

## **RECREATION & PARKS COMMITTEE**

### **SPECIAL MEETING**

#### Minutes

Tuesday, December 12, 2023  
7:30 am

Via Zoom Meeting

- I. Call to Order: Mr. Yass, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
  - A. Attendance – In attendance were Ms. Checko, Ms. Das, Dr. Gurtman, M. McNeill, Ms. Willis and Mr. Yass.  
Absent: Mr. Beaudoin and Dr. Sondheimer  
Also present Mr. Chmielewski and Ms. Weckman from Weston & Sampson
- II. Minutes of Preceding Meeting – September 12, 2023: Dr. Gurtman made a motion to approve the minutes of September 12, 2023, Ms. Willis seconded that motion. All committee members are in favor. The committee minutes were approved unanimously
- III. Public Comment – None IV. Committee Communication – None V. Old Business:
- IV. Weston and Sampson Presentation on Master Plan Schedule:

Mr. Chmielewski and Ms. Weckman gave a presentation with a brief overview of the Avon Recreation & Parks Master Plan Update. Mr. Chmielewski introduced Emily Weckman, RLA, Senior Project Landscape Architect and himself, Ryan, Chmielewski, Team Leader CT. They have offices up and down the east coast. They have 800 employees and cover a broad spectrum of services. The Basic Project Goals – what were they hired to do for the town? Review and update an inventory and analysis of specific athletic field, courts, and indoor recreational facilities. Complete a public outreach and needs assessment process to identify and prioritize indoor/outdoor community needs in the short, medium, and long term. Develop a strategic plan for improving existing facilities and/or constructing new facilities to meet community needs, safety, accessibility, and equity. Outline a potential implementation process to include funding and phasing strategies to include funding and phasing strategies. Stakeholder groups identified: Coordinate with Master Plan Working Group, Town Related Stakeholders (Town Council, Recreation and Parks Committee, Avon Public Schools/BOE, Public Works, Other identified town stakeholders), User-group Related Stakeholders (youth athletic programs, school-related athletic teams, organized adult sports programs, informal sports groups, other key members of the public identified.) Basic Project timeline: 1) Project Initiation – facility inventory, analysis and public outreach planning will be done in October-December 2023, 2) Public Outreach – online survey, stakeholder and public meeting #1 will be held in Jan-March 2024, 3) Needs Assessment – data & trend analysis will be done in Feb-April 2024, 4) Public Meeting #2 where they will present findings will be done in May 2024, 5) Strategic

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Planning – develop recommendations/budgets/implementation will be done in May-July 2023, 6) Public Meeting #3 Present Recommendations/Adopt Final Master Plan Aug-Sept 2024. Discussion: Mr. Yass said you showed a slide of facilities that exist; however, he didn't see playgrounds, is it on the list? They replied, "Yes, they are included. We do not dive into safety and security issues of the playground unless they are blatant." Mr. Yass asked will you identify unmet needs and if the town needs more amenities like this? Yes, Weston and Sampson will look at where these are overall located and if the Town of Avon needs additional facilities like that. Part of the public outreach will be identifying our user groups reaching outside the public realm to use facilities because A) they're not available, B) they're not convenient or C) they want to be private institution rather than using public parks. Mr. Yass suggested for Mr. Chmielewski and Ms. Weckman to look through the meeting minutes from the last year so they can get familiar with what the committee has discussed. What will this committees' role be? Mr. Chmielewski replied, "you're an advisory committee and it is important for me to solicit feedback from you. This is the first step to introduce the project and there will be several steps to check in. We encourage you to attend the open houses to hear the feedback from the community." Ms. Checko stated that there will also be online surveys that you want to participate in. The stakeholders will be divided into two groups, sports and non-sports.

The final presentation will be given to this committee and the Town Council. Mr. Yass would like this to become an agenda item in one of the meetings that line up with the timeline. Ms. Checko asked if this would fit in contractually for Weston and Sampson? Mr. Chmielewski stated that it would be possible because of the meeting being at 7:30 a.m. in zoom form. Dr. Gurtman asked if we can do a live feed? Ms. Checko replied that the Town of Avon is having issues with our equipment. Dr. Gurtman asked if we can change venues? Ms. Checko replied that we can't because we must book these places ahead of time. Dr. Gurtman asked if the town could put the meeting online the next day? Ms. Checko said she will talk to Grace and Brandon. Mr. Yass would like to see the list of stakeholders. There will be a presentation at the meetings but there is also engagement with the public and it is highly encouraged for the community to come out. Mr. Yass asked if Ruth and Grace have a strategy for publicizing this? Yes. What will the stakeholder meetings look like? There will be a public presentation, brief overview of the process - why people's opinions matter and what it means to this Master Plan process, stations where they may set up voting jars on tables, maps with voting dots, ways for people to make a quick vote of what they like and not like, sticky notes of suggestions. There are stakeholders' meetings with two different groups – some virtual, some in person – sports and non-sports. The stakeholder's list is two pages long – it is extensive. They work within the town's budget to have the most extensive outreach program. Can people send their public comments outside of the meetings? Yes, there are various methods for questions. Mr. Chmielewski asked if fitting in the trails in contextually is the goal? Is there a specific committee to trails or is this part of this committee's charge? It is the Recreation and Parks committee's charge and Public Works. Ms. Checko stated that we just updated our Forest Management Plan and everything that is in that new document is extensive in regards what should and could be done with trails. She stated that she is not sure if the Town is interested in expanding beyond small items that are identified in Plan of Conservation and Development. The Forest Management plan is available online. Mr. Yass asked Mr. Chmielewski if they have done work in other

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communities in Farmington Valley? She responded that yes, they've recently completed a Master Plan in Simsbury, Canton, and Greenwich. The committee thanked Weston and Sampson for their presentation.

V. New Business:

- A. Next Meeting: Possible Reschedule to January 16, 2024: Mr. Yass proposed that the committee cancel January 9<sup>th</sup> and reschedule the January meeting to January 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Yass checked with the committee, and they were all available to make that date work. January 9<sup>th</sup> date will be cancelled and rescheduled to the 16<sup>th</sup>.
- B. 2024 Meeting Schedule: Mr. Yass asked if there are any questions with the proposed meeting dates for 2024 – there were none. M. McNeill made a motion to approve the 2024 meeting schedule, removing the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, seconded by Dr. Gurtman. Mr. Yass will sign the schedule and it will be filled with the Town Clerk. Mr. Yass wished the committee a happy and healthy new year and he will see everyone on January 16<sup>th</sup>, in the new year.

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Suljic'.

Merisa Suljic Clerk