

NEWINGTON PARKS & RECREATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Board: Eileen Francolino, Mary Udice, Ed Marchion, Jen Crowley, Bill DeBlasio, Beth Manke, Mary Beth Kelliher, James Cultrera, Sarah Jorgensen, Sue Reniewicz.

Board Members Absent: (all present)

Staff: Superintendent William DeMaio and Program Coordinator Michelle Ball.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Sue Reniewicz made a motion to nominate Beth Manke as the new Chairperson to the Board. The motion was seconded by Sarah Jorgensen. The motion was passed unanimously.

Sarah Jorgensen made a motion to nominate Sue Reniewicz as the Vice Chairperson to the Board. The motion was seconded by James Cultrera. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Don Woods made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 10, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mary Udice. The motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Doug Hasson, 95 Ridgeview Crossing

- Life long resident of Newington, current president of Newington Youth Lacrosse and has come to speak in favor of the Churchill Park renovation project.
- Use of the current synthetic turf field has allowed the Newington lacrosse program to grow by allowing the players to access the field earlier in the season and become more competitive against towns with strong lacrosse programs.
- Mr. Hasson stated that New Britain was lucky enough to grow and gain beneficial facilities with Bill DeMaio and he is excited that it is Newington's turn, with its aging infrastructure, to have this opportunity to improve.

Jeanne Picklesimer, 97 Vincent Drive

- Ms. Picklesimer, a parent of a child with special needs, would like to reiterate her support for the Churchill Park renovation, especially in support of the lazy river addition. Ms. Picklesimer explained how children with special needs can utilize a lazy river pool on their own and experience true independence
- Finding local recreational opportunities that is easily accessible to her special needs son has presented a challenge for her family.
- Lazy river rides at amusement parks are great but can be expensive and far away to visit.
- Having these recreational facilities in town allow great accessibility and opportunity to all families, especially those who have children with special needs

Kelsey Cronin, 20 Oxford Drive

- Kelsey Cronin is the Newington High School Girls Swimming and Diving Head Coach, Newington High School Boys Swimming and Diving Assistant Coach, NSC (Newington Swim Club) Head Coach and Pool Director at Churchill Pool. Ms. Cronin would like to speak about the benefits of the Churchill Park renovations to the town's swim programs.
- NSC currently serves Newington swimmers ages 5 – 18. NSC has been swimming at Churchill Pool during the summer for the past three years. Ms. Cronin stated that swimming year round has allowed the swimmers to improve their times tremendously.
- NSC currently swims the 50-meter long course at Churchill Pool in the summer. However, many of the swim meets and competitions are held in 25-yard pools.
- A 6 lane, 25 yard pool with diving blocks would allow NSC to swim more often throughout the summer, as well as, host swim meets and provide more opportunities for the swimmers to compete.
- Ms. Cronin stated that an improving feeder program like NSC also helps improve the NHS Swim Teams.

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive

- Mady Kenny stated that she would like to see better communication from the department to the public through posting of pictures, plans, and information on the Town of Newington website.
- Ms. Kenny would also like the Parks & Recreation Board of Directors to consider the scheduled Town Council Meetings when scheduling the future 2016 Parks & Recreation Board Meetings.

Curt Burns, 4 Bogarts Lane

- Curt Burns is the Newington High School Boys Volleyball Coach and has come to speak in support of the Churchill Park Renovation with additional lighted sand volleyball courts.
- Mr. Burns stated that playing at the sand volleyball courts allows the current High School players the opportunity to play during the off season.
- The sand volleyball courts at the park also present the opportunity for young players to be introduced to the sport of volleyball in a fun way.

Tim Zapatka, 88 Cedar Street

- Tim Zapatka would like to ask the Board to consider making the new field at Churchill Park a synthetic turf field.

Superintendent, Bill DeMaio stated that the current Churchill Park design does include a synthetic turf field. This synthetic turf field would have the ability to host little league girls' softball, adult softball, kickball, lacrosse, football, and soccer matches.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VII. Summary Report- MUNIS Year to Date Budget Report

Superintendent DeMaio stated to the Board that included in their agenda packet is the current Year-to-Date Budget Report for the Parks and Grounds Division, as requested.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- Superintendent DeMaio reported that the Program Guide Advertising Program has become very popular and that the department is currently looking to add pages to accommodate the businesses that wish to advertise. Over \$4200 of new money has been raised to date.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- **Meetings Dates/Times**
The Board is looking to change the dates and/or time of the Board meetings to avoid conflicts with the scheduled Town Council Meetings. The Town Council and Parks and Recreation Board currently meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm.

Don Woods made a motion to change the Parks and Recreation Board Meetings to meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Bill DeBlasio. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Part-Time/ Seasonal Pay Plan**
The department's proposed Part Time/Seasonal Pay were included in the monthly packet given to the Board. The pay scale reflects what the department was already been using, but this pay scale formally shows all of the employees in both Parks and Recreation and Parks and Grounds together in a 5 step pay rate scale. This pay scale would be referenced for all future part-time or seasonal employees and new positions.
Eileen Francolino expressed concern about the seasonal summer staff pay rates being low for the limited number of weeks they work in the summer.
Superintendent DeMaio agreed and explained that additional summer opportunities were being worked on and that the rates of pay were competitive with the surrounding towns.

Sue Reniewicz made a motion to accept the proposed Parks and Recreation Department Part-Time/Seasonal Pay. The motion was seconded by Mary Udice. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Churchill Park Design**
Superintendent DeMaio presented the Board with a brief overview and background on the Churchill Park Renovation. The original idea of renovations began while Bruce Till was the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation. The Town hired Milone & MacBroom prior to Superintendent Bill DeMaio's arrival. His first task was to design and upgrade Churchill Park in a timely fashion to allow the Town Council time to consider it for the Capital Improvement Project. The Parks and Recreation Board held a public meeting to gather information on what residents wanted designed into the park. The improvements to the park and pool are long overdue. The proposed changes would include a zero depth entry pool, park wide total ADA accessibility, and removal of the invasive plant life that is overtaking the wetlands.

Dave Dixon, a landscape architect from Milone & MacBroom, then presented the proposed design of Churchill Park. Mr. Dixon showed the members of the board the current aerial view of the park; explaining that the parking lot is located far away from the pool and playground making it difficult for parents with small children and individuals with wheelchairs or disabilities to access to the park. The pond at Churchill Park is only 2 - 4 feet deep, a depth which does not allow the support of much aquatic life, but allows for algae to easily grow. The new pond would be about 8 – 10 feet deep. Mr. Dixon also stated that the current softball field is orientated incorrectly toward the sun. In the new design proposal the field would be reoriented properly and extended into the current parking lot. The entrance to the park would be a tree lined boulevard type entry with high quality wetland

mitigation, leading to a parking lot that would take the place of the current pond. The pond would be relocated to the northwest corner of the park. There would be 5 different sized pavilions for rentals and play areas with separate equipment for different age groups. The plans also include a lighted basketball court, bocce courts, and 2 lighted sand volleyball courts. The south end of the park is designed to have an additional parking lot leading to a splash pad, multipurpose room, pool house, and pool facility. The pool facility would include a zero-depth entry, 6 lane 25-yard lap swim area, diving well area; which would include a diving board, slide, and rock wall. The facility would also include a separate lazy river pool. This pool would be used for morning adult fitness classes and special inner tubes for children with disabilities would allow for full independent utilization of the lazy river.

Superintendent DeMaio explained that the multipurpose room would be a year round facility used to hold environmental classes for school groups, fitness classes, preschool, art classes and a starting area for cross country skiing and snow shoeing.

Some concerns presented by the Board were the accessibility to bathrooms during the off season of the pool, fire truck accessibility and an emergency gate from the pool facility to Main Street.

Superintendent DeMaio stated that if approved by the Board the next step would be to present it as a Capital Improvement Project to the Town Council. Mr. DeMaio explained that originally the Churchill Park proposed design would cost an estimated \$24 million but has been reduced down to an estimated \$19 million with this current design.

Mary Udice made a motion to accept the conceptual design of Churchill Park, including the addition of bathrooms and fire truck accessibility with full support to be forwarded to Capital Improvement Project and the Town Council. The motion was seconded by Sue Reniewicz. The motion passed unanimously.

Beth Manke stated that the Churchill Park Project is a great unifying opportunity for this entire Board and a project for both parties to support together.

X. REPORTS

- **Holiday Decorations**
Superintendent DeMaio reported that Michael Hadvab and the Parks and Grounds employees decorated the town center and that some of the decorations are started to show their age, but the Ground employees were able to make repairs for this year. Don Woods would like the department to consider having the trees lining Main Street lighted in the future.
- **Cemetery Property Negotiations**
Superintendent DeMaio reported that they are currently in negotiations with owners of the properties adjacent the West Meadow Cemetery regarding property beautification.
- **Winter Wonderland/ Night of Lights**
Superintendent DeMaio reported that Visits with Santa and the new Winter Wonderland were a great success. Winter Wonderland featured animatronic animals, a clown, and other entertainment drawing about 150 children plus parents and grandparents. Night of Lights also drew one of the largest crowds in years and featured music from John Wallace, Martin Kellogg and Newington High School. The Fire Department also came with their trucks decorated for the Fire Truck Parade.

- **MCC Roof Leaks**
Superintendent DeMaio informed the Board that during a basketball rental the previous week the MCC Gym roof began leaking due to the rain. The rental wanted to continue to play basketball, buckets were used to catch water in the out of bounds area and the Community Center Supervisor was asked to periodically wipe down the playing surface floors with towels to avoid any water on the courts, preventing possible injuries.
- **New Parks Groundskeeper**
A groundskeeper position has been offered to one of the applicants. A written test, oral and practical tests were administered to determine the best candidate.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive

- Mady Kenny would like to state that she agrees with the addition of more bathrooms being added to the park design.
- Ms. Kenny did have a few questions for the Board to consider regarding the design of Churchill Park. Would there be a netting or fencing in place to block the balls from entering Main Street from the fields? Will there be a capacity to the Splash Pad? Is Equipment included in the \$19 million proposed price tag?
- Ms. Kenny would also like to see the Eagle Scout projects within the Bob Stanley Nature Trail resurrected.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

- Don Woods also wished Beth Manke the best of luck in her new position as Chairperson to the Board and stated that she will be an asset to the Board in her new position.
- Eileen Francolino made a motion to adjourn. Sue Reniewicz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle C. Ball