

Meeting Minutes of the Parker Memorial Park Commission, Town of Branford, Connecticut
Regular Meeting of September 15, 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 Redman 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 regarding memorial benches (one receipt is pending) and personal gatherings in the Park, as well as suggestions regarding maintenance and upkeep in the Park. Commissioner Radulski previously received suggestions that a PVC pipe in the Big Rock beach be removed, that phragmites growing there be eradicated, and that the dog images on several of the "No Smoking" signs be removed. Also, a recent article in the local Shoreline Times newspaper reported incorrect information regarding Park access, including access for dogs, and those were corrected by the Town's Parks and Recreation Department in a communication to the newspaper in question.

Old Business:

1. Commissioner Radulski reported that this Summer's heavy rains 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. 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.
3. 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 the previous 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.
4. 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 Commission has recommended to Director Palluzzi that a light (solar-powered if feasible, to be mounted at the top of the flagpole so that the light shines downward and does not contribute to light pollution) be installed to keep the flag illuminated so that it can be flown at night. Director Palluzzi has reported that he's working on that.
 - 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).

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. “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 have noted that the no-dogs rule is routinely violated. When the gate guards restart their duties in the Spring, they are to 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.
7. The PWD was requested by Commissioner Redman to place signs to notify drivers of the in-Park speed bumps, and the Town Engineer’s office has confirmed that such signs are to be installed; Commissioner Radulski will follow up with the PWD.
8. With the repaving of the Park’s road now completed, Commissioner Radulski is working 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 has been cleared, and the same drain-clogging issue applies to the bubbler near the bathroom building. Also, the Commission noted at a previous meeting that some of the railings on the top of the bathhouse are rusted and require cleaning/painting or replacement.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. There’s a utility-furnished light out on Parker Park Memorial Drive, near the FitzGerald house, and a utility-furnished light near the bathhouse is also 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. Also, the light on the bathroom building is out.

New Business: The screen door of the men’s bathroom requires repair; the mowing of the southwest Park area near the cottages needs to be monitored; signs stating, “No bicycles off paved

areas” are needed near the west edge of the Park near the cottages, and, new graffiti has been reported at the water’s edge in the same area. Also, new uses/repurposing of the bathhouse were discussed, because the changing areas are reported to be used rarely; possible new uses include a snack bar, an open-air pavilion with tables, etc., while maintaining some storage for lifeguard gear in the summer and for trash cans in the winter.

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. 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 monitoring the Park-related information 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, and Commissioner Redman suggested that a sign should be posted near the West section of the Park, near the cottage parking, to advise bicyclists that no off-road bicycling is allowed.
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. 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.
8. Commissioners Esborn and Radulski will be inspecting the trees near the Playscape for any dead or interfering limbs, and then taking action as appropriate.
9. The Town fireworks are to be held in Parker Memorial Park next year, per a report from Commissioner Redman.
10. Commissioner Radulski reported at a previous meeting 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. Commissioner Radulski reported at the August meeting that the event has been postponed until next year.

The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, October 20th, 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 8:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman