

**Stonington Recreation Commission Meeting  
Monday, November 30, 2015 at 6:00 PM  
Human Services Community Meeting Room**

Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Chairman C. Michael Crowley and Vice-Chair Frank Prachniak  
Commissioners Joe McKernan, Jennifer Norcross, Beth Quesnel, Joe Ciriello & Larry Theodore  
Recreation Administrator Richard Ward  
First Selectman Rob Simmons  
Human Services Manager Leanne Theodore  
Town of Stonington Resident Rob Wall  
Student Jake DiScullo

Chairman Michael Crowley called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

**I. Public's Opportunity to Address the Commission**

Resident Rob Wall attended the November meeting to express his concerns with the basketball program that is currently being held at the COMO. Mr. Wall is a resident of Pawcatuck and played both rec. and high school basketball in this town and he has also coached.

Mr. Wall feels that the current basketball program at the COMO has outgrown the venue and that the Town needs to get involved. The age groups are too large, for instance, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders are grouped together and 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are in another group. This grouping needs to be more age specific. The program as it is currently being run is doing a great disservice to the children participating as well as creating a safety concern. Mr. Wall is starting to see the effects, for example no travel program home games are held in Stonington.

Mr. Wall also addressed the refereeing issues. Inexperienced kids with no leadership skills or qualifications are refereeing. There needs to be an adult present to run the program. Mr. Wall has spoken to the directors at the COMO but he feels he needs to get the momentum going and has brought the issue to the Recreation Commission. Mr. Wall wants to move forward with the Town of Stonington and its beautiful courts that could be utilized in order to get the program heading in the right direction.

Chairman Crowley told Mr. Wall that his points are well taken and that the Recreation Commission is aware of the growing concern about the basketball program and he assured Mr. Wall that it is being looked into.

Human Services Manager Leanne Theodore stated that the COMO has a long-standing, positive history of working with the Town and the mutual goal is to keep that partnership going. She stated that for many years the COMO donated space to accommodate the Town's Zumba program and most recently worked together to jointly hold a story-telling event for preschool age youth. She stated that the Town would never intend to compete with the non-profit but rather work with them to determine if there are existing issues that we could help to address. One of the problems

is that it is difficult to use the school facilities during the week. This is one of the reasons that the Recreation Commission turned to using the COMO as a venue in the first place.

Commissioner Ciriello stated that the program needs a protocol. Mr. Wall suggested looking into how other towns in the area run their basketball programs. Recreation Administrator Richard Ward suggests sitting down and talking with Mr. Wall and the COMO to work together to improve the program. Chairman Crowley asked Mr. Ward to set up a meeting to discuss a solution to the issues with the current basketball program in order to continue and improve the relationship between the COMO and the Recreation Commission. Human Services Manager, Leanne Theodore, stated that she will reach out to COMO Director, Beth-Ann Stewart, directly to have a discussion beforehand, since the COMO was not present tonight to respond to any of the above statements.

Chairman Crowley thanked Mr. Wall for bringing his concerns to the Recreation Commission.

First Selectman Rob Simmons requested to address the Recreation Commission at the end of the meeting.

## **II. Secretary's Report**

A motion was made by Commissioner Joe McKernan to approve the October 26, 2015 Secretary's Report. Motion seconded by Commissioner Beth Quesnel, all in favor, motion approved.

## **III. Budget Reports**

### **Month Ending October 2015**

Mr. Ward stated that the MUNIS system was down and he was unable to access the official budget report. The motion to approve the month ending October 2015 budget will be added to the January 25, 2016 Agenda (note: no meeting December 2015).

## **IV. Recreation Administrator's Report**

### **Fall Program Update**

- 1. Youth Programs**
- 2. Middle School and High School Programs**
- 3. Adult Programs**

### **Winter Plans: Brochure Preview**

According to Mr. Ward the high school preseason had good numbers. Flag Football was fantastic. The immediate feedback was very positive. There were 128 participants. That program will be buying portable scoreboards. The rates will be adjusted for the babysitting program since the program will no longer be offering CPR/first aid certifications. Coed soccer had 8 unsponsored teams. Girls volleyball was great.

Baby Boomers and Adult Fitness are in the red but a new space has been found to run those programs at a better cost. They will be using a space at Black Bear Martial Arts which is open to adding additional programs in the future.

