Sherman Park and Recreation Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
January 11, 2021
Meeting held via Zoom

Present:
Fran Frattini-Chairman
Stan Greenbaum
Karen Kellett
John Wrenn-Director
T.J. Fazzone
Rachel Booth
Bill Butts
Kris Fazzone (arrived at 7:30)

Absent:
No one

Guests: Neil Stalter, Candlewood Lake Authority

Call to order:
Chairman Fran Frattini called the January 11, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Sherman Park and Recreation Commission to order at 7:15pm.

Pavilion and Facilities Applications:

- There were no new pavilion or facilities applications.
- John Wrenn noted that Connecticut Landscaping will be doing repairs to fence at Volunteer Field with OK having been given from BOS.
- The plan to renovate Upper Veterans soccer field was discussed. Kris Fazzone is working on a set of specifications for the project that has been approved in the 2020-21 budget, noting that approval of finances still needs Town Meeting approval. It is hoped that work will be completed in the spring and the field will be ready for play by the fall. It was noted that there would be no effect on the playground and that a small portion of the track may need to be reconfigured as
the renovated field will be somewhat larger than the existing field. Drainage was discussed.

Minutes from November 9, 2020 Sherman Park and Recreation Commission
Meeting:
A motion to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2020 Sherman Park and Recreation Commission meeting was made by T.J. Fazzo, seconded by Rachel Booth, and voted with all in favor.

Public Comment:
There was no public comment.

Correspondence:
- Fran Frattini shared a phone conversation with Bill McCann of the Conservation Commission with update on a program for removal of invasive species at Veterans Field. The program is moving forward as planned.
- Mrs. Frattini had received and shared a letter from Neil Stalter of the CLA regarding a proposed “Candlewood Lake Steward Program”. Neil Stalter was in attendance and gave an overview of CLA’s proposed community education program. The program would include visits from CLA employees to each of the 7 public boat ramps on the lake. The purpose of the daylong visits is to offer free invasive species information and free voluntary boat inspection, which would take approximately 10 minutes to complete. There would be a rotating schedule of visits to individual boat ramps that will be made available to each town’s Park and Recreation Department. Visits will be scheduled on weekends and any federal holidays during 2021 boating season. Informational materials will be available on weeks between visits, as well.

At this point the CLA is working to apply for grant funding from DEEP and is seeking a letter of permission from each of the 5 towns on the lake to run the program and to allow watershed stewards to visit each boat launch roughly 10 times in the 2021 season. There was a discussion regarding the program.
There also was a discussion about Walker Butts Eagle Scout project for an invasive species disposal station, which he is doing in conjunction with the CLA. The ground is prepared and Walker’s project is ready to be installed to coincide with the opening of boating season. He is just waiting on First Light approval.

Rachel Booth made a motion to send a letter of permission for the CLA’s proposed Candlewood Lake Steward Program as presented for the 2021 boating season. Stan Greenbaum seconded and voted with all in favor.

Mrs. Frattini thanked Mr. Stalter and noted that the letter would be sent shortly. Mr. Stalter left the meeting.
Maintenance and Repairs/Facilities Reports:
John Wrenn reported that all facilities are in good shape and there are no major problems currently.

New Business/Old Business:
• There has been no Dog Park report.
• There was a discussion about the position of maintenance person for Park and Recreation being advertised and hired with an anticipated start date in the spring 2021.
• Fran Frattini updated the Commission on the proposed labyrinth project. Currently there is no Commission member available to take on the task. Mrs. Frattini had sent an email to the organizer about the details of the plan but for now the project was up in the air.

Director’s Report:
• Mr. Wrenn shared the checking account information with the Commission. The only activity in the account in November and December was checks written for ASP salaries and snack.
• Although enrollment is consistently variable, ASP is doing well enough and will continue through the school year.
• It was noted there were no swim lessons last summer due to COVID-19 restrictions.
• The modified summer camp went very well, receiving lots of compliments from parents and no complaints at all. It did run at a $5,000 loss but it was agreed that it was one of the best things the department could have done for the Town’s children.
• Mr. Wrenn is hopeful that summer camp will be able to run for the full 6 weeks, with vaccines on the horizon but only time will tell.
• Skiing lessons at Thunder Ridge started on January 4 and are being enjoyed by about 6 individuals. It was noted that the ski slope’s current policy is that if a participant missed the first class then they could not get into that series of lessons.
• Mr. Wrenn participated in two statewide Park and Recreation surveys. One related to when tennis courts close for the season. Sherman courts were scheduled to close last week. The other survey was regarding lifeguard pay rates. 30 towns participated and Sherman’s rates were deemed competitive.
Preliminary 2021/2022 Budget Discussion:
Fran Frattini asked for input from the Commission on significant changes to current budget as well as any new budget items to be proposed.

- There was a discussion about the impact of the state’s August 1 raise in the minimum wage from $12.00 to $13.00 per hour. It was the consensus of the Commission that the rate hike should be reflected in part time summer staff wages from the beginning of the summer instead of changing the rate part way through the season. Lifeguard hourly rates were discussed.

- It was noted that the department should plan for the full 6 weeks of camp as usual and hope for the best. It would mean a few extra staff to accommodate COVID-19 protocols.

- The condition of the floats and possible need for repair was explored. Mr. Wrenn noted that there were some minor repairs needed to some of the docks. He will ask a local contractor for an estimate.

- Park and Recreation staff monitoring the ramps every day like they did in 2020 was discussed and the First Selectman will be asked about this.

- It was noted that beach passes will not be given out at the beach this summer but at the Park and Recreation office during summer office hours.

- Stan Greenbaum opened a discussion about creating an exploratory study for a mixed-use trail starting from the area at the back of the school; between the school and the library all the way to the American Pie Company. Various routes, possible footbridge over the stream, budget issues, surveys, examining tax maps and possible tie-in to track at Veterans were discussed. The concept was very well received and there will be more discussions at future meetings.

- Mr. Wrenn noted that gate guards and part time maintenance staff would be subject to the $13.00 minimum wage increase but that first year skilled lifeguards should be at $13.50 this summer. It was noted that the minimum wage will also be going up a dollar in each of the next summers until it reaches $15.00/hour in 2023.

- Fran Frattini noted that the preliminary budget should be ready for the February 8, 2022 Commission meeting. However, the BOS has requested that budgets be turned in by February 5. Mrs. Frattini will request that Park and Recreation’s budget be allowed an extension to the evening of Monday, February 8 but no later than Feb 9th. If not granted, she may call a special meeting. Park and Rec. is included in the budget hearings scheduled on Saturday, February 20 starting at 9am which will be via Zoom.
• Karen Kellett requested that Concert Series funds should be included in the budget, noting that the concerts that were held in the summer of 2020 were very well received.

• Any further items for the 2021-2022/budget proposal should be emailed to John Wrenn.

Kris Fazzone made a motion to adjourn the January 11, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Sherman Park and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by T.J. Fazzone and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

T.J. Fazzone
Park and Recreation Secretary

Mary Jo Dix
Recording Secretary

The next Park and Recreation Commission meeting will be February 8, 2021.

These minutes are not considered official until they have been approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission.