

Meeting Minutes of the Parker Memorial Park Commission, Town of Branford, Connecticut
Regular Meeting of July 21, 2021 at the Joe Trapasso Community House Honoring Branford World
War II Veterans, 46 Church St.

Present: Commissioners Esborn, O'Neill, Redman, and Radulski (Absent: Masotta). The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. The minutes of the previous meeting 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.

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

Old Business:

1. Commissioner Radulski reported that recent heavy rains have significantly increased the 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 communicate that to Director Palluzzi of the Town's Parks and Recreation Department for action.
2. The Commission discussed the progress of a recognition ceremony for a Branford citizen, including date (now set for Sunday, August 29th), attendees, bench placement, and award.
3. A sinkhole that appeared (reappeared) along the railing in the Park's property in the southwest corner of the Park was recently filled in; the Commission had previously inspected the sinkhole during a walkthrough and determined that it is caused by a collapsed drainage pipe. Commissioner Radulski has requested of Director Palluzzi that the drainpipe be repaired, in order to permanently eliminate the sinkhole.
4. It has been discussed whether parking spaces ought to be designated (via the use of lime or another method) in the main parking lot in order to maximize the number of spaces available and also to avoid cars being parked in by other cars, several instances of which have occurred recently; Director Palluzzi is to investigate the price and feasibility of marking the parking spaces. It was noted at this meeting that it may be necessary to mark only the main parking axis from each concrete block, and the first few spaces, in order to guide parkgoers as to where to park.
5. Mr. Walt Romblad, former head of the Park's work crew, reported the following items at previous meetings (items already addressed by Director Palluzzi have been deleted):
 - a. The flagpole requires repainting and its halyard requires replacement; in addition, Commission has recommended that a light (solar-powered if feasible) be installed to keep the flag illuminated so that it can be flown at night. Director Palluzzi is working on those items.
 - b. (This will be on hold while repairs at the Town Dock are in progress): 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).

6. 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.
7. “No Dogs” signs are needed at the handicapped parking spaces near the bathroom building and at the Big Rock parking lot. For the latter, a parkgoer recently reported to Commissioner Radulski that a “No Dogs” sign in that area had been removed; therefore, the Commission believes that a very robust form of affixing the sign to a post will be needed. Commissioner Redman has requested the former from the PWD and will report back if/when it’s been installed; Commissioner Radulski will follow up with the PWD on both items. In addition, the Commissioners noted that, during the winter, the no-dogs rule was routinely violated, and enforcement efforts have been restarted now that the gate guards are back on duty. As practicable, the Commissioners and gate guards will remind any violator of the rule when they see an infraction and then contact the Branford Police Department if offenders refuse to take their dogs out of the Park.
8. The PWD was requested by Commissioner Redman to place signs to notify drivers of the in-Park speed bumps; there was some question as to whether these were needed, after which Commissioner Radulski contacted the Town Engineer’s office and was informed that sign installation should move forward. The Commission will follow up with the PWD.
9. With the repaving of the Park’s road now completed, Commissioner Radulski is to work to determine what actions are needed 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. Commissioner Radulski has referred the question to the Branford Fire Department’s Fire Marshall. Also, Commissioner Redman noted at a previous meeting that there’s some cracking in the asphalt near the cottages.
10. Director Palluzzi has been requested to have the PWD repair the main beach’s jetty, which has deteriorated areas and a section which has collapsed; this must be repaired in the interest of public safety. Commissioner Radulski is to follow up on this.
11. 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.
12. Director Palluzzi reported recently on the following periodic maintenance/repair items: The top of the bathhouse may need its periodic resealing; the bathhouse shower drain has been clogging and will be cleared, and the same drain-clogging issue applies to the bubbler near the bathroom building. Also, the Commission noted at a previous that some of the railings on the top of the bathhouse are rusted and require cleaning/painting or replacement.
13. The Commission reported to Director Palluzzi at a previous meeting that a parkgoer’s truck has been seen several times parked in a spot which blocks access to the north pedestrian entrance, and that a concrete block or several blocks, as needed, should be positioned to preclude that.
14. 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 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.
15. There’s a utility light out on Parker Park Memorial Drive, near the FitzGerald house, and a utility light near the bathhouse is out; Commissioner Redman has contacted Town Hall with that information and stated that she’d continue to follow up. The lights at the main gate and dock are now operational and are to be checked by Commissioner Radulski periodically.

16. The Town fireworks were held on June 26th at Foote Park. At the Commission meeting of June 30th, Director Palluzzi asked the Commission's opinion as to whether the fireworks should be held in Parker Memorial Park again, and the Commissioners unanimously expressed at this meeting that they are in favor of the fireworks returning to Parker Memorial Park. Commissioner Redman, who serves on the Town's Fireworks Committee, is to report this to the Committee.

New Business: Commissioner Radulski reported that he'd heard from a member of the public that there may be some type of evening/nighttime boat parade on the Branford River this year; the Commission discussed this and has no objection to allowing parking after sunset, so long as the parade organizers provide security.

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 to monitor the area.
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. The online rules about entry for non-stickerholders were incorrect at one point; Commissioner O'Neill is to monitor the Park-related information and check it periodically.
4. It was noted during a Park walkthrough that 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 a previous meeting after checking several trees.
5. Contrary to the Park's rules, some parkgoers are riding bicycles off of paved areas. Director Palluzzi and the gate guards are to keep an eye out for that activity.
6. 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.
7. Regarding dead/deteriorated trees, several of the damaged/fallen trees have now been removed and some fallen trees have been sectioned and left in place.
8. The gaps between the main gate's pillars and the easternmost ends of the fencing will be monitored to ensure they remain closed by the shrubs recently planted there.
9. Commissioner Masotta reported in 2020 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. Commissioner Masotta reported via recent email communication with Commissioner Radulski that he's received no further information regarding this and that the East Haven resident had been given Commissioner Radulski's contact information. If there's no further news in August regarding this topic, this will be removed from the next set of minutes.
10. Commissioners Esborn and Radulski will be inspecting the trees near the Playscape for any dead or interfering limbs, and taking action as appropriate.

The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, August 18th, 2021, at 7 PM, via whatever means are available, allowing for safety; the location will be stated in that meeting's agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman