

Stonington Recreation Commission Meeting
SPECIAL MEETING
Monday, June 22, 2020 at 6:00 PM
Spellman Park (Behind Stonington High School)
West Pavilion

Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman C. Michael Crowley & Vice-Chair Frank Prachniak
Commissioners Jennifer Norcross, Joe Ciriello, Joe McKernan, Jeff Moore & Larry Theadore
Alternates Ben Kepple & Stephanie Hartell
Recreation Administrator Richard Ward
Recreation Coordinator Pete Christina

Chairman Crowley called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

New members, Ben Kepple and Stephanie Hartell, introduced themselves to the Recreation Commission.

I. Publics' Opportunity to Address the Commission

None.

II. Secretary's Report

a. Approval of minutes from February 2020 Commission meeting

Note: March, April & May meetings were cancelled

Recreation Coordinator Pete Christina commented that in the minutes, Section III. Finance Reports a. General Fund -10173, he was able to attend the NFL Flag Football as a virtual conference and clarified that he was certified by the National Alliance for Youth Sports as a Youth Sports Administrator.

A motion was made by Commissioner Norcross to approve the February 24, 2020 Stonington Recreation Commission Secretary's Report. Motion seconded by Commissioner McKernan, all in favor, motion approved.

III. Finance Reports

a. General Fund -10173

b. Special Activity -21100

c. 20/21 Budget

Mr. Ward stated that they have been tapping into the cash balance, he is thinking they will have approximately \$50,000 cash reserve remaining. Currently, Recreation is \$104,939.57 in the negative. All of the summer camp revenue and spring activities were refunded and Mr. Ward is also in the process of refunding all of the trips. Mr. Ward noted that Recreation was already tied into some big projects such as the tennis court repairs and the Borough playground unit and he was unable to cancel these projects. Recreation was doing really well in February, however, it all went

downhill during March, April, May and June due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr. Ward also noted that the Yankee/Red Sox trip has not been refunded to Recreation yet.

A motion was made by Commissioner McKernan to accept the finance reports as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Moore, all in favor, motion approved.

**IV. Recreation Administrator's Report
COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Ward stated that they had to cancel just about all the programming. Mr. Christina conducted nine weeks of virtual programming. Mr. Ward noted that Mr. Christina did an amazing job.

On the plus side, according to Mr. Ward, the fields are in excellent shape. In the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis they tried to keep the fields open but they ultimately had to close them. Mr. Ward did not receive any push back from the community in regard to closing the fields. They are starting to open back up and are following a four-step plan. Mr. Ward has been keeping everyone in the loop as to what is open in Stonington. Two of the four basketball hoops are open, two of the tennis courts, the track and turf field are open as well as the grass fields. Once the tennis courts are repaired, Mr. Ward will open all six of the courts. The hiking trails and roadways were never closed. Mr. Ward noted that the playgrounds opened up on June 17th. They placed signage stating that the playgrounds are not being disinfected.

There was some discussion in regard to the differences between State guidelines for reopening and specific organization's (Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference CIAC) guidelines. According to Mr. Ward, Recreation has more leeway than the CIAC when it comes to running programs. His main goal is to get the kids back on the fields. Mr. Ward noted that since Summer Camp will not be running and the schools will not be opening until the fall, they will need to find alternatives for the basketball programming. Chairman Crowley is interested in getting as many kids out there as safely as possible. Mr. Ward noted that instead of holding Summer Camp, they are offering a variety of clubs that will be held throughout the summer. These clubs will run up to an hour and a half and there will be limits on how many participants can attend each club. Mr. Ward passed out the Camper Time Clubs brochure to the Recreation Commissioners. He briefly explained how the participants will wear masks, have an initial screening and be asked to stay home if they are sick or have been in contact with someone COVID-19 positive. Mr. Ward needs to be able to pinpoint who is in contact with who in order to isolate possible COVID-19 exposure, and in theory, continue to safely run programming even if there is a COVID-19 exposure.

There was some discussion about the Hike Stonington program. Mr. Ward noted that the golf tournament is still on for October 5th. He further stated that all events and gatherings will look different for at least a year.

V. Chairman's Report

Chairman Crowley stated that, so far, he is happy with the new Administration in regard to the Boathouse project. The park will be the first thing to be completed and he is expecting that Recreation will run the park. Chairman Crowley stated that the Selectwomen are on top of this project. He did mention that there are still issues with the State regarding the property. The building still needs to be moved before the park can go in.

VI. Facilities Ad-hoc Committee Report

Mr. Ward stated that the Ad-hoc Committee did not meet but he will set up a meeting in July. Chairman Crowley believes that Recreation should still have a plan even though funds are currently low due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Ward noted that half of the CIP money for the tennis courts will be going into the budget in July. He further stated that Chad Obrey will be volunteering his time to build the bridge at the Spellman Park trail. The only cost to Recreation will be for the material. Mr. Ward does not know exactly when this will be complete. Mr. Ward stated that he could ask Finance for approximately \$50,000 to update the trails in order to connect Barn Island to Spellman Park.

Commissioner McKernan asked about spraying to combat EEE this fall. Mr. Ward noted that they did have a meeting with the State and other officials, but so far, no plans have been put in place.

VII. Old Business

a. MOU – School/Rec/Public Works

Mr. Ward briefly went over the proposed MOU, which was discussed at the February Recreation meeting, and noted that it was contingent on Public Works acquiring two additional laborers. This did not pass the Board of Finance so they will fall back on the existing MOU. The elementary school fields, the turf fields and the baseball fields will be maintained by the School Department and Recreation will have to pay for gym time outside of when staff is already on hand.

Mr. Ward noted that Public Works will be opening the bathrooms at Spellman Park.

b. Tennis Courts

Patch work on the tennis courts should be complete and ready for the courts to open this Friday, according to Mr. Ward. Commissioner Ciriello stated that they did a good job repairing the cracks.

c. Borough Playground Unit

The unit has been installed and Mr. Ward will be reaching out to the Stonington Village Improvement Association for their contribution.

d. Basketball Court (lights and pavement)

The lights are working great and Mr. Ward briefly explained how they function.

e. Golf Classic Event

Mr. Ward stated that this event will be held on October 5th, however, it will be different than in previous years.

Commissioner Ciriello commended Mr. Ward and Mr. Christina for adapting during the COVID-19 pandemic.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Theadore at 7:04 P.M. Motion seconded by Commissioner Moore, all in favor, motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Notes:

Next meeting: Sept 28, 2020 at 6:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Michael Crowley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

C. Michael Crowley, Chairman