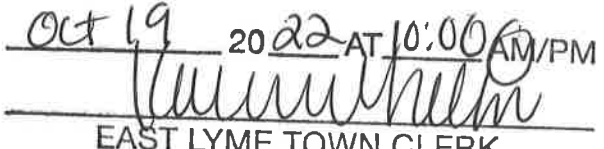


East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2022

FILED

Present: Thomas Beebe, Chairman
Pat Larkin
Sue Kumro
Jackie Curry
Rob Tukey
Kathleen Kovalanka

Oct 19 2022 AT 10:00 AM/PM

EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present: Jerry Lokken, Director of Parks and Recreation
Dan Cunningham, Ex officio

Absent: Todd Donovan

The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

1. CALL TO ORDER Chairman Beebe called the October 13, 2022 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS. There were no guests.

3. MINUTES

a) Minutes of August 11, 2022 Meeting. Mr. Beebe asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the August 11, 2022 East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes.

MOTION (1): Ms. Curry moved to approve the August 11, 2022 East Lyme Parks and Recreation Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Larkin. Ms. Kovalanka and Mr. Tukey abstained from voting. (4-0-2) Motion carried.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT. (See attached Report). Mr. Lokken reported the unaudited fund balance in 2021 was \$41,000. He felt that fund needs to maintain a positive status. In 2022 the fund balance was added to as a result of good beach weather. Ms. Curry felt there was low unemployment and high inflation. The cost of materials is higher. Seasonal staff salaries needed to be increased. We hope the upcoming budget will have a proactive response. Mr. Beebe stated the public that attends may request copies. Mr. Cunningham stated they should be available. Mr. Tukey complimented Mr. Lokken on the style of his Monthly Report. Mr. Larkin asked has the status changed on any of these projects? Mr. Lokken reported someone asked for a list. He asked when does the funding for the Prevention Coordinator run out? Mr. Lokken replied the decrease in funding is to have the General Fund add the amount the ARP does not cover. He stated this is a part-time position. There is discussion on it being full-time. It will be put into the budget next year. Mr. Larkin asked will funding come out of the Parks and Recreation budget? Mr. Lokken replied it will. Mr. Larkin felt this will be a large increase to its budget. Ms. Kovalanka asked is the position social work based or social emotionally based? Mr. Lokken did not know. Mr. Cunningham added the position is funded by ARP resources. If the services are needed and worthwhile, we will find a way to fund it.

5. EX OFFICIO'S REPORT

Mr. Cunningham reported the Selectmen approved a full-time position for the Assistant Animal Control Officer to be funded by East Lyme and Waterford.

The garbage compactors have been purchased with nip funds. The Selectmen hope to have three of them when additional nip funds become available.

The Selectmen tabled Darrow Pond until more information is available.

The Selectmen are moving forward with Charter Revision. Mr. Tukey asked how will it affect this Commission? Mr. Cunningham replied some commissions will be affected. The Selectmen have made recommendations on what they suggest the Charter Commission work on. One recommendation was for an Assistant to the First Selectman. That suggested that they consider whether or not the town should have a Town Manager instead of First Selectman. Mr. Lokken added the Charter refers to duties of this Commission. Mr. Cunningham stated part of the process is to receive input from citizens. Mr. Cunningham discussed recommendation from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Tukey felt maybe we should take a look at how we are impacted.

MOTION (2): Mr. Tukey moved to review the current Town Charter and how it affects our Commission and discuss it at the next meeting of this Commission. Seconded by Mr. Larkin. (6-0) Unanimous.

6. COMMUNICATIONS.

a.) E-mail from Vincent Carver to Dave Putnam regarding boardwalk benches. Mr. Lokken agreed to have his employees inform anyone running on benches that it is not allowed.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) McCook Point Beach Tent. Mr. Lokken reported discussion has been held on constructing a second pavilion rather than purchasing another tent. There are restrictions in the deed about areas a pavilion may not be placed. Mr. Larkin suggested that an estimate on a tent and on a pavilion be sought. Mr. Cunningham felt that possibly a tent was purchased, because it can be relocated.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Darrow Pond (Todd) Mr. Lokken reported the Board of Selectmen drafted a resolution. Several members of this Commission attended that meeting. There are easement, leases and restrictions in the deed. The Town Attorney is working on it. There is interest in this commission managing it with the intent to conserve it. The Board of Selectmen want to maintain a natural environment. A survey has been done. Trails are acceptable. There is a feeling that improving it gains more for the public. Ms. Kuvalanka added this Commission voted to spend \$25,000 for a Master Plan, providing the Board of Selectmen turn maintenance of it over to this Commission. Mr. Larkin suggested including items that will be allowed. Mr. Lokken stated suggestions will be passed on to the Town Attorney.

b) Pickle Ball (Sue) Ms. Kumro reported Pickle Ball is being played at Bride Brook Park. She stated Blackpoint is putting in four Pickleball courts.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a) Park Rules and Fees Review. Mr. Lokken asked what do we want to accomplish with our fees? He wishes to be consistent. As far as park rules he wants to be sure they are implemented. The parks

close at sunset. Mr. Tukey felt recommendations should come to this Commission. Ms. Kumro asked for input from Parks and Recreation staff. Ms. Kovalanka suggested looking at fees in a global sense. Mr. Lokken discussed rental fees for residents. He felt the Beach Enterprise Fund should go into the Special Revenue Fund. Mr. Larkin asked is there a deficit in programs? He was informed COVID caused programs to cancel. Mr. Larkin stated summer salaries have increased and we need to have programs cover that.

b). Potential Mission/Vision/Goals/Branding Exercise. Mr. Lokken felt we need community support on budgets and projects.

