

Town of Hamden
Parks and Recreation Commission
Minutes of a Special Meeting
Monday, May 17th, 2021
8:00 pm

Agenda

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairman Leonardo called the meeting to order at 8: 07 pm.
- 2. Attendance:**
 - a. In Attendance:** Rich Leonardo, Chairman; Ken Sweeten; Sarah Morrill; Christine Huber; Arnie Mann
 - b. Also In Attendance:** Craig Cesare
 - c. Absent:** Thaddeus Watson; Chris Ruggiero
- 3. Approval of Past Minutes:** March 9th, 2021
 - a.** Ms. Morrill made a motion to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Huber. All were in favor.
- 4. Parks and Recreation Director’s Report: (See ‘New Business’ below)**
- 5. Old Business: N/A**
- 6. New Business**
 - a.** Guest Speaker: Katie Hagen
 - i.** Ms. Hagen, a Hamden resident, questioned the commission on the following topics: the relationship between the leagues and the Town, in terms of field access and funding; who oversees the fields and facilities; the stipend procedure; and the condition of the softball field’s bleachers and facilities. Ms. Morrill explained that between \$30,000- \$40,000 of the Town budget is earmarked for Parks and Rec. Roughly \$5,000 is awarded to each league. Prior to Covid, the commission instituted an audit process to ensure those leagues that actually need the funds are receiving them.

There was a brief discussion regarding the various leagues and their inception/history.

Mr. Cesare explained that the improvement of the bleachers has been discussed and proposed with the administration. In the meantime, lesser played fields are being rotated. In regards to facility upkeep, he highlighted the pandemic as a major setback. He cited vandalism as an unfortunate result. Mr. Cesare also clarified that during the pandemic, he did require a brief letter from leagues explaining their need for the stipend, in order to release the funds. Mr. Cesare also briefly discussed general field maintenance, in regards to fertilization, the filling of holes, bare patches, etc. He commemorated his staff for their achievements during a challenging year filled with less funding, less staff, and other unforeseen pandemic obstacles. Mr. Cesare announced that Maretti field will rest this fall, and will be put online next spring. He commemorated the Legislative Council for releasing more funds and is hopeful for the upcoming Parks and Recreation season in the new fiscal year.

There was some discussion regarding the multiple football leagues in Hamden. Ms. Morrill clarified that both leagues each received a \$5,000 stipend. Mr. Cesare reminded commissioners that the commission's purpose is not to get involved with the day to day operations of these leagues. Ms. Morrill noted recent challenges with football recruitment, such as growing safety concerns and financial insecurity, as a result of the pandemic. Ms. Hagan noted the difficulty in simply trying to learn more about league sports offered in Hamden. Ms. Morrill suggested the commission make an ongoing effort to help advertise and streamline the team registration process.

There was a brief discussion regarding the hosting of a symposium or roundtable discussion with the heads of the local sports teams. The goal of this event would be to forge a concentrated, collaborative effort with the leagues, in an effort to diversify the youth participation. In addition, there was discussion of aggregating and streamlining team/program information for easier viewing online.

The roundtable/symposium, ongoing park fees schedule, and any potential commission vacancies will be discussed at the June meeting.

7. Adjournment

- a. Ms. Huber made a motion to adjourn at 9:54 pm, which was seconded by Ms. Morrill.

Submitted by: Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk