

Meeting Minutes of the Parker Memorial Park Commission, Town of Branford, Connecticut
Regular Meeting of July 9, 2020 via Zoom, with public access offered via the contact
information in the published agenda

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TOWN OF BRANFORD

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

Public Comments: There were no members of the public present.

Budget: No report (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 and personal gatherings in the Park.

Old Business:

1. Regarding the measures being taken to prevent COVID-19 transmission in the Park, Commissioner Radulski is to contact the Director of the Town's Recreation Department, Mr. Alex Palluzzi, to request that changes in Town/Department policy concerning COVID -19 prevention in the Park be communicated to the Commission.
2. Regarding the deteriorated road surface of some parts of the Park road, discussed at previous meetings, paving was noted to be in progress during the June meeting and has now been completed; asphalt speed bumps have been installed, 3/8" stone was put down in the main parking lot, one of the pedestrian crosswalks from the main parking lot to the Playscape area was closed off to improve safety, and the newly paved areas have received lines/markings. Also, dirt has been set into the road margins and some has been seeded with grass seed. Commissioner Radulski is to contact 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, using that amount of room as a guide.
3. Regarding dead/deteriorated trees, Director Palluzzi reported to the Commission at a previous meeting that approximately \$20,000 has been requested by his department for removal of dead/deteriorated trees from the properties his department oversees. The latest previous update (from September 2019's meeting) is that the locust trees along Harbor Street should be trimmed of dead branches, which has now largely been completed. General history/background: Commissioners surveyed the Park in December 2018, after leaves were off the trees, to check for trees and limbs presenting danger to Parkgoers. Commissioner Radulski generated a map detailing the issues noted during the walkthroughs and tendered a copy to Director Palluzzi at a previous meeting to pass on to the First Selectman.
4. 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 bathhouse might benefit from having several stalls removed – this will be dropped as impractical due to the expense of the required engineering review.
 - b. The flagpole requires repainting and its halyard may require replacement.

- c. 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 bocce courts have been closed to encourage COVID-19 social-distancing measures.
6. 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 in the appropriate spots; Director Palluzzi stated that his personnel would be planting them. It was discussed at this meeting that a better method might be to add a section of wire mesh or other fencing material.
7. As previously noted, some parts of the fence in the area of the main gate had bare wires sticking up, and Director Palluzzi was requested at a previous meeting to have this remedied; the wire mesh has recently been observed to have been removed, and Commissioner Radulski will inquire of Director Palluzzi as to why this safety measure was removed.
8. The smoking ban was discussed. Commissioner Redman has requested of the Public Works Department ('PWD') that a "No Smoking" sign be added at the handicapped parking area near the bathrooms.
9. 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 during the Winter that the no-dogs rule is routinely violated during the Winter, and it was decided to restart enforcement efforts now that the gate guards are back on duty. As practicable, the Commissioners will individually remind violators of the rule when they see an infraction in the Park, as well as reminding the Park gate guards to enforce the rule.
10. 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), which Commissioner Radulski is to continue to check on and to report about to the Commission.
11. The PWD has been requested by Commissioner Redman to place a sign to notify drivers of the in-Park speed bumps. As noted above, the repaving included installation of asphalt speed bumps.
12. 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; there is a "No Dumping" sign there, and this area is being monitored by Commissioner Radulski. His latest report is that, as of July 8, there were no signs of any additional dumping.
13. The lights at the main gate and dock are now operational and are to be checked by Commissioner Radulski periodically.
14. The Commission had previously determined that the stop sign on Harbor Street near the main gate should be moved several yards north to encourage drivers to make full stops before turning into the Park; it was determined at a later meeting that installing a "stop ahead" sign would be a more effective measure, and Commissioner Masotta is to contact the appropriate Police Commission members to move this forward.

New Business:

1. The progress of seawall maintenance was discussed, and Commissioner Radulski is to contact the PWD to request further maintenance of the jetty on the main beach, which has several deteriorated areas and now has a section which has collapsed and must be repaired in the interest of public safety.
2. Commissioner Masotta reported that he'd received a request from an East Haven resident for the resident's wedding to be held in the Park at a later date, 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 apply, etc.).

Continuing Items to Monitor:

1. The Branford River Parade for canoes/kayaks/stand-up paddleboards, organized by the Branford Land Trust, is to be held on September 12th, 2020, per Commissioner Radulski.
2. 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, once it reopens, that only Town-furnished items are allowed to remain in the area when bocce-court users are not there.
3. 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.
4. It was reported at a previous meeting that a parkgoer stated to a gate guard that the rules posted online about entry for non-stickerholders are incorrect; Commissioner Redman reported that she'd checked the online information and found all information to be correct at that point in time. The Commission will check this periodically.
5. The swings' fittings should be checked for wear and damage.
6. Some of the Park's trees have mulch piled too 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 is to report this to Director Palluzzi for action.

The next meeting is to be held on Thursday, August 13, 2020, at 7 PM, via whatever means are available, allowing for safety.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman