

East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2021
Via Zoom

Present: Pat Larkin
Jackie Curry
Todd Donovan
Sue Kumro

Absent: Robert Pfanner
Roger Nadeau
Thomas Beebe

Also Present: David Putnam, Director of Parks and Recreation
Kris Lambert, President of Friends of the Oswegatchie Hill Nature Preserve
John Kelsey, owner of KOA Campground

FILED
May 21, 2020 AT 1:24 AM/PM
Brooke Johnson ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

1. CALL TO ORDER Vice Chairman Larkin called the May 13, 2021 meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

2. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS. Ms. Lambert, President of the Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve, sent letter dated May 12, 2021 to members of the Parks and Recreation Commission to consider a request to name the Pitch Pine Park the Greg Decker Pitch Pine Park. The Board of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve thought it would be a nice tribute to Mr. Decker who was a former President of the Friends of Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve. The improvement of the Pitch Pine Park was mainly through the efforts of Mr. Decker. A grant has been received from Chelsea Groton Bank and Mr. Decker would like to use it to install a plaque on propagating pitch pines and information on the ice pond and quarry. She stated they have an Annual Meeting next week and if possible, she would like to announce the name at that meeting. The dedication would be held at a later time.

Mr. Putnam felt this would be a great honor for Greg Decker. If anyone saw that area prior to his work it improved the area considerably and made it into a first-class hiking area.

The Commission reviewed the Day article by Kimberly Drelich on the restoration of Pitch Pine Park. Ms. Curry stated she has spent many years at the park and can see the improvement.

**MOTION (1): Ms. Curry moved to name the Pitch Pine Park in honor of Greg Decker.
Seconded by Ms. Kumro. (4-0) Unanimous.**

Commission member Todd Donovan joined the meeting.

John Kelsey, the owner of KOA Campground asked for clarification of 10 passes for a commercial entity. He has three separate L.L.C.s associated with his campground. One L.L.C. is for the light industrial part of the property. One is for dealing with the property and one for the operation of the campground. He receives three tax bills and files three tax returns. Mr. Putnam stated he has allowed 15 passes for Mr. Kelsey's campground. Mr. Kelsey has a bus that shuttles campers to Main Street which the East Lyme Parks and Recreation Department may use. Mr. Donovan reported John and Sally Kelsey have made a very significant donation to Little League. They have been in East Lyme since 2017.

MOTION (2): Mr. Donovan moved to allow KOA Campground to receive 30 passes to McCook Point Park, 10 for each L.L.C. for a total of 30 passes. (5-0) Unanimous.

3. MINUTES.

a.) Minutes of the April 8, 2021 Meeting. Mr. Larkin asked for corrections, deletions or additions to the April 8, 2021 East Lyme Parks and Recreation Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION (3): Ms. Curry moved to approve the April 8, 2021 East Lyme Parks and Recreation Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Kumro. (5-0). Unanimous.

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

Since June 5 is Connecticut Trails Day Mr. Donovan was asked to reschedule the subcommittee meeting of Darrow Pond to June 12.

5. EX OFFICIO'S REPORT Mr. Seery was unable to be present and there was no report.

6. COMMUNICATIONS.

a.) Facility request for McCook Pavilion from Carol and Charles McElaney on 6/19 at 1:30 p.m. for a celebration of life.

MOTION (4): Ms. Kumro moved to approve the Celebration of Life event for Carol and Charles McElaney on June 19 at 1:30 p.m. at the McCook Pavilion. Seconded by Ms. Curry. (5-0) Unanimous.

b.) Facility request from Arianna Thibodeau for a wedding and the use of the tent at McCook Point Park on September 18, 2021 from 1 p.m. to sunset.

MOTION (5): Ms. Curry moved to approve the Thibodeau wedding under the tent at McCook Point Park on September 18, 2021 from 1 p.m. to sunset, with the understanding that no alcohol can be consumed in the park. Seconded by Ms. Kumro. (5-0) Unanimous.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a.) COVID-19 Updates. Mr. Putnam reported we are now open and 100% of those coming into the building are masked. There is plexiglass for our staff. We are allowed one-half capacity and no masks are required outdoors. Last summer we had no complaints with social distancing. Each cohort group needs to be six feet away from any other cohort group. Signs with CDC guidelines are posted

b.) Summer/beach season. (See Director's Report)

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

a) Darrow Pond (Todd). Mr. Donovan reported we have received twice the number of responses to the survey and many positive remarks. We have also received negative comments on the condition of the fields. Mr. Putnam suggested looking at Veterans Field, Bridebrook and Little League. We cannot put pesticides on fields used by K-8. The High School is excluded. Mr. Larkin asked are other towns having the same issue? Mr. Putnam replied they are. Mr. Larkin asked can you treat organically? Mr. Putnam replied that is expensive and needs to be put down every three or four weeks. It hasn't proved effective. His recommendation is to resod fields 2 and 3 to keep them in shape over the next five years. Ms. Curry

asked where does the Roxbury Road property stand? Mr. Putnam replied it is in the Capital Budget Improvement and will cost \$8.5 million.

Ms. Curry stated there are a number of people concerned about wildlife. Mr. Donovan and Mr. Putnam attended the Board of Selectmen's last meeting to seek ideas from them.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Donovan reported we cancelled Celebrate East Lyme because vendors need months to plan for it. He suggested considering Celebrate East Lyme later in the year.

Mr. Putnam reported we plan to have the Oysterfest on September 25. We have applied for money for the fireworks. He suggested that the 2021 Light Parade be bigger than in the past. We decided to have concerts at McCook Park on Wednesdays and Fridays. It is felt that the Vintage and Artisan Fair on May 15 will be a big event.

MOTION (6): Ms. Curry moved to adjourn the April 8, 2021 Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Larkin. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Director's Report
May 13, 2021

Staffing:

- Carol Rossiter will be retiring as of June 30, we have offered the vacant position to Hannah Corrigan, she has accepted and will start on Monday, June 7th. A huge thanks for our Interview Panel: Jackie Curry, Jim Capodiece (Retired Parks and Rec. Director in West Hartford) and Curt Vincente (Retired Parks and Rec. Director in Mansfield).

McCook Point Park/Beaches:

- Season Passes went on sale this week totals as of this morning:
 - Resident 178
 - Senior Resident 293
 - Non-Resident 163
 - Approximately half the sales have been on-line or through the mail.
- Starting dates for beach staff:
 - Gate Attendants – May 29
 - Lifeguards – June 19
 - We will monitor usage and put staff on as needed.
- Commercial Passes a few questions have arisen that need Commission resolution:
 - Commercial property that has multiple LLC's at the same location, KOA Campground are they permitted 10 Commercial passes per LLC? They have been issued 15 passes to date they have 3 separate LLC's.
 - Rental property that rents on a by-weekly or weekly basis are they permitted a season commercial pass for their tenants?

Charlie's Race:

- The Niantic Bat 10K "Charlie's Race" will be held on Friday, June 11, at McCook we will be making a presentation to Charlie's family at the race.

Oswegatchie Hills:

- Please see letter from Kris Lambert, President of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve.

Darrow Pond:

- First meeting of the sub-committee will take place on Saturday, June 5th 9:00 a.m. at Darrow Pond.

Athletic Facilities:

- Maintenance Crew has done an outstanding job this spring, fields at Vets and Peretz Park are in great shape. The State Law on the ban of pesticides and herbicides continues to be a challenge for our Little League, Middle School Soccer and Youth Football Fields.

Programming:

- We currently have over 140 kids for summer camp, we are monitoring recommendations from the state on group sizes and health protocols.
- Exercise classes are getting back to a somewhat normal we are still limiting capacity and participants indoors are required to wear a mask.

Budget:

- Town referendum on the budget will be held on Wednesday, May 19 at the Community Center.