



SHERMAN PARK AND RECREATION

Mallory Town Hall
Sherman, Connecticut 06784

(860) 354-3629

Sherman Park and Recreation Commission Minutes of Regular Meeting June 6, 2016

Present:

Fran Frattini-Chairman
Stan Greenbaum
John Wrenn-Director
Denise DePalma
Kris Fazzone

Absent

Scott Berlinger
Karen Kellett
William Butts

Guests: Meredith Russo Cleary,
Don Lowe, Selectman
Clay Cope, First Selectman

Call to order:

Chairman Fran Frattini called the June 6, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:37pm.

Minutes from May 9, 2016 Regular Meeting:

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2016 Sherman Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting was made by Kris Fazzone. The motion was seconded by Stan Greenbaum and passed unanimously.

Correspondence:

Fran Frattini had received an email from Mike Carpanzano advising that he would like to continue cleaning up the downed trees, treetops and limbs that the Commission had given him permission to do last year on town park property that is adjacent to his property. This was left from the work Jimmy Munch had done logging from the Town Park to Colonial. He was requesting permission to continue the project and noted that he has the proper insurance certificate. It was suggested that a representative from the Commission go out to the property to inspect before the work continues.

Kris Fazzone made a motion to approve the request by Mike Carpanzano to continue the dead/downed tree clean up on the town property adjacent to his property with the condition that a Commission member will meet Mr. Carpanzano within a week to inspect the site. The motion was

seconded by Stan Greenbaum and passed unanimously.

Mrs. Frattini noted recent correspondence wherein the Health Department had noted that the pavilion at the town park was open from Memorial Day to Labor Day but the season is actually May 1 to October 31. John Wrenn had spoken with the Health Department to clear up the confusion.

There was also an email received by Mrs. Frattini from Clay Cope reminding the department not to overspend line items in the budget.

Fran Frattini had sent 2016-17 salary schedules for Park and Recreation employees to BOS, Liz LaVia and Ruth Byrnes. Mrs. Frattini shared the salary schedule with the Commission, noting that the Park and Recreation Director's salary is paid in 5 large payments over the summer season and 5 smaller ones during the rest of the year and contains no contingency/discretionary funds; the entire amount is the salary of the Director.

A resident had sent an email to the BOS who forwarded it to Fran Frattini and John Wrenn. It concerned a chain that is between two posts at the Town Park and the resident believes this chain is a trip/fall hazard. Suggestions for fixing this issue were discussed, including removing chain, painting chain a bright color, putting up a different type of barrier or installing a swing gate. Mrs. Frattini is waiting to hear back from Clay Cope.

Fran Frattini had been invited to attend a recent BOS meeting but at the time of the meeting was not feeling well and could not attend. Mrs. Frattini advised the BOS that Commission member Stan Greenbaum would attend in her place. Mr. Greenbaum reported that at the meeting he was not allowed to speak at length about the tennis courts, basketball courts and other matters. He stated he was relegated to speaking only during the 3 minutes at the beginning of the meeting and the three minutes at the end by Clay Cope. There was a discussion about Park and Recreation Commission's ordinance and that it states that the Commission performs its duties with the approval of the entire Board of Selectmen, not just the First Selectman.

Facilities Use:

There was a request from the Cub Scouts to use Allen's Camp for an overnight camping event on June 16 and 17.

Kris Fazzone made a motion to accept the application by the Cub Scouts to use Allen's Camp for a June 16 -17 campout. The motion was seconded by Denise DePalma and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

It was noted that the rusty climber at the beach playground that was discussed at the last meeting has been taken care of by Clay Cope. The capital budget items for walkway lights and playground items discussed last month had been in the Park and Recreation budget erroneously and should have been in the Sherman School budget. Park and Recreation capital budget items for \$135,000 for tennis courts and \$6,000 for basketball court repair were discussed. It was noted that the basketball court repair was a higher priority. Tennis court repairs were discussed in detail, including drainage issues. John Wrenn had gotten an estimate for two courts with fencing. There was a discussion about supervising tennis court repairs, feasibility of moving tennis courts to a new location, the bidding process, and a possible start date.

John Wrenn and Don Lowe discussed a date for the summer concert series by Mr. Lowe's band, "The Funnels". Mr. Lowe will get back to Mr. Wrenn with a date for a weekend afternoon. The Funnels play a combination of rockabilly, classic rock and original songs.

Ian Langley's Eagle Scout project was discussed. The project is completed and Fran Frattini had seen the benches and noted that Ian had done a very nice job. The Commission had previously approved up to \$600 for materials for Ian's project and, when completed, the materials cost \$448.33

Fran Frattini reviewed plans regarding a dog ordinance from last months' meeting. That plan included: reviewing Wilton's dog ordinance as an example of what might work in Sherman; installing signs on town properties that state dogs must be on a short leash and clean up after by owners; installing dog clean-up bag dispensers on Colonial and Volunteer Fields. There is already one on Veterans Field. Discussion followed including: past attempts by Park and Recreation to get a dog ordinance initiated; potential enforcement of a dog ordinance, as well as options for more effective law enforcement like a shared resident state trooper similar to what Bridgewater and Roxbury have. Selectman Don Lowe expressed his ideas of not allowing dogs at all in the parks and on the fields. This option was also discussed and ideas for creating areas that are just for dogs including exploring New Milford's "Candlewoof" Dog Park and the dog park in New Fairfield as well as any other in the area.

Clay Cope arrived at this point and joined in the discussion by stating that he and the Public Works department were tired of dog feces on the fields that eventually fly out of the mowers. Then Mr. Cope left.

A Commission member suggested that dog owners be invited to the next Park and Recreation Commission meeting to hear their side of the issue before making any definite changes in policies.

Fran Frattini opened a discussion concerning the Park and Recreation Special Meeting that had been called on May 19, 2016 to discuss the May 12, 2016 letter from Clay Cope to John Wrenn. In this letter Mr. Cope listed 20 instances in which Mr. Cope claimed that Mr. Wrenn had shirked his duties as Park and Recreation Director. The May 19, 2016 Special Meeting had been cancelled due to a lack of a quorum.

There was a lengthy discussion about each of the 20 points made by Mr. Cope. The Commission disagreed with the claims. Problems with the claims were discussed and included, but were not limited to: a misunderstanding of Mr. Wrenn's job description; the relationship between Public Works and Park and Recreation; issues that Park and Recreation was not made aware of so could not address; responsibilities listed that are not under Park and Recreation's purview. The job description for the Director of Park and Recreation for the Town of Sherman stipulates that the Director is to be supervised by the First Selectman **and** the Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission. At no time, prior to requesting Mr. Wrenn's resignation, did First Selectman, Clay Cope, consult with Fran Frattini, the Chairman of the Sherman Park and Recreation Commission, regarding his desire to have Mr. Wrenn resign. Virtually all of the failings that Mr. Cope attributed to Mr. Wrenn fall within the job description of the Director of Public Works and Public Works employees (job descriptions were made available to members of the Parks and Recreation Commission.).

Mr. Cope's letter mentioned a new sign that Mr. Cope had ordered for the Town beach. It was noted that the wording is incorrect and that it would have been correct if the Park and Recreation Commission had been consulted before it was ordered. The letter stated that the BOS recently granted Mr. Wrenn a discretionary salary payment for the 15/16 fiscal year. This payment was actually part of his salary. In the 2015-16 budget the Assistant Director line was eliminated to avoid any confusion as to who was to be paid that money. No part of the Director's salary is or was discretionary.

It was noted that it is Mr. Wrenn's responsibility to inform Public Works of maintenance jobs that were needed but not to actually do the work. The history of Park and Recreation having had a dedicated maintenance person years ago was discussed, including the fact that the BOS had taken that maintenance person away from the department. It was suggested that next year's Park and Recreation budget request should include a maintenance person as was done in the past. In addition, it was suggested that the Park and Recreation consider adding a \$10,000 line item to the budget for the services of a facilities manager, preferably sharing the cost with another Board or Commission, such as the Board of Education.

