

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES **April 30, 2020**

Chairman Westerman opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

The members present were: Jim Boniello, Stephen Krug, Chris McCormack, John Papalia, Don Penzine, Michele Sanz, Kevin Westerman, and John Zattola.

Michele Werney was absent.

Town Councilman Rich Clinchy and Parks and Recreation Superintendent Steve Ralston were also present.

The meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public present.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mrs. Sanz to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2020 meeting. Mr. Krug seconded the motion. All were in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Summer Day and Travel Camps – At the April 22nd meeting a discussion took place regarding making a decision as to whether or not the day and travel camps can be held this summer as a result of the current and reasonably anticipated social distancing requirements related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Currently New York State is on PAUSE until May 15th. Registrations for both camps have been delayed until next week. All agreed that the Travel Camp must be cancelled. Even in the unlikely event that there would be a sufficient number of venues for the travel campers to attend, putting 40 campers on a bus would not be safe or permitted. Whatever number of campers that would comply with State, County and CDC guidelines would require multiple busses and the busses would also need to be sanitized before each leg of the trip. These requirements would make Travel Camp cost prohibitive.

A lengthy discussion ensued about the options available for the Somers Day Camp. Though we await formal announcements, all agreed that social distancing requirements will be in effect this summer. Thus, the issue to address was how Parks and Recreation could enforce social

distancing requirements with up to 400 grade school age campers and 200 workers and counselors. With that, the Board had to consider what steps needed to be taken to sanitize and keep safe the park. Moreover, the Board also needed to assess what summer camp activities the children could engage in, given the expected social distancing requirements. The initial consensus was that the Camp staff could not consistently enforce social distancing requirements among the campers, none of the traditional camp activities could be used and the requirement to keep an area sanitized when there were 400 campers and 200 staffers could not be guaranteed.

Recognizing the importance of summer camp to the Town, the Board considered other options to salvage it. Superintendent Ralston was asked to calculate the fewest number of campers that could attend before the camp would lose money. This request was made, despite the concern that it still would not completely address the social distancing and sanitizing issues and the dearth of available camp activity concerns. Mr. Ralston will go over the numbers and get back to the Board on that. The Board considered a late start to the camp, staggered attendance and other modified or reduced options to allow the camp to go forward.

Consideration was given as to how long that we could put off the decision on the camps, in the hopes that there were developments in treatment of the virus, or a loosening of social distancing requirements. Arguments against delaying the decision without any reasonable hope of change was the recognition that summer camp also serves an important role of childcare in Town. Moreover, the summer camp is an important employer of Somers High School students and several adults. Thus, it was decided that, unless the Board heard any news or information that would support opening the camp, a decision needed to be made in the hope that parents will have more time to try to secure other arrangements for summer childcare, and camp workers will have more time to obtain alternate employment. Accordingly, it was decided that a communication should be drafted to notify the residents so they can prepare to make other plans if the decision is in fact to cancel the Day Camp for this summer.

It is expected that the Governor will give another update tomorrow and, with that in mind, all agreed to hold another special meeting at 6:30 p.m. tomorrow evening. Mr. Ralston stated that, in the interim, he would provide the Board Members with the breakeven point needed to run the Day Camp so that it is not at a loss, as well as the absolute last date that a decision has to be made by about running the Day Camp. He will also provide the draft of a communication to be released on Monday, should the decision be made at the next meeting.

Woodard and Curran Proposal – At the last meeting a proposal was received from the engineering company, Woodard and Curran, totaling just under \$10,000.00 regarding a modification to the Reis Park Master Plan expansion work that they did for the Town a few years ago. A motion was made by Mr. Krug to not proceed at this point with the Woodard and Curran proposal, but to solicit at least two other proposals from other firms to see what their ideas are. Mr. Papalia seconded the motion. All were in favor. In preparation for this evening's meeting, Mr. Ralston provided the members with copies of the previous documents presented to the Town from Woodard and Curran concerning this project. Another discussion took place. Mr. Ralston will draft a letter to be sent to these firms for the Board to review at their next meeting in May. In the meantime, all members were asked to send a list of their ideas to Mr. Ralston.

Parks Master Plan Review Update – At the February meeting, Mary Ann Rivera of Landscape Concepts met with the Board regarding a proposal for improvements at Bailey Park. The Board was quite pleased with the proposal. Mr. Ralston followed up with Ms. Rivera concerning the following: prevailing wage; landscape lighting; natural stone walkways along the Route 100 and 202 sides of the property; and handicap accessibility. She will join the Board at their May 27th meeting with an updated plan.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ralston had no additional comments.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no Board comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. Another special meeting will take place on Friday, May 1st at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Parks & Recreation Board

cc: Parks & Recreation Board
Superintendent of Parks & Recreation
Town Board
Town Clerk