

RECREATION & PARKS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 5, 2018
Avon Town Hall, Building Department Conference Room

I. Call to Order - 7:33 a.m. – By Peter Ponziani, Chairman

A. Attendance

1. Members & Staff Present

Ruth Checko, Director, Peter Ponziani, Barbara Ausiello, Donald Droppo, Jr., Kelly Jackson, David Jadovich, Kimberley Pereira, Joe Weist

2. Members & Staff Absent

None

B. Introduce New Members

Mr. Ponziani asked that each member introduce themselves. New Members Ms. Ausiello and Ms. Pereira went first, followed by existing committee members. Each stated how long they've resided in Avon, number of children, their occupations and how long they've been serving on the Recreation and Parks Committee.

Following the introductions, Mr. Ponziani welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of what the committee does – how often it meets, issues and projects, recommendations of priorities, and Town Council's role.

II. Minutes – September 6, 2017

Minutes from the September 6, 2017 meeting were presented.

Mr. Droppo motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Ms. Jackson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

None.

IV. Director's Report

Ms. Checko began with an overview of the summer. We had 873 campers, 312 participants in aquatics programs, 279 discount tickets sold – Six Flags, CT Science Center, Lake Compounce. 2,000 participants in all of our summer offerings. We took in \$79,000 in revenue. Expenses have not been tallied yet.

Because school ended so late, we only ran our day camps for 7 weeks. We utilized the last week of June to do all the training – Diabetes Management, Sexual Harassment, Medical and Medicine Administration. Feedback from day camp surveys was exemplary.

Pool was very busy. Lifeguard trainer – new position which we budgeted for. This employee oversaw in service drills and taught lifeguard certification and recertification for public and staff. Adult swim lessons were offered this summer and will be brought back next year as well.

We had a lot of special needs students enrolled and we supported them.

Fisher Meadows is going very well. We don't think the fields will be playable for next spring. It will take a whole year for the turf to be established.

Turf field project at Avon High School is slated for referendum on December 12th. Process is very lengthy. Project is an 8 lane track and one synthetic field. No bleacher upgrades. No sound system.

Ms. Ausiello had a question about the fill decision. Ms. Checko responded that that would be determined at the Town Council and Board of Education meeting on September 13th. An expert was invited to speak about the materials, toxicology, etc.

The referendum is for two projects. One is radios for the Police Department - \$3,000,000 plus. Second is the Synthetic Turf Field - \$2,900,000.

Mr. Droppo asked if there was any way to decouple the projects. Ms. Checko replied that that's not the plan.

Ms. Pereira asked if there are any minimum percentage turnout requirements for the referendum. Ms. Checko wasn't sure but stated that she would find out.

Mr. Weist asked if the mailings would cover both of the projects. The reply was yes.

Mr. Droppo asked if the questions would be all or nothing or either/or. The reply was that they would be separate – Yes/Yes, Yes/No, No/No, etc.

Mr. Ponziani asked if the Recreation and Parks Committee could send out a flyer. Ms. Checko replied that the mailer the Town is doing, by ordinance has to be unbiased, factual and it states need. If the project is delayed, what is the impact? What is the debt load? What is the impact to taxpayers? She indicated that she would check with Town Manager Brandon Robertson to see if it would be possible.

Ms. Checko continued that several projects were done in the parks last spring in preparation for the summer. Fencing was replaced around the pool, behind the playscape and Avon Senior Center's Community Room kitchen entrance. An Eagle Scout installed a Bocce Court at Sycamore. Chain link fencing was installed around the dugout at Buckingham and the fencing around the lacrosse field was replaced. We replaced the Welcome to Avon sign on Route 44 and refurbished the memorial water fountain at Fisher Meadows.

As of July 1st, we are no longer contracting the services for opening and closing the pool. Everything will be done in-house. It's a much better plan.

The High School baseball field was renovated this summer.

Fall sports permits have been processed.

Mr. Ponziani asked about the field situation for the fall. Ms. Checko replied that we are in good shape.

Ms. Ausiello asked if Ruth could get the name of the expert that would be speaking at the Town Council and Board of Education Meeting. Ms. Checko responded that she would find that out.

V. Correspondence

None.

VI. Committee Communication

None.

VII. Old Business

A. Fisher Meadows Expansion Plan

Discussed in Director's Report.

