



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Parks & Recreation Commission

*Susan Esty, Chairman
Kevin Lane, Vice Chair
Jim Henderson, Secretary*

www.oldsaybrookct.gov

*Star Rueckert
Bror Ashe
Nancy Gatta
Jane Wisialowski*

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

Wednesday, September 13, 2023; 6:30 PM

This was a hybrid meeting

MINUTES

- 1. Call Meeting to Order** – Chairwoman Susan Esty called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Director Ray Allen; Chairwoman Susan Esty; Vice-Chair Kevin Lane; Secretary Jim Henderson; Nancy Gatta; Jane Wisialowski; Star Rueckert; Bror Ashe; Asst. Director Jona Paradis

Absent: None

- 2. Approval of July Meeting Minutes**

A **Motion** to ‘approve of the July 12th OSPR Meeting Minutes’ was made by Mr. Henderson was seconded by Ms. Gatta. Discussion: None. Motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Recognition of Guests** – None

- 4. Correspondence** - None

- 5. Review of Bills** – The commission reviewed the OSPR Monthly bills as presented by Director Allen for July 2023 (\$32,267.53) and August 2023 (\$43,142.01).

- 6. Public Comment** – Chairman Esty discussed comments she had received from the public requesting an upgrade to the fixtures in the Kavanaugh Park at Trask Road bathroom. They are looking somewhat stained and dingy. Also, a new changing table would be useful given the age group frequenting the playground/water park. Director Allen will look into some potential solutions and report back to the Board.

- 7. New Business**

A. Town Green Menorah Discussion

Elizabeth Meyer came to Ray Allen and then the OSPR Commission to discuss the potential for putting a menorah display on the Town Green during the Winter Holiday season. The proposed display would measure 6 ft. high by 6-1/2 ft. wide. Base is 35 in. x 24 in. It will be lit from 120 VAC power with successive lights being illuminated at 5 p.m. each day. Installation would be 2 or 3 days prior to the start of Hanukkah, the 8 days of the celebration, and then perhaps one or two days to dismantle. Director Allen would prefer the installation be weighed down by sandbags to minimize soil disturbance and will have to arrange for power cords routed from the Gazebo.

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

There is U.S. Supreme Court precedent for allowing religious symbolism in public outdoor spaces for all groups. Discussion ensued pertaining to this display and its coincidence with the Starlight Festival on Main Street. A **Motion** was made by Jim Henderson to ‘approve the concept in principle with installation details to be coordinated through Director Allen’, seconded by Kevin Lane. Motion was passed unanimously. Chairman Esty noted that we will have to consult with the Zoning Department and qualified electrician to finalize the plan. Director Allen and Asst. Director Paradis will coordinate with the Starlight Festival committee.

B. Clark Community Park Design Proposal discussion

Director Allen reported that the cost estimates from Engineer Geoff Jacobson have been received and once approved, they can begin the First Draft Design of the Town Park Facility upgrade. There will naturally be comments and suggestions after the Draft Design is complete, and plans can be adjusted to ensure that it meets the needs of the entire community. To move forward, Director Allen has met with the Board of Selectmen whom have given their approval, then the Board of Finance must also be contacted for approval. A **Motion** was made by Susan Esty to ‘grant permission for funds be released to Engineer Geoff Jacobson to begin work on Task 2: Preliminary Design for the Clark Park (Town Park) Project’, seconded by Jane Wisialowski. Motion was passed unanimously.

C. Any other Business regarding Programs, Facilities or Personnel

Director Ray Allen discussed the direction of the overhead lights at the Pickleball Courts on Main Street. They were calibrated in the current direction so as not to shine directly into the neighbors’ windows. Outdoor bicycle pump has been received and is awaiting installation at Saybrook Point by Public Works Dept.

8. Old Business

A. All Parks Review – Director Allen reported soccer season is in full swing, soon it will be time to start stowing outdoor facilities for the Winter season per usual. He briefed the Board on the following:

- Beaches still open but not staffed;
- Mini-Golf still open as weather permits, weekends only;
- She Shed food vendor down to their last weekend;
- Discussed sandbag plan for Duffy Pavilion in case of high wave action

B. Strategic Plan of Parks Discussion

Kevin Lane gave an overview of the plan and the next item of the four parks selected for improvements. Director Allen stated that he would recommend Harvey’s Beach upgrades next. It has become a very popular destination and we want it to be a showcase.

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

C. The Preserve Update

Director Allen gave an update on the Vernal Pool Study that is now being conducted, an update is expected in October. Currently waiting for completion of turtle migration sub-study, being wrapped up now. After that, OSPR will be able to determine the best locations for paths so as not to disturb natural habitats.

D. Any other Business regarding Programs, Facilities or Personnel

Director Allen gave an update on the Ferry Road field drainage requirements. This could be one of the ARPA funds request along with paving of Harvey's Beach parking lot. Also considered is additional bio-friendly toilets at Trask Road or Ferry Road locations. Jona Paradis suggested we consider more adjustable shade canopies, given that we do not have many at our sports fields. Ray Allen will write up proposals as necessary. ARPA projects must be started by 2024, finished by 2026.

Mr. Paradis reported on the following:

- Summer Camp was a big success as always, kids love it;
- Middle School Camp is popular but at break-even, may consider a price increase;
- Soccer Leagues now in session, 12 teams, K-2;
- Indoor Soccer starts in November;
- Teen Center is running, 5th Grade Fridays;
- Goodwin After-School – Two days currently;
- “Monsters On Main Street” – Oct. 14-30th, Businesses will display their monsters;
- “Trunk or Treat” will be held at OSPR, Saturday Oct 28 from 5 to 7pm;
- OSPR Superstar of the Month: Rick Pine for coordinating the Youth Soccer start-up.

9. Reports

A. Chairman's Report

Chairman Sue Esty reported that she attended the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Town Meeting on our behalf and her reports were well received and ongoing projects deemed worthy.

B. Director's Report

Director Allen distributed and discussed the Income Totals for 2022-2023 going to the General Fund. These figures represented Mini-Golf, Harvey's Beach, Concessions and Seasonal Beach Passes. All very good, in line with years past.

C. Liaison Reports

Nothing to report.

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. made by Susan Esty, seconded by Nancy Gatta, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

James Henderson, Secretary

NEXT MEETING: October 11th , 2023