented her director’s report. Sycamore hills tennis courts are finally done. Countryside building has had several material delays, and one thing prevents us from doing the next thing – thus making us far behind. It is the supply chain that has impeded progress. The Program Coordinator position has been filled and he will start working Fridays. He will also run the Kindergarten Basketball program. The Administrative Coordinator has been out on medical leave since the end of October and will not be back until at least February 6<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Checko reported that she has several applications for the community grant and staff will make their recommendations to the Town Council for their February meeting. Basketball is finally running smoothly thanks to Chris, Park and Rec’s temporary employee. Sundown after school program has been a huge challenge. Chaperones wanted an employee on the mountain, so Ms. Checko recruited an employee who runs our volleyball program. The summer employee recruitment process will begin this week. They are looking for lifeguards, water safety instructors, swim team coaches, some camp staff and an assistant aquatics director. There are 90% of the 16 field trips booked for Adventure Camp and 90% of the entertainment booked for Summer Fun camp. The deadline for summer proposals is February 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Yass asked about the new program director. Ms. Checko reported that

These minutes were approved by the Recreation and Parks Committee on March 12, 2024.

Doug Davenport will start full time in two weeks. He is coming from Brooklyn CT Parks and Rec.

VIII. Old Business:

A. Recreation Master Plan Update: Ms. Checko reported that 2 virtual meetings were held. Both meetings were with our consultants, Weston and Sampson – one meeting was for the non-sports ambassadors and the other was for the sports groups. The meetings not well attended. Ms. Checko said that they have been distributing the recording of the meetings with a very detailed email explaining what the groups need do, what we need from them, when they can talk to us and how the process is going to look. Last Friday, an e-mail went out about the press release that will go out with the new playscape and QR code that allows access to the online survey that goes live on February 1<sup>st</sup>. On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Ryan and Emily held 3 in person meetings, one with all the department heads, one with the senior citizens and one with the Board of Education Superintendent, Operation Manager and Athletic Director. They were all very productive meetings. The Superintendent reported that she is hearing increasing requests for after-school athletics at the middle school, but the budget simply doesn't allow for it. Ms. Checko is not able to help with this because we can't get into schools until after 4:30 P.M. and parents are looking for something from 2:45 P.M. – on. In January, we will send out the postcard that she mentioned earlier with the QR code to the online survey which is released on February 1<sup>st</sup> and it will announce the first public meeting, which will be February 5<sup>th</sup> at the Avon Public Library. This is shared on the Town's website, Facebook pages and an e-mail blast will go out. It will also be covered in the Patch and the Valley Press and it will go out in the Board of Education's electronic backpack. Ms. Yass asked Ms. Checko to send Mr. Farrell the right communications so he can catch up quickly on what's been going on. Ms. Checko replied that she already did. Dr. Sondheimer is noticing things in their presentation that he hopes is not too late to fix: no one representing the interest of the boaters or the fishermen, or the bird watchers. He asked how he should deal with that? Ms. Checko replied that he can forward the press release and the graphic with the QR to people with those hobbies and then they will be able to fill out the online survey. Anyone can fill out the survey, official group or concerned citizen. Dr. Sondheimer asked how do Weston and Sampson use their imagination to think of things we aren't doing? Ms. Checko replied trails will be addressed more thoroughly in the Forest Management Plan just updated. Dr. Sondheimer talks about a forgotten piece of land that lacks parking and asked if he can write to them? Ms. Checko states that he can include it in the survey.

IX. New Business: None

X. Adjournment: M.Mcneill made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Dr. Sondheimer . All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by



Merisa Suljic Clerk