He felt branding is related to consistency. We are the glue in enterprises in East Lyme.

c) Potential Department Master Plan. What does a Master Plan mean in terms of staff and property? What services are coming into the park? How often should we replace playgrounds? Does the community understand that the Master Plan may cost \$75,000.

Mr. Beebe stated we are aware of things you see. What level of involvement is there in these items. Ms. Kovalanka felt we will need to triage. Mr. Lokken felt the budget is most important. What is the vision and what are the values? Mr. Beebe stated we will need to have a line item as we go forward.

MOTION (3): Ms. Kumro moved to go into Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Cunningham was invited to attend. Seconded by Ms. Curry. (6-0) Unanimous.

MOTION (4): Ms. Kumro moved to go out of Executive Session at 8:37 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Curry. (6-0) Unanimous.

No action was taken.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (5): Ms. Kumro moved to adjourn the East Lyme Parks and Recreation October 13, 2022 Meeting at 8:38 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Curry. (6-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gherzi, Recording Secretary



TOWN OF EAST LYME PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Monthly Report

September, 2022

Community Health & Wellness

Youth Services collaborates with the schools, police, and other local and state agencies. These strong relationships are essential in increasing public awareness, education, and access to resources focusing on mental health, substance use, and prevention, resulting in better health and improved quality of life in East Lyme.



*Out of the Darkness Walk
McCook Point Park*

The department provides counseling for individuals, families, and couples. By offering this service, we provide community members with additional opportunities to access treatment to address mental health and substance use, and eliminate barriers (i.e., finances, hours, waitlists) that prevent citizens from seeking help.

This month, the Department sponsored the Out of the Darkness Walk organized by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention to raise awareness to suicide prevention.

Collaborations

Staff members have supported many community events in recent weeks and have several more planned in the coming months. Parks and Recreation conducts the Annual Niantic Light Parade with the hold of a volunteer committee. This year's date is Saturday, Dec 10th. Community events are essential for the community to develop a shared identity, to celebrate diversity, to connect with neighbors, and to contribute to economic activity.



Essential Service

We have begun offering our free Open Center program for any middle school students to come to the Youth Center for after-school socialization, to do homework, and get snacks in a supervised setting. This program is staffed by our members of our summer camp staff. Currently, we have about 75 teens enrolled in the program and we anticipate serving more as we undertake efforts to gauge interest and obtain more resources such as a gaming system.

Responsiveness to Community Needs

Pickleball continues to grow in popularity and staff members are working to increase opportunity for players. We've added a second night at Peretz Park due to strong demand and we're working to add an additional indoor opportunity at the Middle School. Unfortunately, the gym is not set up for official Pickleball Courts, but we intend to use the space for beginners. For higher level play, we're working out an agreement with Lyme Shores Racquet Club to allow for more play on regulation indoor courts.

Economic Development and Community Enhancement

Parks and Recreation staff is also participating in Niantic Main Street Steering Committee meetings and working alongside the Yale School of Urban Design. This committee is funded through the ARPA funds and is working to formulate a 25-year plan for the direction of the Niantic Main Street area. The Committee is actively thinking in the best interests of the town and seeking solutions to many of our current and expected future complications as town continues to see growth, particularly during our summer tourist season.

Updates

DEI Focus

- Looking at department operations, staffing and representation to identify ways we can increase diversity, remove barriers and include those we haven't traditionally benefitted from or provided opportunity to.

ARPA Projects

- Darrow Pond - \$25,000: awaiting action from Board of Selectmen
- Restroom Improvements - \$200,000: working with Public Works to obtain specifications and pricing and get work done to add prefabricated heated restroom at Hole In the Wall Park.
- Prevention Coordinator - \$55,000: Sarah Firmin was hired and we will be transitioning to having the salary shifted to general funding over the next 2 years.
- Counselor Contract - \$20,000: We have a wait list and there is an increasing need for counseling services.
- Playscape Improvements - \$150,000: Planning to obtain community feedback to help drive upgrades
- Replace Water Fountains - \$75,000: Planned for McCook Point Park and other locations

Cooperative Projects

- Little League #4 fence – We have about \$9,500 in capital funding available, but the entire project is \$31,000 so we’re discussing with Little League how best to move forward.
- Little League Field 3 sod - obtaining quotes we have \$7,500 in general funding available and will share the cost with Little League.
- Beach Fund
 - McCook Raft: working with Crescent Beach Association to dispose of old raft and getting prices on replacement.

Financial Status

- Special Revenue Fund
 - Fund Balance
 - Current Year status
- Operational Fund

Department Staffing

- Parks Foreman/Turf Specialist and Maintainer have given notice of resignations