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BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

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

Regular Meeting of December 10, 2020 via Zoom, with public access offered via the contact information in the published agenda

Present: Commissioners Masotta, O'Neill, Radulski, and Redman (Absent: Esborn). The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM. The minutes were accepted by unanimous vote, with the motion to accept by Commissioner Redman 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. Alex Palluzzi, Director of the Town's Parks and Recreation Department, joined the meeting shortly after it started.

Correspondence: Members of the public have been contacting Commissioners with various requests/input regarding memorial benches and personal gatherings in the Park. Of note is that the second-annual 'Harbor Lights' luminary display is to be held on December 19th.

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, using that amount of room as a guide.
2. Regarding dead/deteriorated trees, at the September meeting the Commission determined that another walkthrough should be carried out this Fall; the Commission tentatively set the coming weekend for a walkthrough. Also, Commissioner Radulski stated that he will walk through the Park's trails to determine if any clearance work is needed and will report back to the Commission regarding that; he's already seen that a large root ball about one hundred yards southeast of Big Rock should be allowed to drop back into place by sawing through the fallen tree's trunk. Finally, Commissioner Redman reported that a tree near her house in the Park area in the southwest corner of the Park should be removed. Commissioner O'Neill has drafted a letter to be sent to the Town administration noting the dangers posed by the dead/damaged trees in several areas and the Commission's concerns regarding the dangers.
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 report that to Director Palluzzi.
 - 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).
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 in the appropriate spots; Director Palluzzi stated that his personnel would be planting them. It was discussed at August's meeting that a better method might be to add a section of wire mesh or other fencing

material; no action has been noted to date, and Commissioner Radulski is to follow up with Director Palluzzi regarding that.

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 will individually remind violators of the rule when they see an infraction in the Park.
7. The Public Works Department ('PWD') has been requested by Commissioner Redman to place signs to notify drivers of the in-Park speed bumps; Commissioner Redman is to contact Director Palluzzi and request that he relay that request to the PWD.
8. The lights at the main gate and dock are now operational and are to be checked by Commissioner Radulski periodically. Per a report from Commissioner Redman, there's a utility light out on Parker Park Memorial Drive, near the FitzGerald house, and Commissioner Redman is to contact the utility with that information.
9. 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.
10. Commissioner Radulski is to contact the PWD via Director Palluzzi to request further maintenance of the jetty on the main beach, which has deteriorated areas and a section which has collapsed and must be repaired in the interest of public safety.
11. 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.).
12. It was noted by Commissioner Radulski at a previous meeting that he'd seen the national flag flying on the Parks' flagpole after dark and had lowered and folded it, and would return it to the Recreation Department, with a request either that any flag be lowered after sunset or that illumination be provided.

New Business:

1. Commissioner Redman previously reported that there is some construction debris (specifically, an accretion of concrete) left over from the seawall repairs in the Park area between two of the private homes in the southwest corner of the Park, the Chase house and the neighboring house. In addition, at this meeting she reported that a sinkhole has appeared (reappeared) along the railing in that area of the Park and that she'd contact Director Palluzzi to have it filled. The Commission is to inspect the sinkhole during the walkthrough and request of the Recreation Department that action be taken to determine and eliminate the cause, and also to fill the sinkhole.
2. Commissioner Redman also reported that the dumpster in the Park was recently full and overflowing, and that a call to Director Palluzzi had gotten the situation corrected very quickly.
3. The Commissioners discussed several recent instances of late-night activity and vandalism in the Park; Director Palluzzi added that at least one other park in Town has experienced several

separate instances of vandalism. The Commission discussed near-term and short-term measures to deter vandalism and after-hours entry, with the primary methods determined to be (A) increased police presence through frequent patrol drives through the Park, which Commissioner Radulski is to discuss with the Chief of Police, (B) securing the entrance with a chain and combination lock, which Commissioner Radulski is to install as soon as possible, and (C) installing a keypad-operated gate with a lifting or swinging arm, which will need to be funded through the Board of Recreation.

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 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. Commissioner O'Neill is working with the Recreation Department to get the rules prominently visible (they are currently only available through a Web search) and, once accomplished, the Commission will check this periodically.
4. The swings' fittings should be checked for wear and damage; Commissioner Radulski is to check on that and to report to the Commission and Director Palluzzi regarding it.
5. 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 has reported this to Director Palluzzi for action, and is to check on that again and to report to the Commission and Director Palluzzi regarding it.
6. It was reported at a previous meeting that, contrary to the Park's rules, some parkgoers are riding bicycles off of paved areas. In the Spring, Director Palluzzi and the gate guards will be asked to keep an eye out for that activity.
7. Regarding the measures being taken to prevent COVID-19 transmission in the Park, Commissioner Radulski has contacted the Director of the Town's Recreation Department, Mr. Alex Palluzzi, to request that any changes in Town/Department policy concerning COVID-19 prevention in the Park be communicated to the Commission.
8. 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.
9. 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 there were no signs of any additional dumping.

The Commission reviewed its meeting scheduling and determined that meetings would be moved to the third Wednesday of each month, pending confirmation from each Commissioner . The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at 7 PM, via whatever means are available, allowing for safety.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Radulski, Chairman