

Meeting Minutes of the Parker Memorial Park Commission, Town of Branford, Connecticut

Regular Meeting of May 19, 2021 at the Joe Trapasso Community House Honoring Branford World War II Veterans, 46 Church St.

Present: Commissioners Esborn, O'Neill, and Radulski (Absent: Masotta and Redman). The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. The minutes were accepted, with the motion to accept by Commissioner Esborn and seconded by Commissioner O'Neill.

Public Comments and Budget: There were no members of the public present, and no budget report, as the Commission's funds have been transferred to the Town's Board of Recreation. Branford's Director of Recreation, Alex Palluzzi, attended the meeting.

Correspondence: Members of the public have been contacting Commissioners with various requests/input regarding memorial benches (one bench has recently been received at the Public Works Department ('PWD'), and two donations are pending) and personal gatherings in the Park.

Old Business:

1. Following the repaving of the Park's road, now completed, Commissioner Radulski has asked Director Palluzzi to determine what actions are going to be taken to limit the space available for cars to park illegally in the turning circle near the flagpole – specifically, how much room is needed for emergency vehicles to maneuver around the circle and how the paved area will be restricted to the proper dimensions. At this meeting, Director Palluzzi recommended Commissioner Radulski consult the Branford Police Department regarding that, and, if necessary, the Branford Fire Department. Also, Commissioner Redman noted at a previous meeting that there's some cracking in the asphalt near the cottages.
2. Regarding dead/deteriorated trees, much of the damage having occurred during last year's windstorms, Director Palluzzi is to coordinate a walkthrough with a contracted tree-removal service and Commissioner Radulski, to develop a list of the damaged/fallen trees which should be removed or fallen trees which should be sectioned and either removed or left in place. Also, Commissioner Redman reported at a previous meeting that a tree near her house in the Park area in the southwest corner of the Park should be removed. At this meeting, a tree leaning over the bocce court, and a distressed tree near the flagpole, were also noted to be good candidates for removal.
3. Mr. Walt Romblad, head of the Park's work crew, reported the following items at previous meetings (items addressed more recently by Director Palluzzi have been deleted):
 - a. The flagpole requires repainting and its halyard may require replacement; Commissioner Radulski is to work toward that end with Director Palluzzi. At this meeting, the Commission recommended that a solar-powered light be installed to keep the flag illuminated so that it can be flown at night.
 - b. The "No Parking" lines on the Town Dock require repainting so that Park maintenance vehicles have enough room to park to empty the trash barrels there (the Town Dock is, strictly speaking, outside the Commission's area of responsibility). This will be on hold while repairs at the Town Dock are in progress.

4. It was determined at a previous meeting that the gaps between the main gate's pillars and the easternmost ends of the fencing should be closed by planting thorn bushes there; Director Palluzzi stated at this meeting that his personnel would be planting them soon.
5. The smoking ban was discussed. Commissioner Redman has requested of the PWD that a "No Smoking" sign be added at the handicapped parking area near the bathrooms.
6. A "No Dogs" sign is needed at the handicapped parking spaces near the bathroom building. Commissioner Redman has requested that from the PWD and will report back when it's been installed. In addition, the Commissioners noted that, during the winter, the no-dogs rule is routinely violated, and it was decided to restart enforcement efforts once that the gate guards are back on duty. As practicable, the Commissioners and gate guards will remind any violator when they see an infraction and then contact the Branford Police Department if offenders refuse to take their dogs out of the Park.
7. The PWD has been requested by Commissioner Redman to place signs to notify drivers of the in-Park speed bumps; Director Palluzzi reported at this meeting that this action might not be necessary due to the bumps having distinctive stripes on them. The Commissioners are to view the bumps and determine if signs are needed.
8. The lights at the main gate and dock are now operational and are to be checked by Commissioner Radulski periodically. Also, per a report from Commissioner Redman, there's a utility light out on Parker Park Memorial Drive, near the FitzGerald house, and, per a report from Commissioner Radulski, one of the lights near the bathhouse is out. Commissioner Redman is to contact the utility with that information.
9. Director Palluzzi is to request that the PWD have repairs performed to the main beach's jetty on the, which has deteriorated areas and a section which has collapsed and must be repaired in the interest of public safety. Commissioner Radulski is to follow up on this.
10. Commissioner Masotta reported at a previous meeting that he'd received a request from an East Haven resident for the resident's wedding to be held in the Park around July 15, 2021, likely on a Sunday afternoon; the Commission approved issuance of fifteen parking permits for the event and requested that Commissioner Masotta stress to the applicant that several important rules apply to any use of the Park (no glass or alcohol allowed, no tents/awnings allowed, no reservations of any kind apply, etc.).
11. Commissioner Redman previously reported that there is an accretion of concrete left over from the seawall repairs in the Park area in the southwest corner of the Park. A sinkhole that appeared (reappeared) along the railing in that area of the Park has recently been filled in; the Commission noted that it previously inspected the sinkhole during a walkthrough and determined that it has been caused by a collapsed drainage pipe. Commissioner Radulski requested of Director Palluzzi that action be taken to remove the concrete, repair the drainpipe, and permanently eliminate the sinkhole.
12. The Commissioners approved at the December 2020 meeting that the Park's entrance would, in the short term, be secured with a chain and combination lock; this is being delayed in order to work through logistical issues. In the longer term, the Commission is to work with the Director Palluzzi to have installed a keypad-operated gate with a lifting or swinging arm, which will need to be funded through the Board of Recreation.
13. Commissioners Esborn and Radulski will be inspecting the trees near the Playscape for any dead or interfering limbs and taking action as appropriate.
14. Regarding notification of gate guards of upcoming special events, the Commission recommends that the Recreation Department work out a means for the Commission to show a long-term schedule to avoid surprises, either online or in another way. Gate guards

