The Coventry Parks & Recreation Commission held a regular meeting on Thursday, June 11th, 2020 via virtual platform, ZOOM. Marie Gallo-Hall called the meeting to order at 6:40pm.

**Members Present:** Marie Gallo-Hall, Jillian Miner and Beverly Carlson.

**Members Absent:** Jennifer Rodgers and Bob Martin.

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

**Audience of Citizens:** None.

**Acceptance of Minutes:**
Marie Gallo-Hall moved to accept the May 14th meeting minutes. Beverly Carlson seconded. Motion voted in the affirmative by Marie Gallo-Hall, Beverly Carlson and Jillian Miner. Motion carried.

Marie Gallo-Hall moved to accept the May 21st meeting minutes. Jillian Miner seconded. Motion voted in the affirmative by Marie Gallo-Hall, Beverly Carlson and Jillian Miner. Motion carried.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Chair's Remarks:** Ms. Gallo-Hall noted the following items:
- Our last meeting on May 21st was a very sad meeting. It was a difficult decision to make to close Camp Wangumbaug, but it was the right call to make. Ms. Carlson asked how communications have gone since announcing the closure. Ms. Merriam noted that the virtual meeting to notify the staff was very difficult, but they were understanding. Many of the staff also expressed interest in staying involved this summer with either virtual or digital programming for kids.

**Staff Report:**
Written Staff Reports for the month of May were sent electronically to the membership for their review ahead of the meeting. Ms. Rubin noted the following items:
- Camp Cancellation:
  - Ms. Rubin noted that following our announcement that Camp was cancelled for 2020, we heard back from our Health Department Director, Rob Miller, who confirmed that we made the right call in cancelling for this year.
- Beaches:
  - Beaches opened as planned on Memorial Day weekend; however, attendance has been slow due to weather. The Patriots Park Gate has been working out well as the exchange point for residents purchasing their stickers online.
  - Lifeguard training is June 18; the Fire Department will be training staff on the use of BVMs (bag Valve Masks) and the Police Department will provide training on social distance policing and dealing with difficult people. We will also be training staff on
COVID-19-specific issues, such as sanitation procedures, mask wearing, social distancing, health screenings/temperature checks, etc.

- Ms. Rubin noted that beaches are on schedule to open for swimming with lifeguards as planned on Saturday, June 20th. Gatekeepers are all trained and many have already been working; Park Rangers are being trained now and are beginning working. We have already lost three gatekeepers thus far; two due to finding other jobs in the interim, and one for health reasons. Given the scheduling changes we have made for this year, we are still in good shape staffing-wise.

- Ms. Rubin added that the response to beach operations on Facebook is somewhat negative; there seems to be a lot of confusion and questioning as to why we are open but there is no swimming. These have prompted us to respond with clarifying information on our own Facebook page & website, in hopes of educating the public. We have also heard that there is some frustration with some beach patrons not following the rules, prompting those who are following the rules to leave.

- Programming Updates:
  - Ms. Merriam noted that several projects are in the works that will rollout throughout the summer season. These include a scavenger hunt; a “get outdoors” themed day of activities; a digital Camp newsletter with activities & video content; and a “Flat Stanley” inspired activity called “Flat Wongy,” to name a few. Ms. Merriam has been meeting virtually with both Youth Services and Camp staff interested in helping to get these programs planned and executed throughout the summer.
  - Ms. Merriam added that weeklong Specialty Camps remain on the schedule, however whether they will be held or not is still TBD. We are waiting on the schools to determine if the programs have permission to use school facilities this summer. We are also considering some virtual options that can be offered instead. Ms. Gallo-Hall asked if people will wonder why these camps can be offered in person, but day camp was cancelled. Ms. Merriam added that that is possible, but we can help mitigate that with educational communications as to why that is, if they are held.

- Disc Golf:
  - Ms. Rubin noted that holes 1-9 are complete; Signs for holes 1-5 are in but need to be installed; signs for holes 6-9 are being worked on now (additional site work needed to be completed before signs could be made). Next week baskets, signs and tee pads will be installed and people can start playing. Disc Golf can be played under current sector rules, as discs are not shared equipment. Ms. Rubin noted that it is appropriate that we encourage folks to try the course out and play. Ms. Rubin also noted that some instructional programs are being considered for the future.
  - The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is in the planning stages now, and may coincide with the “get outdoors” day that Parks & Rec. & Human Services are working on planning now.

Old Business:

- Softball Fields Committee Update:
  - Ms. Rubin said that the Committee has reached out to the Town Council to schedule their meeting with them to review their recommendations, but due to budget issues were told to hold off. They were asked back and may be on Monday’s (6/15) agenda.

- Summer Operations Update:
  - See staff report.
New Business:

- **Youth Lacrosse:**
  - Ms. Rubin explained that a new group of parent volunteers is looking to start a new Lacrosse League in Town, and may be looking for field time in the future. They plan to develop a program as a non-profit entity, and Wendy has offered to provide guidance to help them get started. Ricky Ruocco is a Coventry resident and Lacrosse coach that is spearheading this effort.

- **Senior Swim @ Lisicke Beach:**
  - Lakota Potter, our Assistant Aquatics Director attended a webinar which suggested a Senior Swim time, to encourage senior citizens who are among a more vulnerable population to come to the beach and swim without the concern of crowds (similar to senior shopping times at grocery stores). Proposal is Monday-Friday in the mornings.
  - Ms. Miner suggested adding an afternoon time, as most families with young kids tend to go home for nap time, so it tends to be quieter that time of day anyway. The Commission agreed offering a 9am-10am slot & a 3pm-4pm slot.

- **Sports Field Re-Entry Plan & Use Waiver:**
  - Ms. Rubin noted that now that sector rules have come out for sports & outdoor recreation, we can begin to move forward with re-opening fields to group play. She noted that Little League has decided to suspend their summer season but that other sports will be looking for field time for practices, conditioning and even games as we progress through the summer.
  - She added that a new waiver to the field use forms will be added to every league’s application packet that is COVID-19 specific. The sector rules are clear as far as precautions each group needs to take, and that those precautions are the responsibility of the group. However as the facility, we can and should require that they agree to follow sector rules while using Town fields.

**Adjourn:** With no other business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm.

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.