

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

Meeting of June 14, 2018, Held at Branford Fire Headquarters, 45 North Main Street, Branford

Present: Commissioners O'Neill, Radulski, and Redman (Absent: Commissioners Esborn and Masotta). The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted unanimously by the Commission, with the motion to approve ('MTA') by Commissioner Redman and the motion to second ('MTS') by Commissioner O'Neill.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present to speak; the period was held open by unanimous vote, with the MTA by Commissioner O'Neill and the MTS by Commissioner Redman.

Budget: No report (the Commission's funds have been transferred to the Town's Board of Recreation). Alex Palluzzi, Branford Director of Parks and Recreation, was present, and noted that spending on the Park's needs was, in his view, higher than in previous years.

Correspondence: Members of the public have been contacting Commissioners with various requests/input regarding memorial benches and event dates. No other correspondence was noted. As noted in previous minutes, communications with other Town departments should include that the Recreation Department should equip the lifeguards with bullhorns. Director Palluzzi noted that the Commission can have information/schedule items included in his Department's newsletter, of which he presented an example.

Old Business:

1. Regarding dead/deteriorated trees in the Park, the Town's First Selectman walked through the Park with several Commissioners on April 11 to inspect for unsafe tree/limb conditions (refer to previous minutes for more information regarding tree care/removal). Discussions at this June meeting added in that Commissioners have noticed that there are many 'telephone pole'-type trees (still standing, but bare of limbs) in the woods. Commissioner Radulski is to send the information to Selectman Cosgrove for action by Town departments and/or contractors.
2. Regarding the deteriorated road surface of some parts of Parker Memorial Park Drive, discussed at previous meetings, the Commission has recommended to the Town that a large section of road should be entirely repaved. The road was inspected by Selectman Cosgrove during the walkthrough of April 11. Repaving is recommended to reduce/eliminate hazards to pedestrians and thereby reduce Town liability; some spot patching has been accomplished.
3. Permanent fencing has been installed at the sides of the entrance road, from the inside of the main gate to the second pedestrian walkway. Commissioner Masotta is to follow up with the Public Works Department regarding closing up the gaps between the main-gate pillars and the easternmost ends of the fencing, perhaps by having thorn bushes planted in the appropriate spots. In addition, it was reported that some parts of the fence have sharp, bare wires sticking up, and Commissioner Masotta is to request suitable action to remedy this, as well.
4. The smoking ban was discussed. The Commission determined at the previous meeting that a "No Smoking" sign should be installed at the Big Rock parking area as well, as should a "No Littering" sign, and a sign at the center entrance to the main beach. Commissioner Radulski is to request those items of the Town Board of Recreation.
5. Regarding the presence of tents/canopies on the main beach, the Commission is reviewing what limits to set on tents (which are prohibited by Town ordinance), canopies, and "sun shades" and umbrellas. The initial takeaway has been that structures five feet high and shorter, with a continuous fabric structure touching the sand (and with no "legs" holding up a canopy surface), and covering fewer than sixty square feet, would be allowed. The Commission is to discuss this further. Mr. Palluzzi said that he'd inform the lifeguards of this information, and that he'd give the gate-guards rules to the lifeguards; Commissioner Redman gave him a copy of those rules at this meeting.

6. The Land Trust's Canoe/Kayak Branford River Parade took place on September 16th, 2017; some adjustments (such as landing on the main beach if the event takes place after Labor Day) are to be discussed for the next Parade, with the Commission to decide upon safety measures to protect any beachgoers.
7. The issue of whether Parker Memorial Park Drive is a Town road is still open, with the discussion to continue after further research.
8. 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 area was inspected by Selectman Cosgrove during the walkthrough. Commissioner Radulski is to request of the First Selectman's office that it direct the responsible Town employee to investigate and, if warranted, then inform the responsible party/parties (likely a nearby landowner) that the materials must be removed.
9. The area near the bocce court is reported to have a number of personally owned items near it. Commissioner Radulski is to communicate to the persons using the area that only Town-furnished items are allowed to remain in the area when bocce-court users are not there.

New Business:

1. The question of the number of items (e.g., a bench, tree, etc.) which can be donated in memory of a person was discussed, and the Commission determined that the limit should be one item, plus plantings smaller than a tree (e.g., a hydrangea bush). It was also decided that gifts/memorials would be accepted only from Branford residents.
2. A majority of the benches in the Park have been painted green, as per Commission discussions in 2017, and the Commission will request of the Town Board of Recreation that the remainder be painted green.
3. The Commission has been informed that Branford's annual Town Fireworks will not be fired off from the Town Dock at the south end of Harbor Street this year; instead, they'll be fired off at Foote Park (rather than at the previously designated site, Eco Park).
4. The office of the First Selectman inquired of the Commission whether it would welcome a census of a local plant species by the New England Wildflower Society; the Commission agreed to this taking place, and Commissioner Radulski is to respond to Mr. Cosgrove.
5. Mr. Palluzzi stated that Mr. Greg Nobile is requesting permission to place a piano in the Park as part of a Town-wide effort to place pianos in public spaces, time and place to be discussed; the Commission agreed in principle but decided that more details will be needed before issuing approval.
6. Commissioner Redman reported that she'd requested of the Department of Public Works that a sign be placed to notify drivers of the speed bump.
7. It was reported that new "No Dogs" signs are needed at the handicapped-parking area at the south end of the main beach and at the north-central (pedestrian) entrance to the Park.

The public-comment period was closed by a vote, with the motion to approve ('MTA') by Commissioner O'Neill and the motion to second ('MTS') by Commissioner Redman. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM; the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 12, 2018, at 7 PM, at Canoe Brook Center, 11 Cherry Hill Road, Branford.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman

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BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT

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