have started duty on weekends, Commissioner Redman reported at a previous meeting that the gate guards would likely be starting full-week duty near Father's Day.

15. The Town fireworks have been scheduled for June 26th, rain dates set for the 27th and 28th; they are to be held at Foote Park versus in the Park, as has been the tradition.
16. There's brush and dirt piled in the small turnout just west of the bathroom building, and Director Palluzzi is to have that removed. Commissioner Radulski will follow up on that.

New Business:

1. The Commission and Director Palluzzi compared notes on the progress of a recognition ceremony for a Branford citizen, including date, attendees, bench placement, and award.
2. Director Palluzzi reported on the following maintenance/repair items: One of the swings on the large set had been cut/damaged and been repaired; the top of the bathhouse may need its periodic resealing; the bathhouse shower drain is clogged and will be cleared.
3. The commissioners reported that a parkgoer's truck has been seen several times parked in a spot which blocks access to the north pedestrian entrance, and a concrete block or several blocks, as needed, should be positioned to preclude that; some of the railings on the top of the bathhouse are rusted and require cleaning/painting or replacement;

Continuing Items to Monitor:

1. The area near the bocce court has been reported at several times to have a number of personally owned items near it. Commissioner Radulski is to continue to communicate to persons using the court that only Town-furnished items are allowed to remain in the area when bocce-court users are not there.
2. Regarding the presence of tents/canopies on the main beach, the Commission has set the following limits on tents (which are prohibited by Town ordinance), canopies, and "sun shades": Structures are allowed to be five feet high or less, with a continuous fabric structure touching the sand (and with no "legs" holding up a canopy surface), and covering fewer than sixty square feet.
3. It was reported at a previous meeting that a parkgoer stated to a gate guard that the online rules about entry for non-stickerholders were incorrect; Commissioner Redman reported that she'd checked the information and found it all to be correct at that point in time. Commissioner O'Neill is to monitor the Park-related information and check it periodically.
4. Some of the Park's trees have mulch piled close to the trunks, which can cause rotting of the bark and (eventually) the death of the affected tree, and the mulch will need to be pulled away from the trunks. Commissioner Radulski reported this to Director Palluzzi for action at this meeting after checking several trees this week.
5. It was reported at a previous meeting that, contrary to the Park's rules, some parkgoers are riding bicycles off of paved areas. Director Palluzzi and the gate guards will be asked by Commissioner Radulski to keep an eye out for that activity.
6. It was noted at a previous meeting that there's erosion on the secondary sledding hill (which runs from the north side of the top of the main easterly hill down toward the bathroom building); Commissioner Radulski is to continue to check on that and to report about it to the Commission.
7. Dumping of yard waste has been noted at the north-central part of the Park, at the 'back' entrance by which pedestrians can enter the Park; the "No Dumping" sign there needs to be replaced, and Commissioner Radulski will do this and monitor the area. His latest report is that there were no signs of any additional dumping.

The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, June 16th, 2021, at 7 PM, via whatever means are available, allowing for safety.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman