

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES **May 1, 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 Councilmen Rich Clinchy and Tom Garrity, as well as Parks and Recreation Superintendent Steve Ralston were also present.

The meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public present.

OLD BUSINESS

Summer Day and Travel Camps – At the April 30th special 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 Covid-19 pandemic. Currently New York State is on PAUSE until May 15th. Registrations for both camps have been delayed until next week. A lengthy discussion took place and ideas were shared.

Although the Governor did give an update today by closing all schools through the end of this academic year, the PAUSE is still in place until May 15th. It was also the hope that the County Executive would reference day camps in his update today, but he did not. Mr. Ralston indicated that a decision must be made about the day camp no later than May 17th and the breakeven point is \$85,000.00 equaling 126 campers.

It was suggested that for those in absolute need, campers be matched up with staff to create a nanny situation. Although a great idea, that is outside of the authority of the Parks and Recreation Board. Delaying the start of camp might not be an easy task if staff can't be secured. It is predicted that the requirements of social distancing and wearing masks will be in effect for quite some time, and additionally if camp is scheduled to happen, and one camper or staff person is diagnosed with COVID-19, the entire camp has to be closed down for a

meaningful period of time. The Board reviewed and reconsidered the options raised at the April 30 meeting, which included a delayed opening and reduced or staggered attendance. The Board considered whether, if a decision was made at the meeting, and circumstances subsequently changed, could 2020 summer camp be re-introduced later. It was determined that the chances of this, and capabilities to do, that were remote. For the reasons discussed and detailed at the April 30 meeting, the Board felt the obligation to err on the side of safety. If the camp is held, a special waiver would have to be created, although the limitations of a waiver involving minors was recognized. Although registering campers at the last minute might be able to be managed, final planning would be problematic. Regardless, the Board has been told that, for multiple reasons, the Somers schools cannot be used on rainy days and that the Library is unavailable and unsuitable.

The overall feeling of the Board members was that there were too many unknowns, dangers, obstacles and variables. What other municipalities and private camps were doing was considered, though the differences between the towns were recognized. While other towns and private camps were taking a wait and see approach, no plans, ideas or firm commitments have been made and there was no guidance for Somers that could be gained. It was considered and agreed that, if the current situation changes at some point in July or August, camp opportunities could be offered through outside organizations and agencies that in years passed have been offering programs after day camp ended.

A motion was made by Mr. Krug to cancel Tusker Trax and the summer Day Camp for the 2020 season as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to adhere to the CDC guidelines. Mr. Zattola seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Mr. Ralston will share the draft of the communication he prepared with Mr. Westerman. It will be released on Monday.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ralston had no comments.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no Board comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m. The Board will meet next at their monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 27th at 6:30 p.m. in the Recreation Center in Van Tassell Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Parks & Recreation Board

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

