

**Stonington Recreation Commission Meeting
Monday, February 25, 2019 at 6:00 PM
Human Services Community Meeting Room**

Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman C. Michael Crowley & Vice-Chair Frank Prachniak
Commissioners Joe McKernan, Jennifer Norcross, Larry Theadore & Joe Ciriello
Human Services Director Leanne Theodore
Recreation Administrator Richard Ward
Recreation Program Coordinator Pete Christina

Absent: Commissioner Jeff Moore

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

I. Publics' Opportunity to Address the Commission

a. Discussion regarding Spellman Park Trails – John Prue, Stonington Selectman

This discussion was in reference to the property that abuts Parkwood Drive and Spellman Park. The 13.43 acres has recently been acquired by the Town of Stonington. There is a trail on the property, but it is not maintained and there have not been any improvements. According to Selectman John Prue, the Town has liability so it would be in the Town's best interest to improve the 530-foot trail. There has been talk in the past about making improvements, however, there were too many obstacles to overcome in order to start the project. Since the property is now owned by the Town, it should be easier to make the necessary improvements.

According to Mr. Ward, he is happy to explore the many grant opportunities available in order to connect communities to parks. Director Theodore stated that trails are something that the community is interested in and the HIKE Stonington program has been very successful. The goal is not to change the landscape but to make safe trails for the community to enjoy.

Selectman Prue believes that the appropriate permits can be obtained and this project can be completed. The land has been deeded open space and could be an extension of Spellman Park. Director Theodore added that there are groups and volunteers that can help pick up debris and litter. Chairman Crowley determined that a route needs to be laid out and the Town Engineer should be consulted. There was some discussion about the layout of the trail and costs involved.

Commissioner McKernan made a motion to pursue this project further and to bring it to the Ad-hoc Committee. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Prachniak, all in favor, motion approved.

II. Secretary's Report

a. Approval of minutes from January 2019 Commission meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Theadore to approve the January 28, 2019 Stonington Recreation Commission Secretary's Report as written. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Prachniak, all in favor, motion approved.

III. Finance Reports

a. General Fund -10173

According to Mr. Ward, the General Fund is on target. The only line items that are over are the Program Expense line item and the Equipment & Trophies line item. Mr. Ward will straighten out these line items before the end of the fiscal year.

b. Special Activity -21100

The total year to date in the Special Activity Account is \$75,122.09 which is up from the amount at this time last year.

c. 19/20 Proposed Budget: General Fund – 10173

The 19/20 Proposed Budget has been sent through the Board of Selectmen and will be presented to the Board of Finance this coming Friday. According to Director Theodore, they are looking to increase the Recreation Administrator salary. The proposal is for a \$5,000 increase this year and another \$5,000 next year for a total increase of \$10,000 over two years. Recreation has grown in the past four years and the numbers prove it. Director Theodore is happy to support this increase, which is based on merit. Chairman Crowley feels this is well deserved. Commissioner Ciriello noted that this is an 8% increase and has concerns about such a significant increase. Director Theodore explained that she has the numbers to support the increase and has also done a comparison to salaries in other towns. Vice Chairman Prachniak and Commissioner Norcross both agree that Recreation has seen a big difference in numbers and the salary should reflect the work that is being done. Commissioner McKernan added that the numbers tell the story and feels that this increase is not too much to ask for in the upcoming budget.

Director Theodore further noted that when the Recreation Program Coordinator position was created, line items were pooled together to fund that position. It was not fully funded by finance. She is hoping that the presentation on Friday will justify this increase. Selectman Prue advised that in every budget season, it is not unusual to see a few merit-based increases.

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

IV. Recreation Administrator's Report

V. Chairman's Report

Chairman Crowley updated the Recreation Commission on the Boathouse project. The park will not be completed for approximately two and a half years and they are still negotiating the removal of the existing house.

VI. Facilities Ad-hoc Committee Report

According to Chairman Crowley, the horseshoe pits still need to be put in at West Pavilion. He noted the addition to the Palmer Building will not be happening. Mr. Ward added that they will be putting up a trail camera near the East Pavilion to monitor the area due to the graffiti.

Mr. Ward set the next Ad-hoc meeting for March 19th at 10am. They intend to walk the existing trail on the property abutting Spellman Park.

VII. Old Business

a. Borough Playground Update

According to Mr. Ward, the Stonington Village Improvement Association contributed \$10,000 and the Board of Warden & Burgesses contributed \$7,000 for the new playground equipment which will be delivered in April. Mr. Ward is hoping that some of the existing wood chips can be reused, however, it depends on their condition. Director Theodore added that when the playground equipment was put in back in 2003, the cost was \$90,000. The new playground will have more equipment and came in at \$65,000.

VIII. New Business

Selectman Prue noted that the Pawcatuck Middle School will be controlled by the Board of Education. According to Mr. Ward, Recreation will be managing the gym, stage area/band room and the storage area near the gym. Direct Theodore stated that this is a very exciting opportunity. They are still negotiating the terms and the logistics of the building.

IX. Meeting Adjourned

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Theodore at 7:03 P.M. Motion seconded by Commissioner Ciriello, all in favor, motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Notes:

Next regular monthly meeting is March 25, 2019

Human Services budget presentation to BOF – 7pm, Fri, Mar 1 @ the Police Department

Respectfully Submitted,



C. Michael Crowley, Chairman