

**NEWINGTON PARKS & RECREATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2008
MEETING MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Jeff Hedberg, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Board: Jonathan Boni, Bill DeBlaisio, A. Neal Forte, Eileen Francolino, Jeff Hedberg, John Kennedy, Robert Tofeldt, Mary Udice

Board Absent: Jeff Perillo, Kenneth Leggo, Don Woods

Staff: Superintendent Wendy Rubin, recreation Supervisors Kristine Kravontka and Alison Alberghini, and Administrative Aide Karen Gallicchio

Town Council

Liaison: Jay Bottalico

Public: Anna, William, Rosemary Lindberg, Lucille Tofeldt, Dora Friedman, Rose Lyons, Michael Rosenkrantz, Suzanne Reich

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2008

MOTION: John Kennedy made a motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2008, Bill DeBlaisio seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2008 was unanimously approved with a 8-0 vote.

Jeff asked the Board to change the Agenda to hear Public Participation at this point since members of the public were in attendance. **MOTION: A. Neal Forte made a motion to change the Agenda to hear Public Participation, Mary Udice seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion to change the Agenda to hear Public Participation was unanimously approved with a 8-0 vote.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Michael Rosenkrantz spoke as a volunteer from NCTV Channel 14. He stated he was in attendance to speak about the St. Mary's Pathway and passed around pictures of the area that showed vandalism. He felt that cleaning up the area would help improve this pathway; however it still needed to be monitored.

Wendy updated the Board and the public about the St. Mary's Pathway. Wendy read excerpts from a memorandum written by Sergeant Jeanine Allin of the Newington Police Department to Chief Richard Mulhall with the subject matter being a proposal to formally adopt the pathway behind St. Mary's as a park. Wendy went on to read email correspondence between Town Manager John Salomone, Sergeant Jeanine Allin, and Chief Richard Mulhall that were copied to her. Wendy indicated to the Board that they had a GIS map of the property in their packets, and gave a copy of this map to the public. Making this area a park would allow us to clean up the area. It doesn't meet the criteria of a park; however it does meet the criteria of a greenway or walkway and meets the Master Plan goals. There was discussion as to whether the Town or the State owns this land and who is responsible for its maintenance. Wendy also indicated that the Board had a copy in their packet of the policy to name Town-owned property and features. John Kennedy stated that it seems from discussions that the area is really a police issue and not a Parks and Recreation issue; additionally the area needs to be monitored by the police on a more frequent basis. Jay Bottalico agreed with John that it is not a Parks and Recreation issue and recommended that the Chief of Police be informed of this. Neal commented that it should be checked out as a walkway.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive stated that her family has lived in the area for over 60 years and this pathway was used as access to the Center School and Newington High School. When St. Mary's Parochial School began the pathway was

extended. She has attended many meetings regarding this pathway and she has found that no one wants to take responsibility for this. The pathway has deteriorated over the years and people don't feel safe walking through there. The pathway should be cleaned up, cut back, and gravel put down; asphalt would heave and flood. Once it is cleaned up, it would need to be maintained and policed.

Dora Friedman of 34 Alton Drive commented that she didn't think officially making it a park would make it better. It could be a great place if it had lights and was patrolled. Older kids drink and smoke in that area and younger children are afraid to walk through there.

John Kennedy suggested placing "you are being watched" signs.

MOTION: Jeff Hedberg made a motion to write a letter to Chief Richard Mulhall of the Newington Police Department asking that the police patrol the St. Mary's pathway either by walking, riding, or with the bicycle patrol on a frequent basis at varying times, Mary Udice seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

Rosemary Lindberg stated that she was in attendance this evening to discuss the skate park. She lives on Bonair Avenue and has heard rumors that the skate park would be moved to the Mill Pond area. She would hate to see areas of Mill Pond Park dug up and replaced with concrete. She feels that the skate park would have a lot of problems with graffiti and vandalism.

Bill Lindberg lives on 154 Cambria Avenue and also was in attendance to discuss the skate park. He asked when and where the skate park would be moved to and would it be on a permanent basis. He is also concerned about graffiti and vandalism.

Jeff commented that the rumors about moving the skate park are just that. The Clem Lemire complex is being looked at to have synthetic turf fields and lighting so the usage of the fields would be more frequent. Many areas are being looked at for moving the skate park and a feasibility study would have to be done regarding safety issues. Additionally, there would be public hearings on moving or keeping the skate park. Wendy commented that moving the skate park is a result of the Master Plan which took two years and \$50,000 to complete, and used surveys and focus groups.

Suzanne Reich of 153 Cherry Hill Drive asked if the skate park is really necessary and if so, it should be moved where it would be better monitored.

John Kennedy also stated that he would feel better if the skate park was totally gone.

Rosemary Lindberg commented that she would hate to see neighborhoods against each other regarding discussions on moving the skate park.

Wendy responded to all comments by stating that there will always be facilities that have some problems. The skate park itself is not the issue, it is the monitoring of the skate park. The skate park does meet the needs of many residents. Parks and Recreation has the responsibility to provide services regarding the health, wellness, and physical activities of Town residents.

