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Meeting Minutes of the Parker Memorial Park Commission, Town of Branford, Connecticut; Regular Meeting of September 18th, at the Joe Trapasso Community House Honoring Branford World War II Veterans, 46 Church St.

Present: Commissioners Esborn, Kovi, Masotta, and Radulski; absent: Redman. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM. The minutes of the July meeting (no August meeting was held) were not available for this meeting, and Commissioner Radulski will forward those when they're available.

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 has asked 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, and one bench has recently been installed).

New Business: Commissioner Kovi noted that the rain date for Harbor Lights is December 28th, and also the distribution of Park rules with all resident sticker was discussed, based on a resident's observations when procuring a sticker recently.

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. The P&RD requested a list of trees several months ago to be trimmed/removed; the Commissioners walked through the Park to see what trees appear to need removal or trimming, and the P&RD's contractor has toured the Park to make its own observations. In July, Commissioner Redman reported that there is a tree near the Chase cottage which should probably be removed; Commissioner Radulski is to visit and review the condition of the tree and report the condition to the P&RD for action.
3. The P&RD is reported to be proceeding with plans to modernize the bathrooms and other buildings, per a previous report from Mr. Alex Palluzzi, Director of the P&RD; no status updates have been received, and it's unknown whether the work has a project designation, or a building committee is planned, etc. The Commission discussed the following at this meeting: reconfiguring the storage shed/tractor garage to hold the Park's work truck (as well as the equipment already being stored); fixing the drainage system for the bathhouse showers; modifying the bathhouse to retain some changing areas and also open up some parts for shelter/tables; the many difficulties with establishing a snack bar there; installing a sewer line (may be unnecessary); jetty repair; plans for the Park overall. The Townwide plan should be reviewed to see what's there.
4. 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 (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. Dept. of Justice was mentioned as having clear guidelines. Captain Galdenzi noted that there were few records of dog-related calls to the BPD, and the Commission and the gate guards present agreed that infractions would be reported to the BPD in the future.

5. Regarding concerns with pedestrians in the roadway near Big Rock, Commissioner Radulski is to ask the Department of Public Works (DPW) to continue the walkway from the Big Rock parking lot up to the cottages’ parking area. The Commission has also 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 Commissioner Radulski has requested signage input from the Town Engineer and the DPW. The Commission also discussed dedicating the walkway while announcing stepped-up no-dog enforcement. Also related to pedestrian safety, Commissioner Radulski will check on the regrowth of vegetation that was trimmed last year and will remove regrowth as necessary.
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 has brought that topic to the attention of Town Hall, with no near-term resolution foreseen.
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 discussed that with Director Palluzzi.
9. 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.
10. 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 a previous meeting that she’d been informed that the company’s vehicles can’t navigate under the wires along the road to Big Rock. An additional utility pole has been installed to lift the wires, and the wires still need to be transferred.
11. From the punchlist, Commissioner Radulski was keeping an eye on when conditions might allow a Town bucket truck to inspect the flagpole’s top to determine what size of pole-mounted light fixture could be installed; dry weather in the Summer might allow this inspection, or cold weather which freezes the ground. Commissioner Esborn discussed a light he had, and it will be checked for its possible fitup.
12. A bench donor requested that all of the memorial benches be blasted, primed, and painted.
13. Several missing fence rails along the entrance road have been replaced.

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 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, October 16th, 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 either the Joe Trapasso Community House Honoring Branford World War II Veterans, 46 Church Street, or the Park.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman