

East Lyme Parks Recreation Commission
February 9, 2023
Regular Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT

2023 FEB 14 P 3: 22


TOWN CLERK

Present: Thomas Beebe, Chairman
Pat Larkin
Jackie Curry
Kathleen Kovalanka
Todd Donovan

Absent: Sue Kumro
Rob Tukey

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

1. CALL TO ORDER Chairman Beebe called the February 9, 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS. Mr. Pitruzzello reported he has lived in East Lyme for eleven years. He has two high school children and an elementary school student. Since the pandemic he has seen the need for mental health services increase. Youth Service programs can allow the students to express themselves. A strong Parks and Recreation Department and Youth Services can give children who feel like they don't belong comfort. He is on the Little League Board and realizes its expensive to renovate fields. The fields promote community pride and bring in extra revenue. Soccer tournaments bring more money. The participation in youth sports benefit the entire town population. From his experience with Little League the town maintaining the fields has helped Little League. He feels we need a full-time position for Youth Services. We have great sports fields. Maintaining our workforce shows a lot about our town.

3. MINUTES

a) Minutes of January 12, 2023 Meeting. Mr. Beebe asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the January 12, 2023 East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes.

The following corrections were noted: On page 2, under item 7 the second sentence should be revised as follows: "It was decided to define a resident as a person and their immediate family members who live with them whose residence is in East Lyme or the principal owner of a business located in East Lyme, as documented by a tax bill, utility bill, car registration or rent/lease agreement."

Motion 3 should be revised as follows: Mr. Larkin moved to accept the Parks and Recreation Commission's 2023 fees with one change that the field rental is \$50 per hour with a cap of \$500. A 501 (3)c located in East Lyme qualifies for the resident rate. All other nonprofit organizations are charged the non-resident rate. Seconded by Mr. Tukey. In Favor: Tukey, Beebe, Kumro, Curry and Larkin. Opposed Kovalanka. (5-1) Motion carried.

MOTION (1): Ms. Curry moved to approve the January 12, 2023 East Lyme Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Donovan. Mr. Donovan abstained from voting. (4-0-1) Motion carried.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT. The Commission reviewed the Director's Report.

5. EX OFFICIO'S REPORT Mr. Cunningham reported the Selectmen discussed an Ethics Policy form for various boards and commissions.

The town will have electric charging stations on Hope Street and Methodist Street. A rate will be charged that covers the town's expenses.

The Selectmen are discussing combining Parks and Recreation and Youth Services.

6. COMMUNICATIONS.

a.) Letter dated January 23, 2023 was received from Susan Chodorov, regarding the fence between the Town's property and her property.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Youth Services Commission Reorganization. Mr. Larkin asked that discussion on this matter be tabled.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Darrow Pond (Todd) Mr. Donovan reported the Committee met with the company that is developing a Master Plan. Members from various town committees and residents as well as he thought the meeting was very positive. There will be another meeting on February 22 to make some changes. They are looking to use 200 acres.

b) Pickle Ball (Sue) Ms. Kumro was unable to be present, and there was no report.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a) Budget Process Discussion. The Director and Chair met to discuss a calendar for future budget requests. They agreed to begin discussions in October and November so that in December the Commission could take a formal vote on the request before it is submitted to Finance and the First Selectman.

b) FY2024 Budget Request. Mr. Lokken presented the Commission with a draft budget for 2024. Mr. Lokken felt a full-time Youth Services position is needed. Youth Services receives state grants that go into the General Fund.

He explained that beach operations include expenses for lifeguards, parking lot staff, and security and revenue received from parking and admission fees, sponsorships and other sources that go into the Special Revenue Fund. Revenue from leases at Cini Park goes into the General Fund.

Ms. Curry questioned a 4.4% increase due to a \$21,700 tax. Mr. Lokken reported the state has passed a law that municipal parking lots have to pay taxes. We are waiting for a written reply from Town Attorney on this matter.

Mr. Lokken stated East Lyme has many events and in his opinion it should be a full-time position to plan them. In the past the duties have been handled by an intern with additional support of the Recreation Supervisor. Mr. Larkin stated if we are not creating anything new, we would have a large increase to our budget by adding a full-time position. If you are not able to handle the workload, you will have to eliminate some activities.

Ms. Kovalanka felt overall what the group thinks is necessary for the department to run at its best should be included. She added It's the Board of Finance's job to make cuts.

The Commission was not in favor of upgrading the Recreation Supervisor position to an Assistant Director position, nor adding a new Events and Outreach Coordinator position. They felt that more time is needed to evaluate the need and to give the Director time to see how the existing staffing works out in the next fiscal year.

Commissioners expressed support for upgrading the Prevention Wellness and Mentoring Coordinator to full-time, contractual cleaning of the restrooms, shifting weekend Community Center staffing to the General Fund and adding athletic light controls. In terms of revenue, they expressed support of depositing revenue from Cini Park leases and State Youth Services grants into the Special Revenue Fund where expenses are.

c. Vendor Fees.

MOTION (2): Ms. Curry moved to set the minimum bid for McCook's and Bridebrook Vendor's fee the same as last year. Seconded by Mr. Larkin. (5-0) Unanimous.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (3): Ms. Curry moved to adjourn the February 9, 2023 Parks and Recreation Regular Meeting at 8:45 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Donovan. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Ghersi, Recording Secretary