

**COVENTRY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10th, 2022**

The Coventry Parks & Recreation Commission held a regular meeting on Thursday, February 10th, 2022 via ZOOM virtual platform. Marie Gallo-Hall called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

Member Present: Marie Gallo-Hall, Jennifer Rodgers, Bob Martin, Beverly Carlson, Jillian Miner, Pam Miller (logged in at 6:34pm) and Ashlee Pascarelli (logged in at 6:37pm).

Members Absent:

Audience of Citizens: None

Acceptance of Minutes:

Jennifer Rodgers moved to accept the meeting minutes from January 20th, 2022. Beverly Carlson seconded. Motion voted in the affirmative by Marie Gallo-Hall, Bob Martin, Jennifer Rodgers, Jillian Miner and Beverly Carlson. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Thank you from Pamela Berardino re: COVID Test Kit Distribution

Chair's Remarks: None

Staff Report:

A written staff report was distributed to the Commission for their review. Ms. Munshower & Ms. Merriam reviewed certain important items:

- Laidlaw Pavilion:
 - The Pavilion package was delivered and construction began; seeding and electrical work will be done in the spring. Pavilion will be ready for use also, in the spring.
- Creaser Park:
 - Community Garden is open for registration, now to new gardeners. 16 plots have been sold so far (21 plots total).
- Patriots Park:
 - Lodge interior painting has been delayed until spring;
 - Community Center fire inspection has been conducted, and smoke detectors are being replaced next week;
 - Upgrades to bathrooms for UCONN Rowing:
 - Staff are currently getting quotes and passing them along to UCONN for their review. We are still working out the logistics of the upgrades, including the scope of the work and who pays; UCONN can upgrade them to their liking & pay, but the bathrooms would then be 100% for UCONN's use. Other option is we do some minor upgrades in-house, and it remains a shared space.
 - Ms. Gallo-Hall asked the Commission for their input. Ms. Carlson expressed concern toward giving UCONN full and exclusive access to a space that could be of use to us, or to other groups who use the park. Ms. Munshower said that even if UCONN does all the upgrades, we may still be able to arrange our use of

the space outside of the rowing season. The Commission agreed that they would prefer to have access to the bathrooms outside of the rowing season.

- Facility Rentals:
 - Ms. Munshower noted that we have had a slight dip in reservations in January due to COVID concerns, causing some cancellations.
- Basketball:
 - Ms. Munshower said that the season is coming to a close, with some games needing to be rescheduled due to snow cancellations. Coaches are working on putting together an end of season jamboree for grades 3-4.
- Summer Open House:
 - Ms. Munshower said that staff are planning an “Open House” event at Patriots Park, on Saturday, May 14th. It will be an opportunity for folks to learn more about parks & rec and what we have to offer, purchase beach stickers, tour & register for camp and other summer programs, and more.
- Office Assistant:
 - There has been a change in our Office Assistant’s schedule, as she is now doing her student teaching full-time, so she is working only 3 hours per week. Primary responsibility is rental communications and deposits. We are looking to increase those hours come spring, as we gear up for the busy summer season.
- Arts Grant:
 - Ms. Munshower noted that 8 applications have been received, and that staff are currently reviewing them and corresponding with applicants.
- Program Updates:
 - Ms. Merriam noted that 3 new staff hires were made this week

Old Business:

- Softball Field Committee:
 - Ms. Rodgers noted that now that the project is into the planning & design phase, the Committee will continue to meet quarterly to review plans during construction.
 - Ms. Rodgers added that the committee has fielded some questions and concerns expressed by members of the community regarding the order of projects, specifically the fact that the practice field by the football is moving forward first. Ms. Munshower noted that the Town Council is including the practice field in the plans for the methane gas project, which has always been on track for completion first. Ms. Munshower also noted that the football field project is a simpler project that can move forward ASAP, whereas the softball fields project is more complex, as the transfer station relocation must happen first. Ms. Gallo-Hall added that the practice field was never a replacement field for one of the softball fields, but is rather in addition to.
 - Ms. Pascarelli asked if the football field project gone out to bid yet. Ms. Munshower said that it is on track to go out in February. All three projects are expected to go out to bid at the same time.

New Business:

- Elections: Call for Nominations

Beverly Carlson moves to nominate the current slate of officers: Marie Gallo-Hall for the position of Chair; Jennifer Rodgers for the position of Vice-Chair and Bob Martin for the position of Secretary.

Jillian Miner seconded. Ms. Gallo-Hall, Ms. Rodgers and Mr. Martin all accept the nominations. Motion voted in the affirmative by Marie Gallo-Hall, Ms. Rodgers, Mr. Martin, Jillian Miner and Beverly Carlson. Motion carried.

- Bench Request from Brian Hastings:
 - Ms. Munshower said that we received a request to build a bench in honor of a friend who has passed away, at Creaser Park. Mr. Hastings and his friend often walked the trails together.
 - Issue tabled, pending research into the process/procedures for in memoriam items & dedications.
- Pavilion Rental Fees:
 - Ms. Munshower conducted some research on neighboring towns who offer pavilion rentals for comparison purposes. She noted that pavilion usage has grown in popularity since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, so there may be an opportunity for additional revenue generation.
 - Ms. Munshower went on to propose a slight increase in rental fees:
 - \$5 per hour to \$10 per hour – non-profits
 - \$10 per hour to \$15 per hour – residents
 - \$20 per hour to \$25 per hour – non-residents
 - We would also impose a minimum number of hours (which we do not currently do), of 3 hours for M-TH and 4 hours for F-Sun.
 - Following discussion, the Commission amended the proposal to \$7 per hour for non-profits, \$12 per hour for residents, \$23 per hour for non-residents.
 - Ms. Rodger asked about parking at Lisicke Beach and how that would work for non-residents attending parties at the Pavilion. Ms. Munshower said the renter would need to purchase 1-day passes, at the current rate of \$5 per car; or we could offer a discount with pavilion rental to bring that fee down a bit. Ms. Carlson suggested that we include 5 passes with each rental, but any additional would incur the \$5 per pass charge.
 - Ms. Rodgers also suggested that attendance should be limited, since that parking lot is not that large, especially with beach goers also parking there. Ms. Gallo-Hall agreed, and suggested a 15-car limit. The Commission also discussed Lisicke Beach pavilion being available to rent for residents only.

Jennifer Rodgers moved to accept the amended proposal of \$7/hr for non-profit groups, \$12/hr for residents, \$23/hr for non-residents for pavilion rentals, effective immediately. Lisicke Beach pavilion rentals will include 5 guest passes with additional available for purchase. Beverly Carlson seconded. Motion voted in the affirmative by Marie Gallo-Hall, Jennifer Rodgers, Bob Martin, Jillian Miner and Beverly Carlson. Motion carried.

- Capital Requests:
 - Ms. Munshower noted that she met with Town Manager and Finance Director to review this year's budget proposals.
 - Projects moving forward include the following:
 - Picnic tables for Laidlaw Park Pavilion;
 - Second softball field at Miller Richardson/begin design work;

- Town Manager is also including the proposal of the creation of a Building Committee to conduct a feasibility study, for the Patriots Park Community Center.
- Projects we proposed but were not approved include the following:
 - Improvements at Mill Brook Place;
 - Improvements at Community Center.
- The Department's Budget Meeting with Town Council has been scheduled March 21, 2022.

Adjourn: With no other business to discuss, Marie Gallo-Hall adjourned the meeting at 7:32pm.

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.