

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



MEETING MINUTES **September 2, 2020**

Chairman Westerman opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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

Michele Werney and John Zattola were absent.

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

The meeting was held via Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment was covered under New Business.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Penzine to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2020 meeting. Mr. McCormack seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MR. RALSTON'S REPORT

Mr. Westerman asked about the charging stations in Van Tassel Park. Town Planner, Syrette Dym, has applied for a grant to place a double charging station in Van Tassel Park. One will be for the use of Town vehicles and the other for the public. The public charging station would require payment for its use. Mr. Boniello wondered why the charging station for the public wouldn't be located in Reis Park. Since it is a double charging station and since there are already electric cars at Van Tassel, and as not to eliminate a needed parking space in Reis Park, the decision was made to put it in Van Tassel Park.

Mr. Westerman asked about Mr. Ralston's meeting with Somers Central School District's Athletic Director Roman Catalino. Initially the meeting was to discuss the District's use of the Primrose baseball and soccer field for physical education classes weather permitting. Mr. Ralston said that was fine as long as he has a schedule in advance. The conversation then led into a discussion about fall tennis in Reis Park. Mr. Ralston made it clear that it is Mr.

Catalino's responsibility to make a decision about whether there is sufficient lighting on the courts for a high school match to be played.

NEW BUSINESS

Eagle Scout Project – Boy Scout Sean Moran joined the Board to discuss his Eagle Scout Project. He has been working with Mr. Ralston and would like to assemble and install a trail kiosk next to the parking lot in Koegel Park. The kiosk would include a map of the trails, rules of the park, and important news. Sean would also like clean-up the red trail, by removing rocks and smoothing it out for the ease of walking. He will start work on the project this month and it should be complete by the end October. This improvement will benefit the Park and make it nicer for users. It was mentioned that the signage on the trails could use some improvement and Sean would be happy to add that to his project. It was noted that since the pandemic the Park is getting much more use.

Mr. Ralston was happy to report that Garret Cassin has almost completed his Eagle Scout project of making improvements at VanTassell Park.

2021 Budget Review – All Board members were given the proposed 2021 Budget for their review and comment. A discussion ensued. There was a decrease in the expenditure line as a part-time and full-time position were eliminated; there will be a decrease in after school instruction programs being offered as a result of COVID; and a decision has yet to be made about upcoming programs and funding for senior programs. There is a placeholder for capital improvements as money was allotted for items last year that were never done, including a new roof and siding at the Koegel House. Mr. Ralston's only concern is that the revenue line has been adjusted as it is uncertain about instructional programs in the spring and camp in the summer.

Bailey Park – Mr. Ralston was approached by the Historical Society about a Boy Scout doing his Eagle Scout project in Bailey Park to include a 9' by 9' brick patio and a historical marker. As there is a proposed plan for improvements in Bailey Park, whatever is done must complement that plan. Mr. Ralston should have more information at the October meeting.

Mr. Westerman asked if Mr. Ralston received the color renditions as promised for the Bailey Park proposed improvements. Mr. Ralston hopes to have them for the October meeting. In addition, Mr. Westerman wondered what the Town Attorney's opinion was as to the need for ADA compliance regarding the proposed improvements for Bailey Park. Mr. Ralston expects to have that information before the October Parks meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID Update – Some sports have already begun play and there has been reports of isolated incidences of non-compliance with CDC guidelines regarding social distancing. The rules have been reiterated with the SYSO Baseball Commissioner with the hopes of no additional infractions. The SYSO Commissioner was also reminded that it is the responsibility of the Somers coaches to make sure the visiting teams are abiding by the rules as well. The mandate to adhere to social distancing rules was reinforced with the Men's Softball League Director, as well. It has been made clear that if the issues persist, the Parks and Recreation

permits issued to SYSO will be revoked and the Men's Softball League will be told they cannot continue to play. It has been a constant challenge, with Superintendent Ralston being at the front lines in the battle for enforcement of these important and necessary rules. The Board commended Mr. Ralston for doing this difficult work, maintaining his professionalism as he makes tough choices intended to keep the public safe. Efforts will be made to inform the Commissioners of the sports that have yet to begin to play about the importance of complying with these rules. Mr. Penzine is happy to assist by making frequent visits to the Park to see how things are going. Councilman Clinchy agrees that this is a difficult situation and is going on with businesses in Town as well, but there is an obligation to make sure there is not an outbreak and to keep the residents safe.

Mr. Ralston has received several inquires about community groups using the pavilion for their meetings since the recreation center, firehouse, and schools are currently not available. Although the pavilion is currently closed, Mr. Ralston would not object to the use of the pavilion by these groups Monday through Friday, provided that the CDC and DOH guidelines are followed. However, public use of the pavilion for BBQ's, picnics, parties, etc. would not be permitted. If there are any problems, Mr. Ralston will rethink things. An update about this will be provided at the October meeting.

Summer and Fall Programs Update – All summer specialty camps ended the week of August 24th and were well received. Tennis lessons began the week of August 17th and will run for 5 weeks.

Andrew Johnson has completed setting up the fall programs and registration began on-line on September 2nd. The number of programs being offered had to be scaled back since the schools are not able to be used, and, in turn, they will be held in Reis Park, off-site or on-line.

Conservation Easement Update – On August 31st, the Supervisor was notified by NYSDEC's Natural Resources Supervisor, Bill Rudge, that the map needs to be modified and should be done shortly.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ralston extended his thanks to all of the Board members for their support during this very difficult and untraditional time.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Penzine wondered why the Board didn't do anything for Jim Boniello about the recent passing of his father.

As a result of some of the difficulties, Mr. Ralston has been experiencing with the visitors in Reis Park as a result of COVID, Mr. Papalia suggested that the Parks and Recreation Board send a letter to the Town Board about civic responsibility to be distributed to the community. The majority agreed and the tone of the letter should appeal to the good side of people. Mr. Ralston will draft a letter taking from communications already shared about the restrictions in place due to COVID. Mr. Penzine would like to assist Mr. Ralston in this endeavor. The draft will be emailed to the Board members for further discussion at the October meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. and the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 28th 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