

MINUTES

**SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
MARCH 10, 2010**

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, March 10, 2010, at 230C Mountain Road, Conference Room

ATTENDANCE:Lou Casinghino, Chairman
.....Leeayn Burke, Clerk
.....Brian Casinghino
.....Bill Clark
.....Cindy Nicholson
.....Michael Roccanti
.....David Rusnock

ABSENT:Gerry Crane
.....Jane Smith, Vice Chairman

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Wendy J. LaMontagne, Director

Lou opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

PUBLIC INPUT: None

MINUTES:

Brian made a motion to accept the minutes from the January meeting (no meeting in February due to weather). Mike seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

PROGRAM REPORTS: Lou asked about Donna’s report and asked if all the programs listed were Special Needs programs. Wendy said no that Donna is doing Special Needs programs along with a variety of other programs and summer camps. Lou said that as a part-time person doing all these programs, it jumps out. Leeayn asked how many hours Donna works. Wendy said 25 hours a week, part time, she does a lot. She gets paid for 25 hours and that is why we are trying to get more hours for her. Lou asked if Cindy Fisher coordinated any of Donna’s programs and Wendy said no, Cindy does the programs she reports on.

OLD BUSINESS:

Yearly participant numbers for major sport programs/activities: Lou talked about the reason for this report and how we can use it to help us understand our enrollments. Wendy said that Cindy has started to include the previous 3 years of enrollment for our big programs. The commission discussed the basketball enrollment over the past 3 years.

Lou asked the commission which programs should be tracked. The consensus was soccer, basketball, tee-ball, softball, field hockey and the summer staple programs. Wendy asked how the commission would like to see this. Lou said that it should be a separate report. Brian said that we need to know what the enrollment was before the digital backpack and Cindy said that enrollments should be taken into account also.

Bill discussed the basketball enrollment for the boys grades 3 & 4 and 5 – 8. Bill suggested that the Grades 5 - 8 programs be reviewed to upgrade it. Bill also suggested using high school kids to coach the teams. The commission discussed the program, intramural school programs and the improvement of the children's talent in this sport and the rules for the older grades' program and the lack of competitive games in the older age range. Dave said that the younger kids he coaches are looking forward to games so to a certain point their needs to be some competitiveness (a hybrid type game). Cindy asked if the children have been asked what they want. Leeyn asked if we could ask the parents what they want when they sign up.

Brian brought up making sure that each child gets equal playing time. Wendy said that our program is set up that way and if a coach is not doing this the department needs to be notified and it will be addressed.

Wendy suggested a meeting between the commission members and Cindy Fisher to review the rules and setup of the program.

Brian said that he coached his daughter's team and he felt that the referees need to be a little more assertive, taking charge enforcing the rules especially the physical fouls. The commission discussed the fact that the referee calls can help the children learn the rules of the game.

Youth Basketball Update: See above.

Correspondence: Wendy said that we have been jumping around and asked to go back to Correspondence. Wendy passed out the Spring Brochure and thanked the staff for the great job they did. Wendy said that registrations are being taken. Wendy said that some people are going to the digital backpack and our website. Paper copies are at the library, banks, pre-schools and at the schools on the bulletin board.

Budget: Wendy said that she met with the finance director and selectman to review our budget. Wendy did increase the Sunrise Camp, Kid's Korner and Aquatics budget because of the 53 rd week of payroll. The selectman has been great in corresponding with department heads to make them aware of what is going on with the budget. The budget did get reduced. The area that was reduced is in payroll for additional hours for Special Programs Coordinator (Donna) and in contracted services for the additional maintenance person.

Wendy said the presentation to the Finance Board will be Monday, March 15. Wendy will be there to answer any questions. Wendy said that she presented the A.C.C.E. budget in February and she thanked the commission members that were there. The A.C.C.E. Commission listened and asked questions, they will present their budget to the Finance Board after they have received and reviewed all the A.C.C.E. budgets.

Field & Facilities: Lou reviewed the meeting that was held with representatives of all the athletic clubs that use our fields. Lou said Wendy did a great job as she has in the past. Wendy said that there were a lot of representatives this year with more clubs requesting fields. The meeting went well. Wendy is working on coordinating the field use trying to accommodate everyone's requests.

Lou asked Bill if he knew about the Titans. Bill said that he was not familiar with them but that Little League will be incorporating a Titans league into their program. This program is for the 12 and 13 year olds.

Lou said that in the past 1 or 2 commission members were assigned to check on fields that were in their area. Wendy said it was called Adopt-A-Field. Lou said that the staff was also asked to monitor the fields for problems that need to be taken care of. Lou asked Wendy to inform the commission of repairs done or to be done on fields. Lou said that instead of assigning fields to commission members just to give Wendy a call if you see something wrong. Cindy said that at her school they call the custodian and he will fix the problem. Lou said that the community thinks we are in charge of repairing facilities. Wendy said that the highway department is good about fixing problems but another set of eyes will help.

Wendy said that the skateboard park will open in April, the highway department has repairs to make and hopefully it will be ready to open for school vacation.

Wendy said that the Suffield and Southwick portions of the Farmington Valley Heritage Trail are paved and Southwick has invited Suffield to join in a dedication of the two trails meeting. This will be held in May. Wendy is working with the selectman to prepare for this dedication ceremony.

Bill had to leave the meeting at this point.

Wendy said that the town is working on a parking area at the end of Phelps Road with a kiosk. The commission discussed the hazards of an isolated parking area.

Dave asked if it would be possible to use the space at the new Senior Center. Wendy said that she is not sure but she has heard that the grant stipulates that only the seniors can use it.

Dave asked about using the high school fields for some of our programs. Wendy said that when the school was built the plan was to not have any rec activities on those fields to keep them in good condition. It is something we may be able to use in the future. Also, we have a new field coming in at Sullivan Field. Lou said that the Bridge Street fields are open but they aren't very good – and on a hill. Brian asked about the fields that aren't controlled by Parks & Recreation but are maintained to some extent by the highway department. The commission discussed who maintains these fields and what part the Town has to do with it.

Leeayn asked about the port-a-lets and who is responsible for them. Wendy said that some of them are paid for by the Town and some are paid for by the athletic groups. Wendy said that part of the spring fields meeting that was held is to cover items like this so everyone is aware of what they are responsible for.

Mike brought up the parking problems at Sullivan Field. Mike suggested a split rail fence along the side of the driveway to try and eliminate this parking problem. Cost of a fence would be around \$2,000.00. There would be the additional expense of maintenance for weed-wacking the grass. The commission discussed the problem of people not obeying the parking rules. Wendy said that people would park on the road and grass so it would impede access for an ambulance. Even with no parking signs, a police officer would have to be there to enforce it. Leeayn said that they need to be ticketed to enforce the rules. Brian suggested allowing parking on one side only. The commission discussed the situation with parking at both Sullivan and Bruce Park, the safety issues involved and enforcement. After much discussion on the fact that this is a matter of public safety Wendy will contact the police department and ask that they enforce the parking situation. She will also contact the lacrosse club to make them aware of this.

Sub-committee updates: Wendy said that she met with the new members, Dave and Cindy, and they expressed their interests. Wendy reviewed the sub-committees and who is assigned to the committees.

NEW BUSINESS:

Soccer Club Tournament Request: Wendy reviewed the request from the Suffield Travel Soccer Club. They are requesting the following fields: Bruce Park, Middle School, McAlister School, High School and Sullivan for their annual soccer tournament which will be held June 26 and 27. Lou asked about donations from the Soccer Club and Wendy said that she has not received a donation for the past 2 years. In past years they have made donations to the Parks & Recreation Department in appreciation for use of the fields. The commission discussed the donation situation. Cindy said that she and David Wright started this tournament 22 years ago. The intent of the tournament was to be able to give back to the community, not to make money for the club. Possibly the philosophy of the tournament has now changed. Wendy indicated that money had been donated for various items and projects in the past along with donations to the Special Needs Programs fund. The commission discussed the leased fields, the donations in the past and the fact that no donations have been received in the past 2 years and if some type of communication should be made to the club regarding this.

Lou asked for a motion to approve the use of the fields. Leeayn made a motion to approve the request for the June 26 and 27 use of fields for the soccer tournament. Brian seconded the motion. The commission discussed the motion. Lou asked for a vote and the vote was unanimous.

The commission discussed donations further and would like to know if the Clubs philosophy has changed and that a casual conversation is the approach to take at a later time.

Wendy discussed the situation with the lights that were installed by the soccer club at the Copper Hill fields. Lights are not allowed per an agreement and they will be required to be taken down. This situation was discussed.

Brian asked that the issue of periodic programs be placed on the April meeting agenda. Lou asked about putting the current Spring program brochures at the schools. Leeayn said that she is

putting some up on the bulletin boards at Spaulding, McAlister. Wendy said that we put some in the Guidance Department at the Middle Schools. Wendy said the paper copies have been given to the nursery schools, library, banks and town hall. Lou asked that they be put in the 2 post offices.

Mike made a motion to adjourn and Cindy seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leeayn Burke
Clerk