



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Parks & Recreation Commission

*Susan Esty, Chairman
Steven Pernal, Vice Chair
Jim Henderson, Secretary*

www.oldsaybrookct.gov

*Star Rueckert
Bror Ashe
Nancy Gatta
Kevin Lane*

**OLD SAYBROOK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

Wednesday, May 13, 2020; 6:30 PM
Meeting Held Via Web Access/Dial In

MINUTES

- 1. Call Meeting to Order** – Chair Susan Esty called the meeting to order at 6:33p.m.
Present were: Director Ray Allen, Susan Esty, Steven Pernal, Nancy Gatta, Jim Henderson, Kevin Lane, Bror Ashe & Star Rueckert entered at 6:38pm
Absent: None
Also present: Jonathan Paradis, Assistant Director & Tina Antolino, Recording Clerk
- 2. Approval of April 8, 2020 Meeting** – MOTION to accept the April 8, 2020 minutes was made by Jim Henderson seconded by Kevin Lane and unanimously approved with the following correction: Section 9A “Susan Esty reported she attended Board of Finance (BOF) March 17th and BOF March 24th. She also attended a meeting with Ray Allen and Town Hall IT about tele-media and she will be visiting parks during the upcoming months.”
- 3. Recognition of Guests** – Police Chief & Emergency Management Director Michael Spera entered the meeting at 6:53p.m.
- 4. Correspondence** – None
- 5. Review of Bills** – The Commission reviewed bills #471 through #514 dated May 13, 2020 in the amount of \$9,637.46.
- 6. Public Comments-** Police Chief & Emergency Management Director Michael Spera spoke about the town’s response and recovery effort going on for the Covid-19 crisis. Masks were given to town residents and will soon be available to businesses and their employees. Restaurants will soon open with outside dining only. There is conversation about using and advertising the use of parks as places to eat carry-out. There is still worry about community spread, as cases are spiking on the shoreline west of Old Saybrook. In the ongoing recovery phase, a municipal recovery taskforce has been made whose goal is to reestablish the fabric of Old Saybrook. Ray Allen chairs the recreation working group subcommittee. The group’s mission is to plan goals for recreation in all aspects of town, not just under the umbrella of town facilities. There will be a meeting May 14th about summer camps. Police officers are currently at beaches on weekends to support P&R staff. The beaches are currently open with 50% capacity and for residents only. If you are eligible for a beach pass under Parks & Rec regulations, then you are considered a “resident” in the minds of the police department. There are no bathrooms facilities and walk/bike traffic cannot be turned away. The vendor at Harvey’s Beach has gone through health inspections. Her business hours have been lengthened, but there is still no parking for non-residents. The police presence at the beach is scheduled weekends only through June 30th. The Chief discussed that masks are not mandatory unless you cannot maintain a 6ft social distance. When beaches get busy, there will need to be a discussion with the Chief and health district on how to maintain safety while at the beach and in the water. Questions from commissioners were then taken. Chair Susan

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Esty thanked and expressed her appreciation for all the support from emergency management and the hard work and long hours put in. Chief Michael Spera left the meeting at 7:31p.m.

7. Old Business

A. All Parks Review – Ray Allen reported the Pavilion stone work is almost done. All parks are open and being utilized. The tennis courts at Kavanaugh Park are 75% complete and leaf gates will be put in shortly. Normal spring maintenance has resumed at mini golf which has a planned opening of next Saturday.

B. Preserve Update – Susan Esty reported there was no Preserve Ad Hoc meeting. The Board of Selectmen has approved a \$106,000 grant from the Trust for Public Land for work on Ingham Hill Road. Ray Allen confirmed the grant was transmitted and received by the Trust for Public Land on May 13th. Susan Esty stated that natural diversity database guidance is available until June 27, 2021.

C. Strategic Plan of Parks Update- Kevin Lane reported the input requested from last meeting was sent to FitzGerald & Halliday (F&H). Consequently, the survey has been edited and F&H have done a press release and both should be sent to local media, social media and the department's email list by the end of this week. Right now the return date of the survey is to be determined. The target return response is 25% of the town's population. Jona Paradis thinks reaching the response goal should be successful because of the increase in online programming.

D. 2020-2021 Budget Discussion – None.

E. Any Other Business Regarding Programs, Facilities or Personnel – Susan Esty wanted to make sure the website is transparent about purchasing beach passes with the new 50% capacity rule. Ray Allen and Jona Paradis responded it is stated on the website in numerous places.

8. New Business

A. Beach Facilities Discussion – Ray Allen has met with lifeguards to give them general updates on operation, but an official meeting with them next week will include in depth preparations for a safe summer.

B. Mini Golf Discussion- Ray Allen discussed the new operations at mini golf. These include: entering through the picnic area, signs for social distancing, groups of 5 max, play every other hole to maintain a one hole distance between groups, hand sanitizer stations, closed picnic tables, clubs cleaned & course capacity at 45 people. The opening is scheduled for May 23rd and it will be open to the general public.

C. Summer Programs Discussion- Ray Allen stated a meeting about summer camps with other town officials is scheduled for May 14th. By the end of the week there should be a determination about what camps will be available.

D. Park Facilities Discussion- Ray Allen discussed the trail systems in town and his only concern was how to enforce capacity and social distance rules should the time arise when enforcement is needed. As the weather improves, picnic table usage will need to be revisited. The splash pad is closed until further notice per the health department. Pickle ball screens will be installed. Kevin Lane suggested using Green Scapes servicing at Main Street Park. Ray can get a quote to add it to the existing contract.

E. Any other Business regarding Programs, Facilities or Personnel- Jona Paradis reported that April's virtual pay-to-play programming had 225 participants with \$1,000 in

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revenue. T-Ball is still up in the air, possibly July. Summer registration begins June 1st. The summer stock theater program coordinator seems confident they can provide a program around the theater experience for the youth this summer.

9. Reports

A. Chairman's Report – Susan Esty expressed her appreciation for all the hard work Ray Allen is doing and his handling of day- to-day issues, especially during the busy beach weekend. She also thanked commissioners who have gone out and about to see what the department will be facing when the weather changes and thanked them for their time and correspondence. She also reported her attendance at the Harbor Management meeting on April 20th. This meeting discussed kayak racks at Sheffield Street dock. She also attended the Board of Selectmen meeting May 12th regarding the approval of the Trust for Public Land grant.

B. Director's Report – Ray Allen reported he is the chair of the town's recovery taskforce subcommittee regarding recreation. Nancy Gatta is also a member of the subcommittee and will be the Parks & Recreation Commission liaison.

C. Liaison Reports – None

MOTION to adjourn at 8:00p.m. made by Nancy Gatta seconded by Star Rueckert and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Antolino, Recording Clerk

NEXT MEETING JUNE 10, 2020