

Meeting Minutes of the Parker Memorial Park Commission, Town of Branford, Connecticut
Regular Meeting of March 20th, at the Joe Trapasso Community House Honoring Branford World War II Veterans,
46 Church St.

Present: Commissioners Esborn, Kovi, Masotta, Radulski, and Redman; absent: None. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM. The minutes of the January meeting were reviewed and approved, with the motion to accept by Commissioner Masotta and seconded by Commissioner Esborn. It was noted that there was no February meeting.

Public Comments and Budget: There were no members of the public present. There was no budget report, as the Commission's funds have been transferred to the Town's Parks and Recreation Department (P&RD). Commissioner Radulski is to ask the P&RD for a regular representative to attend.

Correspondence: Members of the public have been contacting Commissioners with requests regarding memorial benches (more donations/deliveries are pending).

New Business: It was noted that more trash cans need to be set out for Parkgoers' use; at the Big Rock parking area, there is one trash receptacle and one recycling receptacle. Commissioner Radulski is to check with the P&RD as to where and when more can be placed.

Old Business:

1. The most recent update to the 'punchlist' of requests for maintenance/repair items, sent to Alex Palluzzi, Director of the PRD, has been removed from the body of the minutes, and the remainder of the action items below generally reflect items within the Commission's area of responsibility.
2. To recap the January meeting's events regarding the Park's enforcement of the "No dogs" policy: That meeting was attended by a number of personnel who serve as gate guards, and also Branford Police Department ('BPD') Captain David Galdenzi; while the First Selectman and representatives from Animal Control and the Parks and Recreation Department (P&RD) were scheduled to attend, they did not. It was established by reference to Town ordinances that enforcement actions are mandated. The Commission requested that two actions be taken: (1) The presence of a uniformed BPD officer on May 11 starting at 10 AM (the first day of gate-guard presence in the Park this year) in case of any dogwalkers who refuse to leave the Park when requested by the gate guard to do so and (2) The regular presence of uniformed BPD officers to drive through the Park's road and inform dogwalkers that they would need to leave the Park or would face the issuance of a summons with a fine. The Commission is to publicize the new actions via press releases and also research the topic of the definition of "service animals" – the U.S. Department of Justice was mentioned as having clear guidelines. Captain Galdenzi noted that there were not many records of dog-related calls to the BPD, and the Commission and the gate guards present agreed that all infractions would be reported to the BPD in the future.
3. Commissioner Redman noted at a previous meeting that she's seen pedestrians walking in the roadway near Big Rock and that action will be needed to prevent an accident between vehicles and pedestrians. Per a request from the Commission, the Department of Public Works (DPW) is installing a pedestrian path by the road and has almost completed the work. The Commission has discussed what signage should be used to discourage pedestrians from walking in the road, including a possible "Blind Spot" warning sign, and a "Children Playing" sign, and it was determined at this meeting that Commissioner Radulski is to request signage input from the Town Engineer and the DPW; it was thought that a brown background, as used in wilderness/historical/tourist areas, might be appealing and persuasive, versus the standard yellow/black color scheme. The Commission also discussed dedicating the walkway while announcing stepped-up no-dog enforcement, and Commissioner Radulski will follow up with the Town and media outlets on planning for that. Also related to pedestrian safety, Commissioner Radulski will check this Spring on the regrowth of vegetation that was trimmed last Spring and remove regrowth as necessary.
4. Issuance of parking stickers: Commissioner Radulski is continuing to follow up with the Tax Office.
5. Moving gate guards off their duties on rainy days and reassigned to fair-weather days to then assist the guard at the gate by patrolling the Park is to be discussed by Commissioner Radulski with Director Palluzzi for 2024.
6. The Commission received a request previously that the use of an electric mower for Park use be investigated; Commissioner Masotta is to follow up with the P&RD on that.

7. The Commission has discussed a request that the large lights in the Park be modified so that they can be turned off (or dimmed) for special events such as the Town fireworks and Harbor Lights; Commissioner Radulski is to research that topic.
8. Several Parkgoers have reported that they've seen animals in trash cans and suggested that tops be installed on the cans; Commissioner Radulski has contacted Director Palluzzi regarding that request and is awaiting a response.
9. A Parkgoer requested installation of an additional baby swing; Commissioner Radulski is to address that with Director Palluzzi.
10. There appeared to be fewer recycling boxes in the Park during last Summer; Commissioner Radulski is to address that with Director Palluzzi and check the bathhouse for extra boxes.
11. During a 2024 beach closure, a parkgoer remarked that the East Shore District Health Department closure signage was not very prominent, and Commissioner Radulski contacted Director Palluzzi with a request that the Recreation Department and ESDHD work together to produce more and more-prominent signs for the public in the future.
12. An inquiry was received as to why the dumpster was removed from the parking lot near Big Rock and placed in the main parking lot – Commissioner Redman has followed up with the P&RD and the waste-removal company and reported at the previous meeting that she'd been informed that the company's vehicles can't navigate under the wires along the road to Big Rock. Commissioner Redman has asked the waste-removal company to find a solution and get the dumpster moved.
13. From the punchlist, Commissioner Radulski was keeping an eye on when a hard freeze might allow a Town bucket truck to inspect the flagpole's top to determine what size of pole-mounted light fixture could be installed; that opportunity has passed, and dry weather in the Summer might allow this inspection.
14. It was noted that the flag now flying seems small for the height of the pole – Commissioner Masotta reported at this meeting that he'd found a source which reported that the proper size for the flagpole in the Park (estimated to be 40 feet tall) should be approximately ten feet by six feet.
15. A bench donor requested that all of the memorial benches be blasted, primed, and painted.
16. The graffiti at "Little Rock" may be possible to be curbed with additional surveillance; Commissioner Radulski has contacted the Police Department to see what additional patrols and/or surveillance methods may be available.

Continuing Items to Monitor:

1. The area near the bocce court has been reported to sometimes have had personally owned items near it. Commissioner Radulski is monitoring the area.
2. The operability of the lights at the main gate and dock are being checked by Commissioner Radulski periodically, and he's been adjusting the timing of the lights at the main gate to reflect the time of sunset.
3. Commissioner Radulski reported at a previous meeting that he'd heard from several members of the public that the main beach appears to have a steep dropoff; he stated that he'll investigate this at the next convenient low tide and report his observations.

The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, April 17th, 2024, at 7 PM, via whatever means are available, allowing for safety; the location will be stated in that meeting's agenda and will likely be the Joe Trapasso Community House Honoring Branford World War II Veterans, 46 Church St. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman

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 Matt Radulski
 BRANFORD TOWN CLERK