Call to order:
Chairman Fran Frattini called the February 8, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:25pm.

Pavilion and Facilities Applications
John Wrenn reported that there had been a request from the Sherman Congregational Church for use of the Town beach and pavilion for their annual Easter Sunday Sunrise Service. There was a discussion.
Stan Greenbaum made a motion to approve the Sherman Congregational Church’s request to use the Town beach and pavilion for their Easter Sunrise Service on April 4, 2021. Kris Fazzone seconded and the motion was voted with all in favor.

Minutes from January 11, 2021 Regular Meeting:
A motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2021 Sherman Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting was made by Rachel Booth, seconded by Kris Fazzone and voted with all in favor. Minutes accepted as written.

Public Comment:
There was no public comment.
Correspondence:
Fran Frattini noted that she had received an email request from Don Lowe to discuss the possibility of moving the Park and Recreation office to the Jewish Community Center (JCC). The reasons being that the JCC may offer better office space as well as the space for expanding program offerings, especially utilizing the auditorium and the kitchen. There was a discussion. Pros and cons were explored, including the proximity of the current Park and Recreation office to summer camps and ASP. It was noted that the JCC already collaborates with other town agencies. It was noted that even if the office continued to be located in the school, the possibility of expanding program offerings utilizing JCC spaces could be explored. Possible programs and program costs were discussed.

Maintenance and Repair/Facilities Reports:
a. John Wrenn received confirmation from Connecticut Fencing and Landscaping that the repairs to the fence at Volunteer Park was on their schedule and should be completed by spring.
b. A local contractor has committed to repairs needed at the town beach on one of the docks that needs tightening up the ladder where it attaches to the boards. The cost will be around $200.
c. It was noted that skiing, the only program that is in session, was doing well and was following COVID-19 protocols. ASP had received a visit from a state health inspector, which was related to a Care 4 Kids application.
d. Upper Veterans soccer field project is still in the works.

Old Business/New Business:
a. There was no report on the Friends of Dog Park.
b. There was a discussion about the Park and Recreation Department’s Maintenance person. The position has not been filled. Yet there is still a need for the position and no applications have been received.
c. Walker Butts’ Eagle Scout project was discussed. Neil Stalter of CLA advised that the request to First Light for permission for the project should come from Park and Recreation as the owner of the property. Fran Frattini sent a letter to Brian Wood at First Light in support of Walker’s project and requesting permission for the construction of the box.
d. There was a discussion about the Conservation Commission’s plans to remove invasive species from Veterans Field and plant native plants. A request for this project has also been sent to FirstLight as the project falls within the project boundary (formerly the 440).

Director’s Report:
a. Mr. Wrenn shared the July checking account report.
b. The boat slips were all rented and there were currently 9 individuals on the waiting list. The tennis nets and wind screens have been taken down for the winter.
c. ASP has had low enrollments but holding its own.
d. The Commission is attempting to plan for a normal summer of camps and activities.

Proposed 2021-2022 Budget Discussion:
The proposed 2021-2022 budget that had been distributed by Mr. Wrenn was discussed, page by page.
a. It was noted that there was no change from last year’s proposed budget in any of the lines on the page listing supplies.
b. Salaries were discussed. The Director’s salary showed a proposed increase of 3%, which was recommended by the First Selectman. The area of salaries from 2020 Covid camp was discussed and it was noted that considerably more was spent on camp staff salaries due to the extensive protocols in place related to the pandemic. Hourly rates for the 2021 summer camps were discussed. It was noted that the increase in minimum wage to $13/hour was driving the proposed increase in staff salary lines. In addition, it was proposed that lifeguards get an increase of $.75 above the minimum wage to maintain a reasonable differential between them and gate guards or maintenance workers. 

c. The process for obtaining beach passes as well as the need for beach guards to monitor the boat ramps was discussed. It was decided that beach passes would be obtained in the traditional manner, by going to the Park and Recreation office during regular business hours. Beach guards were also deemed necessary to check beach passes and to monitor the boat ramps. The proposed increase in staff salaries due to minimum wage increase and additional hours for beach guards represented a $16,447 increase in overall salaries line.

d. There was a proposed increase in the Concert Series line item from $2,000 to $3,000 in the hopes of being able to offer 6 concerts instead of 4.

e. It was noted that planning for a normal summer of camps and programs made sense in that if there were still pandemic related issues to deal with, the plan could be modified.

f. Expenditures were proposed to total $158,770.

g. Anticipated revenue was discussed. Camp and swim lesson fees were proposed to be increased due to increase in staff salaries. Boat moorings were proposed to remain the same at $1,000. If $50 was still being earmarked by BOS for future projects then Park and Recreations portion of boat slip fee would be $950 so that the total fee was still $1,000. Pavilion rentals were anticipated to go back up to what was brought in during a normal summer, $1500 as compared to the $500 revenue from pavilion rentals in 2020.

h. Swim lessons fees were proposed to remain at the 2020 rates. Proposed increase of $50 per session for summer camps was discussed. It was noted that this would be the first significant increase in quite some time.

i. Anticipated revenue for 2021-2022 is $99,500.

*Stan Greenbaum made a motion to approve the $50.00 increase in summer camp fees. T.J. Fazzone seconded and the motion was voted with all in favor.*

Capital Improvements line consisted of $4,000 for painting of Park and Recreation structures.

Capital Non-Recurring line items included:

1. Replacement of the Boardwalk and Wall for the Town Park at $45,000. This represents 1/5 of the funds that are being earmarked for this project over a 5 year period due to be complete in 2022-2023 budget year. This is the 4th year of earmarking the money.

2. Walkway project was proposed to have $20,000 included for civil engineering study and development of specifications for the project. There was a discussion, including the width of proposed walkway being 12 feet; possible paths the walkway might take, for example from Colonial Field to Veterans Field; investigating past proposals for walkways or sidewalks in town; possible proximity of walkway to a stream; elevation and wetland issues and possible use of boardwalks.

3. Labyrinth project was the third and last item in Capital Non-Recurring portion of budget and $3,000 was proposed.
It was noted that sidewalks in town were a worthwhile subject to explore and that perhaps looking at this issue simultaneously with walkway proposal could be done.

Stan Greenbaum made a motion to approve the proposed 2021-2022 Park and Recreation budget as presented. Rachel Booth seconded and the motion was passed with all in favor.

The proposed 2021-2022 Park and Recreation budget includes expenditures of $158,770 with an additional $4,000 for Capital Improvements for a total of $162,770. There was also a proposed $68,000 for three Capital Non-Recurring items.

There was a discussion about the name “Walkway” to describe the project mentioned in one of the Capital Non-Recurring line items. It was noted that a more accurate name for the project would be “Multi-Use Path Study.”

Kris Fazzone made a motion to amend the proposed 2021-2022 Capital Non-Recurring line item from “Walkway” to “Multi-Use Path Study”. Stan Greenbaum seconded and the motion was voted with all in favor.

With no further business, Rachel Booth made a motion to adjourn the February 8, 2021 Park and Recreation Regular Meeting. The motion was seconded by Kris Fazzone and voted all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

T.J. Fazzone
Park and Recreation Secretary

Mary Jo Dix
Recording Secretary

The next Park and Recreation Commission meeting will be March 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.