**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Minutes**

**February 26, 2018**

***Minutes are subject to the approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission.***

**Present:** Chairman C.J. Kersten, Commissioners Joe Fredlund, Ray Reich, Greg Kraft, Alice DeMeo, Carrie Rowe, Whitney Ryan, Sheila Anson, Tim Cook. Coordinator Jeff Hammond; Clerk Mary Anne Greene.

**Call to Order:** Vice-Chairman Sheila Anson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

* **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the January 8, 2018 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission. By Whitney Ryan, seconded by Carrie Rowe and unanimously approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

* **Wellness Events:** There was discussion as to the attendance at the events that have been held to date. Some have brought in good numbers, others have not – what can be done to improve attendance? Suggestions: Commissioners “invite” friends and family to events, schedule less events, conduct a survey as to what people would like to see offered.
* **Winterfest:** Cancelled third year due to no snow. The suggestion was made not to schedule the event for next year but should we have snow, put the event together “last minute”. Most thought this would be doable – including having Sportsman’s of Litchfield participate.
* **4th of July Float Parade:** Sheila Anson and Jeff Hammond reported on a meeting they had with Jim Brinton who was instrumental in organizing the Fire Department parade in 2004. They distributed a handout outlining who needs to be contacted, who to have participate, logistics, timetable, etc. “Summer Fun” was agreed upon as the theme. Following the parade, a picnic and barbecue would be held at the Pavilion with music – hopefully provided by one of Roger Cannavaro’s bands. Rain date would be Saturday, July 7th. There was discussion regarding sponsorships and who would take on various responsibilities. The possibility of doing the parade in 2019 was also discussed as the preparation time for 2018 is relatively short. The final decision will be made shortly.
* **Summer Concerts:** Jeff Hammond reported there is still approximately $1300 in the General Fund. This could be used for the 4th of July picnic and barbecue.
* **Budget Review – Tennis Court funding request:** Jeff Hammond reported he has submitted the Parks and Rec proposed budget to the Selectmen. Parks and Rec commissioners will meet with the Selectmen on March 6 to discuss. He also reported that he has received estimates for repair of the tennis courts at the Washington Primary School. “Turf” courts would cost approximately $56,000; a “post tension concrete” courts, $120,000. The latter has a much longer guarantee – 20 years as opposed to 3 years. The Commissioners will discuss this further with the Selectmen when they discuss the proposed budget as a capital improvement request.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* **Election of Officers: Motion:** To maintain the current slate of officers: C.J. Kersten as Chairman and Joe Fredlund, Sheila Anson as co-Vice Chairmen. By Ray Reich, seconded by Tim Cook and unanimously approved.
* **Pop-up Park collaboration with EDC:** The Economic Development Committee is considering creating a “Popup Park” on the property at the intersection of Routes 109 and 47. The idea is to make the area more attractive and connect into the Greenway, Hidden Valley area. They are hoping the owner of the property will be agreeable to this idea and should the property be sold, there would be a 90-day period to dismantle the “park”. The area could be used for picnic tables, possible basketball, volleyball courts. The EDC was hopeful a Parks and Rec representative would work on a sub-committee if the idea moves forward. Following discussion, the commission agreed not to participate for lability reasons, concerns for safety, etc.
* **Coordinator’s Report:** Jeff Hammond reported the following:

**What’s Happening?**

**The Winter Season:**

The Health and Wellness events are ongoing. We’ve had mixed results in regards to attendance. With a combined approach of flyer disbursement, Facebook, and weekly updates included in the email from the Selectman’s Office, I think we have done well at getting the word out. Next year, after talking with the Gunn Library, in working with them, I hope to get even more exposure and attendance from their patrons. We will also be entertaining the idea of a mailer for these events if the increase is passed in the budget request.

**Fourth of July**

Time to pick a theme! I’d also like to decide on a parade route and rain date option so we can move forward with getting proper paperwork set with police, town, etc.

**Morning Swim**

Last month I received a formal letter from Don O’Leary, the facilities manager for Region 12. Citing safety issues brought up by his plow drivers, we were told that the morning swim program was no longer allowed to use the pool on days the school was closed or delayed due to inclement weather. After passing this info on to the swimmers, a series of passionate emails were sent around by several swimmers expressing their anger and opinions over this decision. In response, it was put on Region’s Facilities Committee agenda. Sheila, Carrie and myself attended the meeting, held on Monday, January 22nd to represent Parks & Rec and have an open discussion about the issues. Swimmers Hugh Rogers and Barbara Braverman also attended. After much discussion, it was agreed upon that the morning swim program would adhere to the school’s schedule. Meaning that on days with a delay, morning swim would also be delayed. On days the school closed, there would be no swimming. While some swimmers still aren’t happy with this outcome, Parks & Rec is in agreement with Region 12 and is happy that they are willing to work with us to provide as much pool time as possible while maintaining a safe environment for all parties.

**Swim Lessons**

I have talked to Mo and have confirmed that she will be doing swim lessons again this spring. Registrations have begun with the first session starting on May 1st. This is over a month later than they started last year. Going forward I assume this will be the norm as she has to work it into her travel/housing schedule. This being a transition year, may have some issues with upset parents. If you talk to anyone, please let them know that it’s still happening but will start later in the spring. Looking forward, I have been in contact with someone looking to offer a Lifeguard Certification class. I am also looking to discuss with her, the possibility of running our fall swim lessons.

**Everything Else…**

We have our annual Mohegan Sun casino trip scheduled for Sunday, March 25th. Please help spread the word if you know anyone who may be interested. Planning for this year’s summer camps has begun. At present I have two afternoon camp slots in July left to fill. I’d like to ask everyone to please keep an eye on our Facebook page. Please share my posts about events and such to help get the word out.

* **Activities/Events – WAA Sculpture Walk:** The Washington Art Association is creating a Sculpture Walk throughout the Depot July – November 2018. Parks and Rec has been approached to promote and to possibly be involved in helping with scheduled narrated weekend walks. Diane Decker of the Art Association will get back in touch with Jeff with more details as they become available.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:** Vice-Chairman Sheila Anson reported:

* **Congratulations to Grandparents Joe & Julie Fredlund** on the birth of George William.
* **Happy February Birthday** **to Whitney Ryan.**
* **Congratulations to all the USA Olympic participants.**

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:08p.m. as there was no further business for discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Greene