Fall programs totaled 288 participants.

Summer Camp had 162 participants down from last year's number by 9. More expenses were used in order to bring up the quality of the program. The return is less but next year Mr. Ward anticipates it will grow. The fees may increase a bit. Ms. Theodore is looking into charging different fees according to how long a child would like to participate in the program. Some children can not commit to an entire summer so charging a weekly fee may be possible in the future. Commissioner Ciriello believes that the summer camp program prices are a great deal for what the campers get and there was great feedback about last summer's program.

Chairman Crowley wants Mr. Ward to keep in mind prices that are being charged for each program and that successful programs should not be carrying programs that may need to be discontinued due to costs.

The new brochure will be mailing the first week of December and all the Recreation programs will be listed.

**V. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Crowley was concerned about the pump house. It will be repaired, repainted and cleaned up by the Department of Public Works. The stairs to the press house will also be painted. Chairman Crowley is also looking into the trailer. He would like it removed because it is an eye sore. The batting cages and wind screens on the tennis courts should be removed and stored during off season. He asked Mr. Ward to check on that with the school. The trailers and leaf vacuums should not be left by the Palmer building. The entire area needs to be cleaned up. First Selectman Simmons agreed that the screens on the tennis courts should be taken down and he will also address the clean up issue.

Chairman Crowley also would like to put up a sign that the bathrooms are now closed and suggested looking into having portable toilets available while the bathrooms are closed for the winter season.

**VI. Facilities Ad-hoc Committee**

- a. Multipurpose Field Updates
- b. Updates on Security Cameras in Spellman Park
- c. Plans: Lights, Tennis Courts

The Multipurpose field is 99% completed and all the other fields have been winterized.

The security cameras are up and running and have more coverage than Mr. Ward originally anticipated.

Plans with the lights and the tennis courts will be addressed at the next meeting.

The Facilities Ad-hoc Committee will be meeting December 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM in the Human Services Community Meeting Room.

**VII. Old Business**

**VIII. New Business**

Student Jake DiScullo posed a question to the Recreation Commission about whether or not the Commission has addressed the possibility of a dirt bike or motor cross program. Chairman Crowley said that the Commission has addressed it but it is a huge expense and liability on the town. Towns that have a program like Central Village, CT could possibly be privately owned and not town operated.

First Selectman Simmons addressed the Recreation Commission first by introducing himself as the newly elected First Selectman of the Town of Stonington. First Selectman Simmons has been going to each town meeting to get an accurate understanding of the issues and concerns in each department. First Selectman Simmons has asked all department heads for a priority list to bring him up to date. He stated that Ms. Theodore has given him a list and has also completed the one hour meeting with the First Selectman. He complimented her on her efficiency and thoroughness. First Selectman Simmons has organized staff meetings for all department heads because communication is an issue but communication is of critical importance.

In 1985 First Selectman Simmons wanted to fix the town dock playground so he addressed the Recreation Commission. He received permission to do so and raised enough money to fix the playground.

First Selectman Simmons told the Recreation Commission about his plans to name the tennis courts after Former First Selectman George Crouse. He would like the Commission to help in finding a suitable plaque to put at the courts. This will also give the Commission the opportunity to fix the courts in preparation for a ribbon cutting next spring. A line item will be put in the budget for this purpose.

Chairman Crowley reminded the First Selectman that the courts fall under the Recreation Commission's responsibilities and not the School Department. No offense was meant by First Selectman Simmons and going forward he will address the Recreation Commission regarding the courts.

First Selectman Simmons restated that he will address the clean up issues that Chairman Crowley mentioned in his Chairman's Report at the next department head staff meeting. First Selectman Simmons is excited to be here. He intends to put Stonington first and he appreciates the time and effort others put into the Town as well.

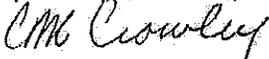
Chairman Crowley thanked First Selectman Simmons for coming to the Recreation Commission Meeting.

#### **IX. Meeting Adjourned**

A motion was made by Commissioner Larry Theodore to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 PM. Motion seconded by Commissioner Quesnel, all in favor, motion approved.

**Note: No meeting in December – Next meeting Monday, January 25, 2016.**

Respectfully Submitted,



C. Michael Crowley, Chairman