

**Stonington Recreation Commission Meeting  
SPECIAL MEETING  
Monday, September 27, 2021 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, Larry Theadore, Joe McKernan & Stephanie Hartell  
Alternate Ben Kepple  
Recreation Administrator Richard Ward  
Recreation Coordinator Pete Christina

Absent: Commissioner Jeff Moore

**I. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance**

**Moment of Silence in honor of Joseph Ciriello**

Chairman Crowley called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**II. Publics' Opportunity to Address the Commission**

None.

**III. Appointment of New Member**

**Welcome Stephanie Hartell**

Commissioner Hartell was welcomed as a regular member of the Recreation Commission.

**IV. Secretary's Report**

**a. Approval of minutes from May 2021 Commission meeting**

**Note: The Commission did not meet in June, July or August**

A motion was made by Commissioner Norcross to approve the Regular Meeting May 24, 2021 Stonington Recreation Commission Secretary's Report as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Theadore, all in favor, motion approved.

**V. Discussion – Policy/Procedure for Naming of Parks, Facilities & Recreational Amenities**

Mr. Ward provided the drafted policy/procedures for Naming Parks, Facilities and Recreational Amenities to the Recreation Commissioners. He explained that the Recreation Commission had raised this idea of creating an official process last spring. Mr. Ward stated that he reached out to different towns for their naming policies and he condensed them into a policy that would work for the Town of Stonington. He worked with First Selectwoman Chesebrough and Public Works Director McKrell on the policy. Mr. Ward stated that it was too complicated to do a town-wide policy, so this policy is only for the Recreation Division.

Mr. Ward will create an application form for the process. They will require a narrative from the requestor as to why a name is being submitted and can include any petitions, local support, etc. Anyone can fill out an application. There will be an initial vetting process done by a review committee comprising of the Director of Human Services, the Director of Public Works and any other department or board relevant to the request. Submitted names will be subject to verification by the committee. Once vetted, the applicant will then come to the Recreation Commission and the Commission can either deny the request, make suggestions or push the request forward to the Board of Selectmen for final approval.

Mr. Ward stated that there are two criteria for naming. Either the subject has made a major donation to the town or has made major contributions and selfless efforts to the town, facility or activity (examples: George Crouse, Jim Balato, Tom McCoy). Once a request is approved by the Recreation Commission, it will go to the Board of Selectman and there will be a thirty-day period for appeals before the Board of Selectman gives approval.

According to Mr. Ward, during the vetting, if there are no budget funds, the requestor can fundraise. Mr. Ward also stated that the Recreation Commission reserves the right to decide what is installed (example: a plaque, etc.). Recreation Commissioners can also make nominations. As residents of the Town of Stonington, they can fill out an application and go through the process.

Commissioner McKernan asked if, once this policy is accepted, can changes be made to it in the future if necessary? Mr. Ward stated that to change the policy or to make any additions, it would go through the same process they are doing now to create the policy; propose the changes or additions, submit it to the Town Attorney, etc.

Mr. Ward stated that whatever is named is permanent unless there is an extenuating circumstance. If there is a building that is named in town and it is in disrepair it can still be torn down regardless that it is named, and it does not necessarily have to be replaced or rebuilt. It will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner McKernan made a motion to accept this policy as written. Motion seconded by Commissioner Theadore, all in favor, motion approved.

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

### **Summer Program Report**

Mr. Ward stated that this has been the busiest summer even though camp ran at three quarters the normal size. Mr. Ward provided the Recreation Commissioners with the Program Registrations for the years 2018 to 2021 Spring into Summer Programs. It shows an 11% growth from 2018 to 2019. 2020 showed a 10% decrease due to activities being cancelled, however, the Hike Stonington numbers were up along with other outdoor activities. They continued with the soccer programs, added a scavenger hunt, did camper time clubs and had a tennis tournament. In 2021 they resumed the summer camp, basketball camp, outdoor basketball league, and the NFL Flag tournament. Mr. Ward commented that the soccer programs participation numbers grew along with youth tennis. Most programs came back and they have continued to add programs. 2021 showed an increase of 26%. In comparison, in 2018 there were 1191 participants and in 2021 there were 1500 participants. Mr. Ward did note that the camper time clubs were very labor intensive so he did not offer those this year. The outdoor Como basketball and NFL flag tournament were very successful

and Mr. Ward plans to continue those programs. Mr. Ward stated that there are currently 250 participants in flag football.

#### **Fall & Winter Programs**

Mr. Ward is unsure if they will be able to hold indoor basketball this winter. They are still unable to use the gyms at this time, but that could change. He noted that Mystic Indoor Sports has been sold and will no longer be a sporting facility. Mr. Ward will need to get creative with the indoor flag program.

#### **Benefit Golf Classic**

The Benefit Golf Classic will be held this coming Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> and it is sold out. There are currently twenty teams. He will provide the Recreation Commissioners with a link for the raffles. He noted that departments in town helped develop basket raffles. Solid Waste created a compost basket, Finance, Planning and Town Hall created a lobster pot basket, Human Services created a Bloody Mary basket and the First Selectman's Office created an Italian basket.

### **VII. Finance Reports**

#### **a. General Fund -10173**

According to Mr. Ward, this account is on target.

#### **b. Special Activity -21100**

Mr. Ward stated that the cash on hand in the Special Activity -21100 account is \$111,403.25. He feels that there is more in that account, however, as usual at this time in the fiscal year, not all the programming revenue is shown on the reports. He further noted that the summer camp revenue is actually \$64,257. Date ending August 31, 2021 reports show all the expenses and not much revenue.

Mr. Ward commented that the softball field lights were done under an Eversource grant. Payment for the lights is handled through Finance, however, Recreation pays the monthly utility fee. Mr. Ward thinks they will be able to budget for less in this line item, but for now, he left it at \$4500 in the budget under Utilities.

### **VIII. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Crowley stated that the Town has received grant money for the Mystic River Park. They are currently working on getting permits. The current President of the Mystic Seaport has agreed to provide some parking for the park.

**IX. Facilities Ad-hoc Committee Report**

**a. Tennis Courts**

According to Mr. Ward, this project has been pushed to next year. The bids will go out late March / early April. Work should start late July / early September. Public Works and the Town Engineer have both looked at and approved the plans.

**b. Softball Lights**

Mr. Ward stated that this project should wrap up next week and that it is part of an Eversource program. Chairman Crowley suggested inviting the press when they turn on the lights since this is a very positive modification to the softball field.

**X. Old Business**

**a. Spellman Park Trails**

Mr. Ward stated that Christian Cullen is blazing the Tom McCoy Trail for his Eagle Scout project. Mr. Ward got the lumber order. The one-mile trail has been mapped out. Hopefully this will be completed this fall.

**b. Disc Golf**

According to Mr. Ward, three holes have been installed and they have mapped out nine holes on paper. Mr. Ward will do some fundraising to raise money for additional holes to be installed. He would like to raise about \$20,000 to cover the costs of the baskets and signage.

**XI. Meeting Adjourned**

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner McKernan at 6:56 P.M. Motion seconded by Commissioner Norcross, all in favor, motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

**Notes:**

**a. Next meeting: October 25, 2021 at 6:00 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,



C. Michael Crowley, Chairman