After considering Mr. Cope's entire letter, the consensus of the Commission was that John Wrenn has not been negligent in his duties as stated by Clay Cope and that the Commission supports Mr. Wrenn in his refusal to resign. The commission further noted that they had not been consulted before this request for resignation was sent to a person in their department directly under their supervision. Since the letter was from the First Selectman and not the entire Board of Selectman, it appeared that the other Selectmen had not been consulted either. It was noted that this kind of unilateral action on the part of the First Selectman was unacceptable and reprehensible and that the letter was replete with fallacies and inaccuracies. A Commission member stated that Mr. Cope acted without authority by failing to consult with John Wrenn's co-supervisor, the Park and Recreation Chairman.

Also noted was that Mr. Cope's letter indicated that the Park and Recreation Commission was copied on the letter but the commission members present at the meeting stated that they had received the letter only as a copy from Fran Frattini, not from Mr. Cope as his letter indicated.

It was stated that Mr. Wrenn's duty is to report maintenance needs to Public Works so that Public Works can complete the jobs. The Commission agreed that over the past few years Mr. Wrenn has appropriately mentored the Public Works personnel and helped them learn the schedule of routine seasonal maintenance tasks that are required on Park and Recreation properties.

To the extent that the Director of Public Works and Public Works employees have mastered these tasks, it is unnecessary for the Director of the Park and Recreation Commission to supervise these efforts. In fact, Mr. Wrenn frequently speaks with the Director of Public Works to be sure that these needs have been met and to check that any special events have been planned for.

It was noted that the Park and Recreation Commission should request to be put on the

BOS agenda or call a joint meeting to discuss this matter and that the Commission members would be happy to sit down with BOS to clarify any items or issues as may be necessary. The relationship between the Facilities Manager and town agencies was discussed, including the Facilities Committee's efforts to help coordinate the Sherman School, Fire Department and Park and Recreation in prioritizing maintenance issues and to institute a systematic repair/replacement schedule for town buildings, parks and fields.

Mrs. Frattini reported that the funds for a fence at Munch Meadows which had been included in the 2016-17 budget had been approved. Mrs. Frattini will be in touch with the Conservation Commission to discuss exactly where the fence should be installed. When that is determined Public Works will be consulted about the installation.

Drum Circle will be held again on Friday June 17 at the Sherman School.

New Business: None

Director's Report

John Wrenn shared the following information:

1. Copies of the checking account report were shared with the commission. ASP deposits were listed along with checks written for ASP snacks and salaries as well a check written for Ian Langley's Eagle Scout project supplies.
2. ASP is doing well and will end the school year very close to self-sustaining. The program will be continued next school year. When the program concludes, Mr. Wrenn will make a report to the Commission and the BOS.
3. The weed problem at the town park was discussed. Weeds are extremely high and abundant in the water in the swim and boat dock areas. Mr. Wrenn will look into having weeds cut back.
4. Meredith Russo Cleary's complaint about her boat slip being too narrow was discussed. Mr. Wrenn is working making a possible switch with another boat to accommodate her. Mrs. Cleary was assigned the only boat slip available at the time she registered.
5. There was discussion of avenues being pursued to widen boat slips in the future to accommodate the continuing trend of boats being wider.
6. Sign-ups for summer programs had begun Saturday June 4. The sign-ups so far are as follows: Senior Camp – 10, Junior Camp – 3, Camp Sampler (June 20-24) – 1, Swim Lessons – 22, Tennis -2. Mr. Wrenn stated that it was a very good first day for sign-ups.
7. Lifeguards scheduled to begin work on June 7. Their paperwork was turned in to Town Hall on Saturday, June 4 and Mr. Wrenn is hoping to have 3 guards working on June 7, the day school gets out.

8. On Saturday June 11 due to New Milford High graduation guards will only be available to cover 10am – 2pm. When guards leave at 2pm they will put up “swim at your own risk” sign.
9. Bands for upcoming summer concert series were discussed, including “The Funnels” and 2 bands that Denise DePalma had suggested, one of which was comprised of young employees from the Sherman IGA. Bands and dates will be announced soon.

Kris Fazzone made a motion to adjourn the June 6, 2016 Park and Recreation Regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Stan Greenbaum and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Kellett
Park and Recreation Secretary

Mary Jo Dix
Recording Secretary

***These minutes are not considered official
until they have been approved
at the next regularly scheduled meeting
of the Park and Recreation Commission***