

**Town of Hamden
Town Center Park Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting
Monday, February 22nd, 2021
4:45 pm**

Minutes

- 1. Call To Order:** Chairman Matthew Fitch called the meeting to order at 4:50 pm.
- 2. Attendance**
 - a. In Attendance: Matthew Fitch, Chairman; Michael D’Andrea; Jessica Hazan; Gerry Tobin; Victor Mitchell
 - b. Absent: Mike D’Andrea
 - c. Also in Attendance: Nancy Dudchik; Joe McDonough; Alisha Martindale; Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk
- 3. Approval Of Past Minutes:** January 25th, 2021
 - a. Chairman Matthew Fitch requested a motion to approve the minutes. Gerry made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Mitchell.
- 4. Chairman’s Report- N/A**
- 5. Old Business- N/A**
- 6. New Business**
 - a. Food Forest Project Update: Adam Matlock
 - i. Mr. Matlock expressed his continued interest in creating a food forest in the TCP. There was some discussion to schedule a walkthrough of TCP with some commission members. Chairman Fitch, Ms. Tobin, and Mr. Matlock agreed to meet in the park on Tuesday, 3/2/21. Mr. Matlock’s immediate goal with the food forest project is deciding on a spot. He is due to meet with Mark Austin, the new Town Planner, as well. Ms. Tobin noted that Mr. Austin is currently working on a rain garden in the TCP, and has plans to begin planting in the spring.
 - b. Farmer’s Market- Alisha Martindale
 - i. Ms. Martindale expressed a desire to hold a farmer’s market in the big field of TCP. She explained that Covid restrictions have placed a strain on holding such an event. However, if the big field is used, visitors can better socially distance, and therefore it will be easier to attract more vendors. All commissioners were in favor.
 - c. Hamden Fest- Nancy Dudchik and Joe McDonough
 - i. Ms. Dudchik explained that the original paperwork for Hamden Fest reserved a date in June 2021. However, she believes a better time would be sometime in September 2021, after the rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations for all age groups. She has talked to her vendors, who are in favor of moving the date to September 18th. Chairman Fitch is hopeful the commission can hold a food truck festival in October, so there would be no conflict to hold Hamden Fest in September. He approved the date change. Mr. McDonough added that he is hopeful that once the vaccines roll out for other age groups, there will be an openness for outdoor events in late summer. Ms. Dudchik clarified the age groups and dates for the vaccination rollout per the governor’s order.
 - d. Q&A with members of the Parks and Recreation Commission
 - i. Two members from the Parks and Recreation Commission, Ms. Christine Huber and Mr. Arnie Mann joined for some discussion regarding the TCP’s fee structure. Mr. Mann asked the commission if they charge for use of the TCP. Chairman Fitch responded “no” and suggested inviting the Hamden Finance

Director, as well as the Parks and Recreation Department to the March meeting, for further discussion. He expressed a need to revisit the TCP fees policy, as all Town parks should be under an umbrella policy. Mr. Mann expressed the difficulty the P&R commission is having trying to decide which athletic teams/organizations should pay to use the fields. He explained that a prominent issue is outside teams or groups using Hamden facilities/parks while Hamden provides maintenance and supervision- cost-free. Mr. Mann emphasized that the goal of this proposed parks' fee structure is not to completely balance the budget, but at least start bringing in some profit for the Town.

Ms. Tobin raised the subject of liability with outside organizations paying to use Town property. She believes the town attorney should weigh in on this. Mr. Mann explained that Dave in the Parks and Recreation department issues a permit to use a field. He questioned how to enforce such permitting, and the cost effectiveness of said enforcement. Ms. Huber believes it less important to pay for permit enforcement, as a properly maintained permitting procedure is sufficient. For example, one could clearly identify a scheduling conflict.

Mr. Mitchell noted that the BOE has a fee structure for use of the gyms and football fields. The new director of facilities John Cross, can offer some insight into creating a parks' fee structure. Mr. Mitchell offered to get in touch with him and share his feedback at the March meeting.

General Comments:

Chairman Fitch noted that the High Line Theater, who hosts Shakespeare in the Park, wants to discuss moving their event, possibly during the March meeting. Ms. Hazan spoke to a rep from the Food Bank in regards to their greatest needs. They are in need of anything: food or monetary (cash/giftcards). Ms. Hazan told them that the commission is interested in promoting a food donation event sometime in October. She suggested farmer's market visitors bring a food donation and get entered into a raffle for a Soup Girl gift card. Chairman Fitch does not have any updates from Smilow. Ms. Tobin will look into a possible Farmington Canal fee structure.

- 7. Adjournment:** Chairman Fitch requested a motion to adjourn at 5:21 pm. Ms. Tobin made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Mitchell. All were in favor.

Submitted by: Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk