

**Wallingford Parks & Recreation Department
Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, November 13, 2019
8:00 a.m. at Parks and Recreation Department**

Commissioners in Attendance:

Don Crouch, Dave Gelo, Jason Michael, Steve Rossacci, and Mike Savenelli Sr

Recreation Commission Members Absent:

Recreation Department Staff Present: Kenny Michaels, Director of Recreation Parks & Recreation

Special Guests: Rajan Doering, resident; Bob Danielson, resident; Denise Heinig, resident; John Gawlak, resident

Opening Remarks: Chairperson Dave Gelo called the meeting to order @ 8:06 a.m.

Minutes:

A motion made by Steve Rossacci and seconded by Jason Michael to approved minutes from the October meeting.

Special Guests: Allotted time per guest 15 minutes per Article 4 of By-Laws

Bob Danielson, a resident, asked to speak to the Park & Rec and the Rec Commission about Pickleball. In particular, Bob is looking for dedicated courts throughout Wallingford. Pickleball is for all ages, not just for Seniors. Pickleball is played in High Schools and Colleges, making it a sport for all ages.

The paddle is a composite paddle played with a whiffle type plastic ball with holes. The court size is 20ft x 44ft. Six pickleball courts would fit in the size of 2 tennis court. Pickleball is a social all-inclusive sport. Pickleball has grown significantly in popularity over the years across the US. Connecticut has 75 locations to play pickleball. In Wallingford, Harrison Park is the only viable place to play. There are only 3 pickleball courts.

The Pickleball courts at Harrison Park are on the same courts for tennis which makes for some challenging modifications. The Pickleball courts are lined, but the net for tennis is higher and even though it can be lowered in the middle, the ends are still too high. In order to have the net at the right height water jugs need to be hung on each end of the net.

When both tennis and pickleball people want to play who plays? Jason Michael's responded whoever was there first, unless someone has a permit to use the courts.

A lot of area towns have dedicated Pickleball courts and Bob is inquiring into Wallingford also having dedicated courts.

To build a brand-new facility would be very costly. In looking at the different parks that have tennis courts that could be converted. Doolittle Park tennis courts are used by Lyman Hall High School for their practices and games. Community Lake has lights which would allow for night time playing, but there is limited parking with the Linear Trail, Little League games, and Amphenol parking. A drawing was developed to utilize the Tennis courts for Pickleball, but they were east to west and the

sun would hamper play. That leaves Harrison Park as the best place to have dedicated Pickleball courts. The existing net could be left as a barrier between courts. Kenny Michaels said if the courts were changed the crack in the middle under the nets would need to be fixed and the nets would need to be removed.

John Gawlak said Pickleball is not going away. John, Director of Cheshire Park & Rec, said he has approval to redo the tennis courts in Cheshire Park. He will keep 3 Tennis courts and create 4-6 Pickleball courts. Anyone can play the game; it can be a family sport.

Choate has Tennis courts that the public use now. Concern is if Choate stopped allowing residents to use their Tennis courts, they wouldn't have a place to go.

John said while he was the Director, he had the Tennis and Handball courts removed from Pire and Pragemann park.

Denise Heinig organized the group in Wallingford for Pickleball.

Jason Michael asked if their organization raised any money to help with the costs. Jason played an instrumental role in the development of the Disc Golf course at Lufbery. He said they raised \$7,000-\$8,000 before pursuing with the Town about installing the course. He suggested that Denise may want to follow a similar process with raising money for their initiative. Jason also asked if it mattered the type of court Pickleball is played on. Depending on the surface a different ball would be used.

All the Tennis/Pickleball courts in Town need to be resurfaced, which is a major cost. Denise was asked if they have approached the Board of Ed about playing on their courts, no they have not.

Kenny said they have added a Tuesday indoor Pickleball program that will run from Nov 19-April 7, 2020 from 2:00-4:00pm the fee is \$45.00 resident/\$55.00 non-residents.

1. Yalesville LL requests town to accept donated scoreboard @ Parker Farms #2

The Parker Farms Field 2 has been named after Bill Donegan for his long-time service to Yalesville Little League.

The Gamache family requested donations be made to Yalesville Little League in lieu of flowers for the passing of their son in August 2019. The league would like to purchase a scoreboard with Bill Donegan's name on it and a notation in memory of Kevin Gamache. The League will be responsible for installing the scoreboard.

Motion made to approve the purchase and installation of the Scoreboard. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Kenny will bring this before the Mayor and then the Council for approval.

2. Grand St. Park Updates

Kenny asked Sal Amadeo, Purchasing Dept, if the bid was submitted for the playground equipment. Sal said he is still working on bid.

A. Urban Oasis – Mary Heffernon request

Kenny and Michelle met with Mary Heffernon on Oct 25th to walk the grounds of Grand Street Park to discuss the different areas for an Urban Oasis. Mary liked the area by the building and thought that would be an ideal place. Mary suggested using wildflowers and plants instead of trees for that area. The Commission wanted to make sure Mary was aware that the area did not have any irrigation. They also inquired on who was going to maintain the area.

They also went to Westside Field and discussed several areas that an Urban Oasis would be possible. It would also beautify the area and there is an irrigation already in that park.

3. New Trees at Wallace Park – P&R Commission to inspect & review

The Commissioners looked at Wallace Park/Legacy Gardens and provided feedback on their opinions of having two trees there. Two Commissioners thought it looked nice as it currently is without trees. It looks clean and neat, very opening and inviting. Three Commissioners liked trees there to provide some shade and thought flowering trees would be very nice. When this area was planned trees were always part of the plan.

Motion: Would like to pursue putting flowering trees in Legacy Garden. 3 Commissioners voted yes 2 Commissioners voted no. Kenny will take this in consideration.

4. Wallingford Jubilee 350 - P&R Involvement- Up-Date

Nothing has changed from the last status.

5. Advertising Signs on Town Property – Jason Michael

Kenny was able to get a guideline packet for advertising from his hometown in NY. Including in the information was criteria on advertisement. If graffiti happened it was the sponsor's responsibility to clean, replace, or remove.

Kenny did ask Finance and a separate account can be created and the balance could be carried forward yearly.

Jason will reach out to the Ordinance Committee to see if they will need any additional information to bring forth an ordinance change. Kenny's concern if the new ordinance is in place, who will solicit for the donations.

6. Update on nominees for Legacy Garden at Wallace Park 2020

A. Wallingford Community Women & Wallingford Historical Society

An informational sheet will be sent to both groups to complete for the presentation of the stone.

Both groups were pleased to be selected and recognized for their work in town.

The date for the recognition is May 9 or 16, 2020.

7. Plan of Evacuation for Recreation Center – Update – Steve Rossacci

Kenny said the daytime staff had the Run, Hide, Fight training. It was an interactive training put on by WLFDPD Officer Cadet as what to do with an active shooter, disgruntle employee, or upset client. Kenny said the Town Hall now has panic buttons for each department and has requested panic buttons for the office area at the Park & Recreation.

The Preschool teachers are locking their doors which is a good start. There are a lot of hidden area within the preschool classrooms that could be used for hiding.

Kenny would like to have the Run, hid, Fight training for the night/weekend staff training.

Steve said the next step is the MOU (memorandum of understanding), to move people to off-site and then to have a plan for dismissal of children. Steve will send a copy to Kenny.

8. Community Lake – Shoreline clearing of brush – Update

Dave asked if the bid went out for the Shoreline clearing. Kenny said the information is being pulled together and they will be submitting and open order bid.

9. Community Pool Up-Date Mike Savenelli

There is a pool meeting at 2:00 pm with Kacie, Planning & Zoning; Erin O’Hare, Inland/Wetland; and Rob, DPW, to discuss any issues. One item in particular is the parking.

Michael Fortuna had done a great job communicating statuses, issues, or concerns.

Meetings will be held with Planning & Zoning on Dec 4th and Inland & Wetland on Dec 9th.

Nov 20th the committee will be meeting.

10. Open Discussion:

None

Park & Rec Director’s Report:

For the Fall, 163 classes were offered and 148 ran which is a success rate of 91%.

Weber sign-up for 2019-2020 is 533, compared to 559 for last year.

Gannon sign-up for 2019-2020 is 174, compared 194 for last year.

We are still taking High School until December and might still get another 40-60 registrations.

The other grades just have a few spots left to fill out the teams.

Grades 4 & 5 numbers are the lowest this year, due to more kids playing travel basketball.

Practice starts next week 11/18 for grades 8 and under. Games for Grades 5 and under will begin in January.

Grades 6 and higher will start having games the week of 12/9.

Men’s Basketball beginnings tonight with 6 teams playing at 6:30, 7:30, 8:30.

SWISH is down 2 teams because they consolidated within other teams.

Coed Volleyball have the same number of teams 4 in A 14 in B.

Recreation Program Specialist position closed on 11/4 because it exceeded the maximum applications. HR will identify the top 10-12 applicants and schedule interviews. At this point, Kenny will get the top candidates to be interviewed. He is hoping to have someone identified by the end of December.

The Spring 2020 brochure will need to go to the Printer by 12/6 for the first cut.

Next Commission Meeting: Wednesday, December 11, 2019
8:00 a.m. Park and Recreation Department

Meeting Adjourned at: 10:10 a.m. by Dave Gelo seconded by Mike Savenelli

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Barillaro, Sr Clerk
Wallingford Parks and Recreation