

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



MEETING MINUTES **July 22, 2020**

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

The members present were: Stephen Krug, Chris McCormack, John Papalia, Don Penzine, and Kevin Westerman.

Jim Boniello, Michele Sanz, Michel Werney and John Zattola were absent.

The meeting was held via Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public present.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Penzine to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2020 meeting. Mr. McCormack seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MR. RALSTON'S REPORT

Mr. Westerman was pleased that Mr. Ralston met with scout Garret Cassin about beginning his Eagle Scout project of making improvements at VanTassell Park.

NEW BUSINESS

Tennis Court Rules – The tennis courts have been reopened and there has been a lot of activity on them. Issues have been raised regarding the restrictions that have been in place regarding private lessons on the Town courts. A Somers resident may receive private lessons from a paid coach using Town property and facilities if that coach has been authorized by the Town. To be authorized, the coach must present a valid certificate of insurance, affirm compliance with NYS Covid-19 Return guidelines, and sign a permit agreeing to indemnify the Town and hold it harmless from suits or claims arising from the business that they conduct on Town property. The coach must also agree to pay to the Town 20% of the fees that the coach/trainer collects while using Town property and facilities to run the business. With that, the coach can train Somers residents, though the Parks Superintendent has the right to limit the hours of the lessons so that they do not unduly interfere with use of the courts by other residents. All of the outside coaches, camps and clinics that run lessons and programs at Reis

Park and Van Tassel, including SYSO, comply with these requirements. SYSO, as a non-profit organization of Somers residents, does not pay, however. These rules are intended to protect the residents of Somers in the event that someone is injured during a lesson or clinic and sues the Town.

Andrew Johnson has been working with individuals to collect the necessary paperwork required so that they can become authorized trainers. Since there is no longer a tennis attendant at the courts, folks have been self-patrolling.

OLD BUSINESS

Parks Reopening Guidelines and Restrictions Update – As of July 6, the restrooms are open, tennis courts are available for doubles play, and the concession stand as well as the playground are open. The bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected twice daily. Backpack sprayers have been purchased and all restrooms, garbage can lids, handles, access to gates, and playground equipment are sanitized two times a day. Mr. Garrity reported that the Town purchased two sprayers that will be used to fog the interior of the buildings and vehicles. A determination will be made as to who will handle this task in each building and a schedule will be worked out. Kencal will conduct the fogging on July 27th. The pavilion remains closed even though groups of under 50 are now permitted. Not only would monitoring events in the pavilion be difficult to do, but it would encourage too many people to congregate there. Overall, the park has been getting less use than anticipated if there is not a baseball game.

The baseball and soccer programs have started as well. A letter was sent to the Town Supervisor regarding rules not being followed at a baseball game. Mr. Garrity was surprised to hear that as he frequents the park and was recently witness to social distancing, the wearing of masks, and team players split between the dugout as well as a temporary canopy tent at a baseball game. Mr. Ralston spoke with Kevin Marcus, SYSO President and Jeff Hopper, SYSO Baseball Commissioner, to reiterate the rules, especially those of the CDC. He also reminded them that it is their responsibility to make sure the coaches understand that they must enforce the rules. In addition, they should be reminding the coaches of the visiting teams of the rules as well. If violations continue to occur, the baseball program is at risk of having their permit revoked. Clearly it is evident that people in the park are watching to be sure that COVID guidelines are being followed.

On August 3rd, the Men's Softball League will begin. Mr. Ralston and Mr. Johnson met with the umpires and they are in total agreeance of taking on the responsibility of enforcing the league rules as well as those of the CDC. As this is a Town sponsored program, Mr. Ralston certainly hopes that there will be no issues. Both he and Mr. Johnson will be present on the first night of play. All were reminded if there are any incidences, the program will be closed down.

Summer Programs Update – As a result of Health Department regulations, a limited number of programs were able to be offered and include arts and crafts; tennis clinic, lessons and camp; multi-sports camp; yoga; and no fear training. All are either full to capacity or close to it. Mr. Johnson is working on scheduling similar programs in the fall as it is highly unlikely the schools will be available for after-school programs.

Bailey Park Improvements Proposal Update – An updated proposal was received from Mary Ann Rivera of Landscape Concepts for improvements in Bailey Park and it was shared with all. A review and discussion ensued. One option being suggested will cost \$261,000 and the other \$180,000. Two factors that have added to the increase of about \$10,000 are required prevailing wages and making access to the proposed patio in the park ADA compliant. Mr. Ralston has been asked to verify the ADA requirements with the Town Attorney as this is an important issue. Mr. Westerman asked if it is a requirement to match the proposed brick walk with the walkways in the Business Historic Preservation District. Mr. Garrity asked about the unilock pavers at the concession stand. Mr. Ralston reported that they sink and shift, need to be weeded and the ground expands in the winter and contracts in the summer, ultimately requiring frequent maintenance. Mr. Westerman feels as though it is difficult to make a decision with only figures listed. He is requesting that the Board have color renditions both digitally and on paper in time for the September meeting to assist in deciding whether to move forward on this project. Mr. Papalia reiterated the need to be provided with professional renderings as it was an item in the contract for these services. All agreed that the vinyl fencing option is best as it requires less maintenance. Mr. Ralston stressed the need for most of the improvements made in the park to be as maintenance free as possible. In the long run, spending more now would result in a savings in the long run. The money used for this project would come from recreation fees. Mr. Papalia reminded everyone that the Board agreed it was time to make improvements to the smaller parks, but this project has potentially mushroomed into a more expensive undertaking than originally thought. Mr. Penzine feels as though the money will be well spent as Bailey Park is in the center of town and that park should be a showcase for the Town. The money spent for the Bailey Park upgrade would be a major overhaul and the improvements would be clearly apparent to the residents, according to Mr. Westerman, whereas the same amount spent improving Reis Park would likely be almost invisible. Mr. Krug wondered whether money will be needed for other necessary Parks expenses as the impact of COVID most likely will result in budget cuts. Although recognized as a true statement, Mr. Westerman opined that if the project is not undertaken now, the funds may not be available in the future and it will never end up getting done. The merits of going forward on the project under these circumstances is what needs to be evaluated. Historically, the Parks and Recreation Board has been very conservative in its spending. Mr. Ralston reminded the Board that if a decision is made to move forward with the project, he will have to go to public bid to have the work done.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

All were reminded that the 2021 proposed budget will be discussed at the next meeting in September. Mr. Ralston thanked the Board for their support and assistance during this trying time. Mr. Garrity thanked Mr. Ralston for everything that he has been doing, which has been a great job. Mr. McCormack reminded Mr. Ralston that he should not hesitate to ask for help if needed. Mr. Garrity echoed the sentiment.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no Board comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m. and the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 2nd 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