

# September 12, 2011

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

## **Present:**

Chairman Sheila Anson, Commissioners C.J. Kersten, Whitney Ryan, Laura Martin, Ray Reich, Joe Fredlund, Darren Dutcher; Coordinator Lisa Easter; Clerk Mary Anne Greene. Groundskeeper Gary Alex and guest John Meeker.

## **Call to Order:**

Chairman Sheila Anson called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m. at the River Walk Pavilion noting there was a quorum present and welcoming Whitney Ryan as a new Commissioner, Groundskeeper Gary Alex and guest John Meeker.

## **Tour of the River Walk Park:**

The Commissioners toured the walking path, playground area and playing fields assessing damage caused by Hurricane Irene and subsequent heavy rains. The path is washed out in several places and will need repair. There was discussion as to how much the town highway department will be able to do, how much will need to be contracted out, etc. There are several pieces of equipment in the playground that need repair as well as playing fields.

## **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion:

To approve the minutes of the July 18, 2011 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

By Joe Fredlund, seconded by C.J. Kersten and unanimously approved.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

\* River Walk Park:

Discussion following the “tour” included working with the Board of Selectmen and Buildings and Property Commission regarding repairs to the walking path, soliciting information from contractors, determining if the job will need to go out to bid, etc. Repairs to the playing fields will also need to be given a priority, as this work needs to be done prior to the winter season. The Commission does receive \$5000 a year from Region #12 for Field Upkeep; Gunnery generously assists with upkeep of the soccer field behind the Pavilion. The Town may be eligible for a FEMA reimbursement for a percentage of the costs involved in these repairs. John Meeker suggested getting information and prices for the repair and start the bidding process if necessary so will be all set for filing for FEMA reimbursement.

A sub-committee was formed to work on this project consisting of Joe Fredlund, C.J. Kersten, Gary Alex, Darren Dutcher and Tim Cook. They will begin by contacting First Selectman Mark Lyon. Sheila reminded them of the importance of noticing meetings, taking notes, etc.

\* Pavilion:

held up well through storms. It has been used nearly every weekend all spring and summer and is booked through September and early October. Gary Alex reported that the requiring of deposits for all individuals and groups renting the Pavilion has proven to be beneficial – the premises have been left in good order, nothing has been missing, etc.

\* Kitchen Stove:

It has become increasingly difficult to light the stove. There was talk about purchasing a new one, trading in the current and/or doing so in conjunction with or by the Fire Department. Gary has arranged for a repairman to look at it – hopefully tomorrow – and asking if an electric ignition can be installed.

\* Kitchen tables:

The Commission approved the purchase of two stainless steel tables at their June meeting. Lisa was asked to follow up on this.

\* Bocce Courts:

Joe Fredlund has looked at courts in New Milford and obtained information. He will review with the Buildings and Property Commission regarding placement back behind the Pavilion, solicit pricing prior to requesting assistance from the Village Improvement Society.

\* Alarm system:

Sheila and Joe reported that all has been working well this season noting that the only “false alarms” were as a result of renters trying to re-enter once the premises was alarmed.

\* Summer Concert:

was not held this year (usually arranged through Shepaug Friends of Music). It was noted that although attendance is generally light, it is enjoyed and should be looked into again.

\* Fireworks:

Ray Reich reported on the income and expenses for the 2011 Fireworks. There are still two bills not yet received, however Ray estimates there will be approximately a \$24,700 balance left in the 4th of July account. Only 959 of 1300 car passes were sold. There was discussion as to whether unsold tickets should be sold at the entrance to the fireworks. It was decided not to do this as it has been the policy not to and may only cause confusion and difficulties in years ahead. There were reports of cars entering Painter Ridge without passes. Ray will ask to have a police officer covering the road. T-shirt sales went fairly well – possibly ask for more “women’s cut”...Sheila and the Commissioners thanked Ray for another year of a job well done!! He was also reminded that there are many who would be happy to have him delegate some of his load to them :)!

Beach & Boat Launch:

Ray Reich reported that the kayaks have been a positive addition to the Town Beach. Beach Director, Jeff Cox, felt the use of them went well and were enjoyed. There was discussion about looking into a tandem kayak, storage may be an issue but will be looked into further. There was discussion of the beach area, the amount of work required, etc. Lisa Easter will invite the Caretakers/tenants to the October meeting for an end-of-season follow up discussion. Laura Martin voiced her opinion that the lifeguard staffing at the Beach went well and parents/families she spoke with throughout the season were very pleased. Jeff Cox’s end-of-season report is attached to these minutes filed with the Town Clerk. Lisa Easter spoke about the need to have scheduled coverage of the Boat Launch throughout the summer and Labor Day Weekend by our regular inspectors as well as the need to have back-up personnel in place. Hank Vallely has decreased his hours from previous years, and college students often return to school before Labor Day and before the “launch season” closes. Currently we are on the fall schedule of Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 4:00p.m. to Sunset. Boat owners need to be reminded about the shortened coverage when arranging to have their boats taken off the Lake. Lisa will invite Hank Vallely to the November meeting for an end-of-season follow up discussion.

\* Youth Work Initiative:

The Shepaug Youth Work Force, started this year, has been very successful assisting Denise Arturi at the Judea Garden, helping with clean up and weeding etc. on the Town Hall property, assisting the

Garden Club with Park (behind the old Parks Drug building) clean up and Gary Alex with weeding, cleanup work at the River Walk Park.

### **COORDINATOR'S REPORT:**

Lisa Easter reported on the following:

#### **\* Summer Camps:**

In general, enrollment was down considerably this year. DI Softball Experience was cancelled due to low enrollment, as was one Lego session. Darren Dutcher suggested the Commission think about holding the Softball camp earlier in the summer (at the same time as ACE), in the evening and admitting younger students. A new director will also be needed for this camp. The Shepaug Little League Board will discuss further. Discussion followed about the low number of attendees for Summer Recreation Camp and ideas brought forward included expanding the camp to a full day, combining it with swim lessons and/or other camps. The suggestion was made to put out a questionnaire to get a better feel of what parents would like. Mary Jane Ruthven has submitted her end of season report for the Arts and Crafts portion of Summer Recreation and it is attached to these minutes filed with the Town Clerk.

#### **\* Gunn Library**

thanked the Commission for supporting their Summer Reading program with a gift certificate to Lore's Lanes.

#### **\* Bus Trips:**

The 8/14/11 trip to Yankee Stadium was cancelled due to a rain out. The Commission has a rain check for a game next year. Lisa has offered a refund to those who want it, otherwise those who wish to keep their spots will be price protected for next year's trip. Lisa is working on a trip to Mohegan Sun Casino – using the Senior Bus, which will limit the number of attendees. The Town of Warren has expressed interest in co-sponsoring a bus trip perhaps to Radio City Music Hall's Christmas Show. Lisa will be meeting with them as soon as possible to discuss further. 2012 is the 100th Anniversary of Fenway Park. Lisa would like to schedule a trip that would include a game, a tour of the stadium and some free time in Quincy Market. More to come on this. Safe Boating Course may be scheduled in November – have had several requests. Lisa will speak with Trooper Steve Sordi, as he is an instructor regarding his availability.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **\* Boat House Tenant Selection:**

In the event there be a need to select a new Beach House Tenant, Ray Reich drafted a procedure for the Commission's review and discussion. The draft included advertising suggestions. Applications would be sent to the Selectmen's Office, interviews arranged with a committee consisting of Lisa Easter, Ray Reich (as the Commissioner who oversees the Beach and Boat Launch area), and one Selectman. It was suggested there be at least one more Parks and Recreation Commissioner on this committee.

Applications would be reviewed, interviews scheduled, recommendations of possible candidates made to the whole Parks and Rec Commission, who would then recommend candidate(s) to the Board of Selectmen who would make the final selection. The Commissioners agreed to discuss the suggested procedure further and with the Board of Selectmen. John Meeker made the suggestion that an "outside" real estate agency be hired to find possible candidates – it would do the advertising, the Town could give it's "requirements", etc. taking any possible conflict of interest out of the process. The Commissioners thanked John for his input and will take it under consideration.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:**

Sheila Anson reported the following:

- \* September 11th – we remember and honor those lives lost ten years ago. Thank you to the Washington Volunteer Fire Department for conducting a very meaningful Memorial Service at the Depot Fire House on September 11, 2011.
- \* Expression of Sympathy to the Ryan Family on the passing of Whitney’s father-in-law.
- \* Congratulations to C.J. Kersten and Tammy Marquis on the birth of David Henry.
- \* Congratulations to Sarah and Keith Lipinsky on the birth of Lily Grace.
- \* Congratulations to Liz (Greene) and Eric Gibbs on their wedding.
- \* Happy Birthday to C.J. Kersten.
- \* Congratulations to Sarah Fredlund on her new employment in New York City.
- \* Thank you to Gary Alex!
- \* Thank you to ALL Town volunteers and personnel who diligently prepared for the arrival of Hurricane Irene with planning meetings, staffing before, during and after the storm and to all townspeople who once again showed the strength of neighbor helping neighbor!

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m., as there was no further business for discussion.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Anne Greene  
Clerk