

East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2021
Via Zoom

Present: Thomas Beebe, Chairman
Jackie Curry
Todd Donovan
Pat Larkin
Roger Nadeau
Sue Kumro

FILED

March 22, 20 21 AT 9:51 AM/PM
Brooke Stevens ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Absent: Robert Pfanner

Also Present: Kevin Seery, Ex officio member of the Board of Selectmen
David Putnam, Director of Parks and Recreation
Michelle Williams, Chairlady of POCD
Bruce Dasinger, resident

1. CALL TO ORDER Chairman Beebe called the March 11, 2021 meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

MOTION (1): Ms. Curry moved to add Michelle Williams to this evening's Agenda as item 4. POCD. Seconded by Mr. Larkin. (6-0) Unanimous.

2. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS. Mr. Dasinger of 12 Stonewood Drive, reported he had difficulty finding the survey about Darrow Pond on the Town website. He felt since the Town paid \$4 million for the land, it should be widely used by the East Lyme taxpayers. He added many uses have been posted.

3. MINUTES. Mr. Beebe asked for corrections, deletions or additions to the February 11, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION (2): Ms. Curry moved to approve the February 11, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Kumro (6-0). Unanimous.

4. POCD. Mr. Putnam reported Ms. Williams, Chairlady of the POCD wishes to discuss the POCD section that pertains to Parks and Recreation. She reported each Town has to update its POCD for the state no later than every ten years. If the Town does not it will not be eligible for many grants. She stated we began the process of updating the POCD and it took two years. Some towns have used an outside consultant. In East Lyme we were fortunate to have all volunteers. We began by looking at the 2009 POCD to see what has been done and what is or is not relevant. We wanted to make sure the POCD brought in boards, commissions and various organizations. We wanted representatives to give input. We had an online survey and public forum giving feedback. We took all of that, as well as new studies and went through each section. Most of our liaison work with Parks and Recreation was through Mr. Putnam. We discussed how Parks and Recreation's plans fit into the larger plan of the Town. The POCD helps with grants. The plan was written, approved and adopted in 2020 and filed with the State of Connecticut. We are beginning to plan for implementation. We want to stay in the document for the next ten years to support and adopt the plans. We would like to know how the POCD can help you. The POCD is on the Planning Commission's website.

Mr. Putnam reported if we apply for grant funding its important to have it in the POCD. He sent the Commission his recommendations that identify those areas. It is an important document for us to review. Ms. Williams stated some

sections speak to the Parks and Recreation indirectly. We are looking to develop and communicate for things like land maintenance, watering schedule, parking lots, salt management plans and the impact of salting our parking lots and how it can affect our water supply. It's to have us all in the same direction.

Mr. Beebe stated hopefully it will align us to what improvements we are looking for. Ms. Williams asked that we stay in touch. Mr. Putnam stated some areas are under our control and some are not. Ms. Williams stated much of the feedback we received were resident feedback.

Mr. Seery stated the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen feel this POCD is far more detailed and a credit to the Commission. Mr. Putnam agreed.

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT. (See attached Report).

Mr. Larkin felt since we are not able to allow the full capacity of the beaches, he suggested as of April 1 selling only to East Lyme residents and in May selling to non-residents. Mr. Putnam stated his staff feels commercial passes should be limited. It was felt only ten commercial passes should be sold to each entity . If more than ten are requested the commercial entity will be charged an additional \$75.

**MOTION (3): Mr. Larkin moved to limit the number of commercial passes for one entity to 10.
If more is needed, it will be at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Director.
Seconded by Mr. Donovan. (6-0) Unanimous.**

Planning is needed for Celebrate East Lyme. It was felt this Commission should have a Special Meeting on March 24.

Mr. Putnam reported all municipal buildings plan to open on March 19. This Commission's Board of Finance budget review will be held on April 19.

Commission members were given copies of an official letter of resignation from Carol Rossiter. Ms. Rossiter has been with the Town for 49 years and will be missed.

**MOTION (4): Ms. Curry moved to accept Carol Rossiter's retirement letter.
Seconded by Ms. Kumro. (6-0) Unanimous.**

Mr. Putnam reported he met with Messrs. Seery and Beebe to discuss the restructuring of the Parks and Recreation Department. An Assistant Director's position was requested and denied. We are now looking at a recreation supervisory position. This individual would oversee the new Program Coordinator and act for Mr. Putnam in his absence. Ms. Curry felt Mr. Putnam needs someone he can rely on when he is unable to be in his office.

This matter was tabled until the next meeting of this Commission to allow commission members to review a Job Description for the recreation supervisory position.

**MOTION (5): Ms. Kumro moved to table discussion of the recreation supervisory position until the next meeting of this Commission to allow commission members to review a job description of the proposed new position.
Seconded by Ms. Curry. (6-0) Unanimous.**

5. EX OFFICIO'S REPORT Mr. Seery reported the East Lyme/Waterford bridge is closed for repairs. As a result, Rt. 161 has had a lot of traffic.

Town buildings plan to open on March 19. We are hoping to be able to have in-person meetings on March 19, providing the Governor agrees. The Town is colored orange for COVID-19.

We are hoping the state will close on the purchase of the Starlight Motel.

On March 3 the Board of Selectmen approved the Town budget with a 3.4% increase over last year's budget for a .6 mill increase. The Board of Selectmen will forward the budget to the Board of Finance.

6. COMMUNICATIONS. There were no communications.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a.) COVID-19 Updates. Mr. Putnam reported CDC has given guidelines for opening up spring sports. They can start on April 10.

b.) Parks and Recreation budget review. Mr. Putnam reported the Parks and Recreation budget review will be held on April 19.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

a.) Charlie Fenick Recognition Committee. Mr. Nadeau emailed everyone Mr. Donovan's summary of Charlie Fenick's life. Mr. Nadeau felt we need a citation for the plaque. The Commission needs to decide what award he will be honored for. Mr. Beebe stated we discussed honoring him at Charlie's Run to be held on June 11. Mr. Nadeau felt we can have more than one honor for him. He suggested the Lifetime Achievement Award and/or the Sports Award or possibly naming a softball field after him. Mr. Putnam will send the Lifetime Achievement Award to commission members. He felt Charlie's Run is appropriate. He approves of Mr. Donovan's input. He would like to make sure Charlie Fenick's family is present at the race. Mr. Larkin suggested that a plaque be given to his family with some of Mr. Donovan's write up on it. Mr. Putnam agreed to put something together for this Commission by its next meeting.

b) Darrow Pond (Todd). Mr. Donovan reported he volunteered to Chair a subcommittee for the Darrow Pond property. He received input from 90 individuals. He plans to meet with Mike McDowell. Mr. Donovan has not met all of the subcommittee members. He plans to reach out to them by early next week to discuss what we can do. He will wait for the survey to come in and bring its contents back to this Commission. Some of the responses are anonymous. Mr. Dasinger felt it needs to be defined what property we are talking about. Mr. Donovan stated that the Darrow property has not been turned over to Parks and Recreation. We are waiting to see what part of the property would be developed. We are also waiting to hear from the Board of Selectmen and Town Attorney. Mr. Putnam added two hundred acres have a conservation easement. There are very few things we can do on that property. There are 100 acres where things can be done. Mr. Dasinger showed a map of Darrow Pond. He stated we cannot touch 200 acres. Mr. Donovan stated we would not want to take away from the natural beauty of the property. Mr. Dasinger stated there are New England cottontails and a nesting area for birds that should not be disturbed. Mr. Donovan felt we need another member on the subcommittee. Mr. Larkin volunteered.

9. NEW BUSINESS There was no discussion of new business.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (6): Mr. Larkin moved to adjourn the March 11, 2021 Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission at 8:25 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Curry. (6-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Director's Report
March 11, 2021

McCook Point Park/Beaches:

- Ad for the Vendor permit has run in the New London Day and proposals are due back to the Office on March 26, I present at your April meeting for approval.
- Waiting for additional guidance from the State of CT in regards to beach capacities, we have published May 10th as the official date we will start selling Beach passes.
- Staff has expressed a concern regarding the number of Commercial passes we sell and would like to set a limit for each establishment, my recommendation would 10 per establishment and they could petition the Commission for more. Commission approved rate for a Commercial pass is \$75.00 and is transferable.
- Seasonal Contracts have been issued to returning staff.
- Projected starting dates for staff:
 - Gate Attendants – May 29
 - Lifeguards – June 19
 - We will monitor usage and put staff on as needed.
- 1st Special Event tentatively scheduled will be the Niantic Bay 10K “Charlie’s Race” named in honor of Charlie Fenick on Friday, June 11.
- We are proceeding with scheduling our summer concert series on Wednesday and Friday nights starting July 7.

Athletic Facilities:

- I have provided a memo that I sent to Athletic Field users for this spring.
- I plan to open fields weather dependent officially on April 3.
- Fencing project on the Vets Softball field is almost complete, the overhang on the backstop is all that remains.
- LL Softball and Baseball as well as the High School Softball team have requested use of the Miracle League Field beginning this weekend.

Programming:

- We have a Celebrate East Lyme Committee meeting scheduled for March 22, looking for recommendations on moving forward.
- Municipal Buildings will be reopened to the public on Friday, March 19, we will be offering programming (see attached sheet) with enrollment at 50% capacity.

Budget:

- Budget review with the Board of Finance is scheduled for Monday, April 19th.
- Attached please find information regarding the posting of the Recreation Program Coordinators position.

Darrow Pond:

- Survey developed by Todd and Mike has generated almost 90 responses to date, the link is on the Town's website.

Miracle League:

- Spring Programming to include:
 - Baseball (presently have 41 kids registered)
 - Lacrosse
 - Kickball
 - Ballet in partnership with the Eastern CT Ballet