

Town of Hamden
Parks and Recreation Commission
Minutes of a Special Meeting
Wednesday, June 16th 2021
Villano Park
6:30 pm

Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Leonardo called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m.
2. **Attendance:**
 - a. **In Attendance:** Rich Leonardo, Chairman; Sarah Morrill; Christine Huber; Ken Sweeten
 - b. **Absent:** Chris Ruggiero; Arnie Mann; Thaddeus Watson
 - c. **Also in Attendance:** Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk
3. **Approval of Past Minutes:** May 17th, 2021
 - a. Ms. Morrill made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Huber. All were in favor.
4. **Parks and Recreation Director's Report:**
 - a. As Mr. Cesare was unable to attend, he issued a memo to be read at the meeting. He noted that the Recreation Department has been very busy preparing for the summer camps. Unfortunately, the pool is still under repair, and will not be open. Mr. Cesare recently attended a meeting with the PAL group. The PAL group and the Parks Department will be scheduling youth events beginning in July. Many other events, such as basketball tournaments, and movie nights are in store. An events schedule will be forwarded to the commission, once it is finalized. Lastly, Moretti field will be undergoing top dressing and over seeding.

Comments from Commissioners: There was general consensus that an ongoing positive interaction between the police and the community, particularly the youth, would be cathartic. The commissioners' ultimate goal is a weekly event for Hamden youth.

5. Old Business

- a. Patrick Donnelly- Update
 - i. As Mr. Donnelly was unable to attend, he issued a memo to be read at the meeting. He has followed up with the town attorney regarding the social media policies. They will be working with CCM to determine best practices. The fees discussion is currently on hold, but hopefully will resume after the summer season. He was excited to note that park registrations are in full swing.

Comments from Commissioners: There was a brief discussion regarding the need for improved communication, clarity and ease of use with the events calendar and youth athletics' registration. There was general consensus that youth athletics are not targeting a wide array of kids. Commissioners discussed possible barriers preventing this, namely financial and lack of communication from the leagues.

6. New Business

- a. Lacrosse Fields Improvement/ Cages
 - i. Ms. Huber and Ms. Morrill commented on the relatively poor condition of the Lacrosse fields, which are in need of topsoil and sod. They noted that a boulder at the middle school field poses a danger to both children and adults. Ms. Morrill suggested the commission ask Mr. Cesare about any potential grants that could assist with lacrosse field maintenance.

There was a brief discussion regarding the fields and parks currently in use and their general condition. They noted that poor field conditions means less opportunity for both Hamden and outside teams to play. There was a general consensus that nice facilities attracts a wider array of youth participants. The commissioners would like to speak to Mr. Cesare at the next meeting to gain a better understanding about who decides which fields get used. They highlighted the need for improved communication so individuals/families can easily access youth athletics' information and registration. Ms. Huber suggested the Parks and Recreation webpage list the registration links for the local teams.

- b. Update on Potential Commission Vacancy
 - i. The Town Clerk, Ms. Morrison, has reached out to Mr. Watson, to confirm his interest in remaining on the commission. Any updates will be announced at the next meeting.
- c. Symposium
 - i. The commissioners discussed potentially hosting or sponsoring an event in which parents and kids have the opportunity to learn more about the different sports leagues and registration requirements. They noted that PAL may even be interested in co-hosting/sponsoring the event. There was a brief discussion in regards to holding such an event at Villano Park, in an effort to attract a wider array of kids.

7. General Comments/ Suggestions

- a. Mr. Sweeten recently learned of a new Hamden youth center, The Village, which is run by Hamden resident, Ms. Melanie Jones. The Village is open on weekdays and weekends from 2pm-7pm to kids of all ages. It contains a gym area, arts and crafts tables, and even a pantry. It is run entirely on a volunteer basis. The main goal of the Village is to provide a recreational space for kids, whether that be for homework, video games, or working out. Currently, The Village has a relationship with the Keefe Center, but Mr. Sweeten hopes that the Town can embrace this new youth center as well.

- 8. Adjournment:** At 7:38 pm, Ms. Morrill made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Sweeten. All were in favor.

Submitted by: Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk

***Please note the next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 6th at 5:30 pm in Brooksvale Park.**