

MINUTES

**SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
December 14, 2011**

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 2011, at 136 Marbern Drive, Suffield, CT.

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:Wendy J. LaMontagne, Director
.....Marie Bourque, Administrative Secretary

Lou called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

PUBLIC INPUT: none

MINUTES: Brian made a motion to accept the minutes. Dave seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

CORRESPONDENCE: Wendy reported that the winter brochure is complete and is available on the town website as well the school’s digital backpack. Paper copies have also been distributed throughout the town. There are some new programs and times as well as new adult programs. There is also a new pre-school program that is being held at Suffield Academy.

Wendy thanked Leeayn for attending the CRPA (Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association) award ceremony. Leeayn gave kudos to Wendy and stated that Kristine spoke very highly of Wendy in the introduction and all that she has brought to the town of Suffield since she has been here.

PROGRAM REPORTS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

A.C.C.E: Wendy met with the Public Works Department to work up some updated figures to present in the A.C.C.E budget. The items will be presented, as agreed, at the

last meeting, the Babb's project, dugouts and Bruce Park Field. Wendy received new figures from Bill for wood dugouts and will present the new figures at the meetings. Wendy will work with Little League to attempt donations to help bring down the cost of the dugouts.

Wendy received an email from A.C.C.E; they are distributing their paperwork with their required parameters. A.C.C.E will be scheduling their meetings sometime between January and early February. Wendy anticipates being placed on the A.C.C.E. meeting schedule on January 11, 2012, which takes place after the Parks and Recreation commission meeting.

Youth Basketball: Wendy advised the commission that the basketball program will begin January 4, 2012. The coaches meeting and clinic was held on December 6, 2011 and all the pertinent information has been delivered to the coaches. Brett Bishop returned this year and passed on great ideas, tips and helpful websites to the coaches. He also presented ways for coaches to motivate the children and keep them interested.

Brian inquired about the number of participants in this years basketball program versus last years. Wendy reported the numbers are down in grades 7 and 8 and grades 1 and 2. Cindy stated there is a drop in numbers at Spaulding School; they are down about 80 children. There are only 7 first grades this year versus 9 first grades last year, but the numbers are improving. Parks and Recreation numbers are in line with what is happening in the school system.

Brian wanted to know about the competition for the players in grades 3 – 8. Wendy informed him that they play internally. Wendy also advised the commission that the coaches will continue with teachable moments. Cindy stated that there has been a lot of success with them and the children and coaches love them.

NEW BUSINESS:

2012 Meeting Dates: Wendy presented the calendar for the 2012 commission meetings. Lou inquired about conflicting dates and stated that the Parks and Recreation meeting has conflicted, in the past, with the town meeting in May. Lou asked for suggestions to remedy the situation in advance. There was some discussion regarding the best way to handle it. The recommendation was made to change the Parks and Recreation May 9, 2012 meeting to May 2, 2012, should the town meeting be scheduled on the same date.

Brian made a motion to accept the 2012 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting schedule with the May 2, 2012 backup date. Gerry seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Tennis Court Construction/Programs: Lou presented an article to the commission, regarding a new method for teaching young children how to play tennis. The new method includes the use of smaller rackets, large foam or low-compression felt balls, downsized courts and shorter nets. Cindy feels it is a good idea; everything is downsized

so the children are more successful. Wendy informed the commission that Conrad McIntyre, the tennis vendor Parks and Recreation uses, has already implemented the program with younger children. Lou stated that it is an opportune time to implement the new teaching method, due to the fact that the tennis courts are scheduled to be redone in the spring of 2012. Lou suggested taking one adult tennis court and making the changes required to downsize for children, possibly getting 3 or 4 downsized courts. Lou contacted the USTA (U. S. Tennis Association) and there is a possibility that Parks and Recreation could get the new equipment for nothing. Lou and Wendy will attempt to get funding for the conversion of the tennis courts and associated equipment from the USTA. Wendy suggested trying to get funding, or applying for grant money to build additional courts to the north of the present courts.

Cindy suggested having small basketball hoops placed around the tennis courts should new courts be built from grant money.

Gerry made a motion to move forward to modify one adult tennis court to a children's tennis court and to investigate the possibility of applying for grant money to have additional tennis courts built. Cindy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Skateboard Park: Leeayn asked how the skateboard park was going. Wendy stated that there has been some vandalism to the gazebo, which has been repaired by Public Works, and that there have been kids hanging around the park. Leeayn received feedback from younger kids that having the older kids hanging around, with some of their behavior is intimidating to them. There was some discussion regarding having time parameters set aside for the younger children to utilize the skateboard park. Wendy suggested having new signs made with designated times for the young children.

Gerry made a motion to adjourn and Mike seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leeayn Burke, Clerk