COVENTRY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 9TH, 2020

The Coventry Parks & Recreation Commission held a regular meeting on Thursday, January 9th, 2020 at Town Hall Conference Room B. Marie Gallo-Hall called the meeting to order at 7pm. Alternate Member Beverly Carlson was seated for regular member Jennifer Rodgers.

Members Present: Marie Gallo-Hall, Beverly Carlson and Bob Martin.

Members Absent: Jillian Miner, Jennifer Rodgers and Jennifer Bynes.

Others Present: Wendy Rubin, Director of Parks & Recreation and Caterina Merriam, Recreation Supervisor.

Audience of Citizens: None.

Acceptance of Minutes:  
Beverly Carlson moved to accept the November 14th, 2019 meeting minutes. Bob Martin seconded. Motion voted in the affirmative by Marie Gallo-Hall, Beverly Carlson and Bob Martin. Motion carried.

Correspondence:  
- Email to John Elsesser, from CT Veteran’s Day Patriot Race Committee:  
  
  o Thanks to many Town departments for their assistance to the event, held November 9th, 2019 at Patriots Park.

- Memo from John Elsesser, re: STEAP Grant Update:  
  
  o Portions of relevance to the Parks & Recreation Commission were highlighted for the membership’s review & information.

Chairman’s Remarks:  
- Ms. Gallo-Hall visited the Board of Education’s 18-21 Program at the Patriots Park Youth Building to see the updates they’ve made to the facility and it was very nice.

Staff Report:  
- Budget:  
  o The ’20 - ‘21 Operating Budget has been submitted, including our Transmittal Letter. When we are notified of our Town Council presentation date, the Commission will be informed.

- Community Center Flooring Project:  
  o Flooring has been chosen and ordered. Earth Dynamics, who completed the structural work had to come back to make some slight adjustments, to allow the flooring contractor to lay the new floor. We expect that the project will be completed this month.

- Mill Brook Place Heating System:  
  o Due to an incident with ice buildup, the condenser unit has failed. Staff have been working diligently the last few weeks to contact everyone renting the building while the repairs are being made (a 3-week process) to make alternate arrangements. Most
renters have been very understanding and amenable, however we have 1 renter who is very unhappy. Staff are working to resolve this issue now.

- **Creaser Park Disc Golf:**
  - Ms. Rubin met with the graphic designer who will be producing the signs. He has been very busy with holiday orders, but now that the holiday rush has passed he can begin work on designing our signs. He will send us the first designs which we can proof, and then once the final design is approved, signs will be printed & delivered. We are looking at a spring opening for the first 9 holes at minimum.

- **Aquatics Program:**
  - Our Aquatics Director, Meredith Hopkins is spending her current semester abroad in Singapore. In her absence we have appointed Lakota Potter to fill in. He will be doing much of the pre-season planning/scheduling/hiring, etc.

- **Building Maintenance:**
  - Ms. Rubin is working with our current part-time maintainers, DPW and school custodians (to improve communications and operations) to be more efficient and cost-effective.

- **Father Daughter Dance:**
  - The Commission discussed making changes to this year’s event, with an eye toward inclusion. Staff reported that the description has been updated in the latest “06238 Magazine” which was recently mailed out, noting that “Any parent, guardian, grandparent or ‘special someone’” may attend, however we have hit a creative snag in terms of changing the name. The members agreed to leave the name as “Father Daughter Valentines Dance” with the updated description and asked that staff poll the public for their input on the name change, possible for 2021.

- **NAYS Workshop:**
  - Coventry is hosting a Certified Youth Sports Administrator training workshop in March, sponsored by the National Alliance for Youth Sports, in conjunction with the Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association. A flyer for the workshop was distributed.

**Old Business:**

- **Park Rules Review:**
  - Ms. Rubin explained in addition to Town Ordinances, there are also Park Rules that are set by the Parks & Recreation Commission. We cannot find any documentation of the Commission setting any rules in the past, and inconsistent rules are printed on signs at each Town Park. She said it would be helpful for the Commission to review the rules that are currently in use at the Parks, both for clarity and consistency.
  - The Commission preliminarily discussed certain rules, including open fires, hours of operation, swimming, etc. The Commission also discussed changing the format to “Do’s & Don’ts” versus listing each rule, to make it more “reader friendly.” Staff have been tasked with researching & re-wording rules, for the Commission’s review & subsequent approval. Staff will report back at the February meeting for further discussion & possible approval.

- **Youth Basketball Board Update:**
  - Ms. Rubin noted the Basketball Board’s most recent meeting minutes, and distributed copies for the Commission’s information. She noted that she is addressing the questions that the Board has for her with the Board directly.
The first issue they discussed is gym supervisors and referees, and while Parks & Rec. directly oversees the gym supervisors and refs, the Board would like to be more involved. Ms. Rubin noted that since hiring and supervision of Town employees & subcontractors is a personnel issue, they should be under the Department’s oversight rather than the Board’s.

- Coaches are still having issues with keys and access to the schools;
- We are having some issues with other town’s coaches & consistency with refs;
- There is still some confusion as to roles and responsibilities of the Board vs. Parks & Rec. that we are working to resolve;
- Ms. Rubin noted that we recently heard a complaint about 1 of our coaches, who reportedly questioned a girl on the opposing team’s gender, referring to her as a “boy” due to her appearance. Ms. Rubin noted that the Board did a great job in addressing the issue with the Coach directly: the Coach has been put on probation for the next 3 games and a board member will be present at those games to observe. Ms. Rubin also issued an apology letter to the opposing Town/team, and is working with Youth Services on providing coaches with some sensitivity training items.
- In keeping consistent with other Town league’s policies, the Board would like Travel players to purchase their own uniforms next year.

- Softball Field Committee Update:
  - The Commission asked if there was any update on the Engineering Report that was Commissioned by the Town Council this past Fall. Ms. Rubin explained that we are waiting for updates.
- Budget:
  - Minimum Wage Impact: Programs:
    - Ms. Merriam updated the Commission on the minimum wage increase and its impact on Camp Wangumbaug for the upcoming summer season, 2020. She discussed this year’s budget numbers, noting that the wage increase amounts to an approximate 10% increase to our payroll for this year. If fees are increased by 10%, we are looking at a $15 increase to the weekly fees for the full-day program ($150 for residents to $165 for residents). All other weekly fees (Mini-Explorers, CITs) will also increase at that rate, while before care, after care and trips will either remain the same, or increase slightly. The Commission agreed that our pricing is already so affordable that a 10% increase is understandable and to be expected.

New Business:
- Elections:
  - Call for Nominations:
    - Tabled.
- Town Council Goals:
  - Ms. Rubin explained that the new Town Council’s Goals have been discussed, but not yet accepted; they are working on wording now. She explained that there are a few goals that directly impact Parks & Recreation and encouraged the Commission to provide input before the goals are adopted. The Commission discussed their thoughts on the goals regarding maintenance and future plans for the Community Center, to be passed along to the Town Council for their consideration.
Adjourn: With no other business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caterina Merriam,  
Recreation Supervisor

Please note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission at the next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting. Please see the next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.