B. Synthetic Turf Field Project – Avon High School

Discussed in Director's Report.

VIII. New Business

A. Approve Advertisement signs for Spring 2018

Ms. Checko advised that the Committee approved via email the new signs that went up at Buckingham – Kingswood Oxford and UCONN Medical. She requested a motion to approve the signs. Mr. Jadovich motioned, Mr. Droppo approved. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

B. Thompson Road Property

As a result of the Fisher Meadows expansion, Public Works Director Bruce Williams was able to move fill to MH Rhodes. He used the bulldozer that was sitting idle at Fisher Meadows to work on MH Rhodes. He borrowed irrigation equipment and got it up and running. Now the fields are being mowed twice a week.

Mr. Ponziani recommended writing Bruce a thank you note and copy Brandon on it.

C. Buckingham Baseball Field Project

Ms. Checko requested that the committee review the Advertising Policy again. We might need some assistance with what the intention of the policy was and what it might be evolving into. We have \$9,600 in the fund for the signs. I don't want to see this money used for little things for the baseball team. I'd like to put some of the money into my Capital Budget. Baseball teams wants a gravel area for warming up the pitchers. Public Works is too busy. I'd want to use a contractor to do it. Policy was written that it could be capital or operating budget purchases. Would you be okay with this or would you rather see the funds go directly to things for the baseball players. They want soft equipment – for inside the dugout, turtle for pitching. I'd like to see them improve the field.

Ms. Jackson inquired what the critical needs of the baseball team were. If it was the pitcher's warmup area. Ms. Checko responded that that's what Tim Filon and Jon Yolles are relaying.

D. Capital Improvement Program

Ms. Checko referred the committee to the Capital Improvement Program packet. It lists the projects and the years in which the funding is being requested. This coming fiscal year we'd like to finish the fencing for the Farmington Valley Trail. We've done from the Farmington Line to just over Thompson Road.

Brandon requested that \$21,000 be put back in for design work for renovations at Countryside Park Building. It needs new systems, roof, siding, basement mold/mustiness, kitchen, bathroom and windows.

Synthetic Turf field – numbers may go up depending on the infill selection. This number is for crumb rubber with a contingency of 20%. This was increased from 10%. Lights are not a priority. Mr. Weist asked about a list of wants that could be fundraised for. Response was yes.

Buckingham Recreation Area Planning – Ms. Checko stated that the Engineering Department has expressed an interest in doing this for us – improved parking, lighting, retention pond, concessions, and bathroom.

Senior Center Interior Improvements – Carpeting, painting, LED lighting, kitchen facelift – new appliances (stove and refrigerator), cabinets, countertops.

Sperry Park – priority of Little League. Dirt from Fisher Meadows was dumped there to fill in the indent by the school.

Thompson Road irrigation – pushed out.

Recreation Master Plan – Hasn't been updated since 2007

Sycamore Hills Pool Painting – Every 5 to 7 years.

Shade Shelters at pool – requested money for this.

Sycamore Hills Tennis Court Resurfacing – preventative maintenance.

Sycamore Hills Accessible Playscape – we will need this someday.

Last page of CIP packet has projects forecasted from 2029 out.

E. Memorial Day Soccer Tournament

Last year the Soccer Tournament grew to 10,000 people. Initially they wanted fireworks, a flyover. Police department determined that 2 police, an ambulance and a fly car would be required every day. Soccer Club called Brandon who backed the chief. He did state that he would give them a reduced rate for the police coverage. Private duty is not a requirement so we had to ask other towns. Canton did it, but the bill was \$4,500. Soccer Club balked and Recreation ended up paying most of the bill.

As a result of this, all the departments here held a meeting. We drafted a document outlining what Soccer Club will be responsible for next year – police coverage, dumpster, port-a-potties, etc. I will be contacting Rich Rosein and going over this with him. Due to the size of the tournament, we can only support you so much. This is what you can anticipate for costs.

Lacrosse Tournament is a quarter of the size of the Soccer Tournament.

F. Summer Wrap Up

Discussed in Director's Report.

Fall programs are in full swing – flag football, volleyball, field hockey, men's softball, pickleball.

The pool closed Monday. Pavilion is the last remaining project at Sycamore.

Our next meeting will be in December. We need to create the dates for the next fiscal year.

IX. Adjournment

Mr. Weist motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 AM. Mr. Jadovich seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by Usha Srivel

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