Eileen Francolino commented on the St. Mary's Pathway and felt that it should be researched as to who has the rights and jurisdiction of that property. She also stated that Chief Richard Mulhall should be invited to a Parks and Recreation meeting to hear about the concerns that have been expressed regarding these areas that need to be better monitored. She has been hearing a lot this evening about illegal activities going on in these areas and if the Newington Police Department is not made more aware of this, then it is pointless.

Jeff and Wendy both commented that kids have been arrested for vandalizing areas of Town, however they can go before a judge seven or eight times and punishment is not being given. These kids should be made to clean up the vandalism.

V. CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS/REPORT

A. FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Wendy indicated that Parks and Recreation was recognized for its safety practices from CIRMA for not allowing inflatable jumping games at Churchill Park. This letter was sent to Mayor Wright and Town Manager Salomone. Another letter received from the Department of Environment Protection giving Parks and Recreation permission to use the Young Farm as a dog park. Wendy passed around a summary of the Town Council's retreat and highlighted areas referencing Parks and Recreation. She also indicated that the Board had in their packets information from the Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association showing trends in fitness & team sports participation.

Alison passed around a copy of a proposal regarding the family pool pass and changing the definition of family. This will be discussed and adopted at the March meeting.

Kristine passed around a copy of a proposal to purchase a movie screen. The monies from the golf tournament would be used towards purchasing the movie screen. **MOTION: Eileen Francolino made a motion to give permission to Kristine Kravontka to purchase the movie screen and accessories using proceeds from the golf tournament and the balance from the special revenue fund, Mary Udice seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously with a 8-0 vote.**

Jeff indicated to the Board that Suzanne Reich, President of Newington Little League, was in attendance tonight to share with the Board the Batting Cage Proposal for Legends Field. Wendy stated that Parks and Recreation recommends that this proposal go ahead because it meets the needs of the users. **MOTION: Bill DeBlaisio made a motion to approve the Batting Cage Proposal for Legends Field, John Kennedy seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed with a 8-0 vote.** Suzanne indicated that should these batting cages need to be moved in the future, she would be responsible for taking care of it.

B. PROPOSAL – ST. MARY'S PATHWAY FROM POLICE DEPARTMENT

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. MASTER PLAN STATUS REVIEW

Wendy reported that items in the Master Plan are for a five-year period and a lot are earmarked for years down the road. Work continues on specific plans and all capital items have been submitted through the CIP process and will be in tune with the budget. She stated that the Board might want to hold a work session to prioritize items. The ByLaws indicate that the Board is responsible for policy issues and that the master Plan has many recommendations related to policy. .

Department Heads from Parks and Recreation, Senior and Disabled Center, Library, and Human Services are sharing the volunteer management program that includes information on background checks. Representative Sandy Nafis has offered to assist CIRMA & CRPA by sponsoring a bill regarding background checks that will allow local police more flexibility in helping us out.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD STUDY COMMITTEE

John Kennedy reported that the Committee has not met yet. He has done some research from a numbers point of view and to start the process would be approximately \$15 to \$20 per square foot. The area is approximately 80,000 square feet so an approximate cost would be \$1.5 Million. He suggests that constructability study of

the site be done and also getting an accurate site map. Jeff indicated that he spoke with another person in the synthetic turf industry who came up with a \$1.2 Million price tag, and suggested it would cost \$1,500 to get pictures of the site for a study. John suggested appropriating funds to get an accurate survey of the area would be \$8,000 to \$12,000 for the design and a complete plan. This would be a budget item for the Town Council to review and give permission to go out to bid. Neal suggested that there might be grant money, or asking the sporting teams that use these fields to appropriate monies. Wendy Rubin stated that all planning & survey work has been included in the Capital Improvements Program budget request for this year.

B. EXTRAVAGANZA SUBCOMMITTEE

Neal reported that the Committee met this evening. The next scheduled meeting is March 4th at 6:30 PM at Jeff Hedberg's office.

C. GOLF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

Neal stated that Bob Gai will be assisting him with the 10th Annual Golf Tournament scheduled for Monday, May 12th. Ted Fravel had more information; however he was not in attendance.

Wendy thanked her staff for putting together the spring brochure and commented how great it looks.

Robert Tofeldt commented that the meeting room is getting too small, especially when the public is in attendance. Wendy will see if Conference Room 3 is available for the Wednesday evenings that Parks and Recreation hold their Board meetings.

Eileen reported on the Youth Adult Council and that they are looking for use of an existing tree to be offered for the Extravaganza so that children can write ideas for making Newington a better place and placing these ideas on the tree. She also reported that volunteers are needed for the Hoopla event.

Jeff stated that the Town's Environmental Commission spoke to the Rotary Club and are looking to clean up parks on Earth Day which is April 19th.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no further Public Participation.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: John Kennedy made a motion to adjourn, Jonathan Boni seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 8:40 PM with a 8-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Whitney
Secretary to the Board