

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



MEETING MINUTES **December 2, 2020**

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

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

John Papalia was absent.

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Steve Ralston was also present.

The meeting was held via Zoom.

Mr. McCormack offered his condolences to Mr. Westerman on the recent passing of his father. Everyone else was saddened to hear and echoed Mr. McCormack's sentiments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Penzine to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2020 monthly meeting as submitted. Mr. McCormack seconded the motion. All were in favor.

A motion was made by Mr. Boniello to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2020 special meeting. Mr. McCormack seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MR. RALSTON'S REPORT

As the fall programs offered via Zoom were successful, Andrew Johnson is working on making them available in the winter. The participants pay the companies hosting the programs and in turn the Town gets a percentage of the total collected.

NEW BUSINESS

2021 Fees – The goal of the fees is to break even based on the approved budget. It is Mr. Ralston's hope that the amount of revenue budgeted for will be received. A question came up about increasing the fees proposed for the use of the pavilion which is only available to

residents and Town businesses. The requests for use of the pavilion has consistently decreased. With that in mind, all agreed that Mr. Ralston submit the fee schedule for 2021 as proposed.

Although there are so many unknowns, Mr. Ralston anticipates being able to offer Day Camp next summer with no off-site trips and perhaps a maximum set on how many can register. He is doubtful that the Teen Camp will be able to be held as it is all off site. The administrators for Day Camp have been secured, but Mr. Johnson is still trying to secure a medical person.

Reis Playground Equipment – The existing piece of playground equipment in Reis Park was donated and installed in 1998. The decking surface is peeling and falling apart. It would cost \$20,000 to replace that area however Mr. Ralston was told that replacement parts of that set are no longer available. This playground piece is very popular and gets a lot of use. Rather than investigating significant money in twenty-two years old equipment that is no longer supported by the manufacturer, replacement of the entire set must be investigated. Two State/County contractors were contacted. One is working on a proposal for a replacement piece and Mr. Ralston has also scheduled to meet with the other company on site. The Parks staff can do the prep work for installation, keeping the cost down. Mr. Ralston estimates that the total cost will be \$125,000 which will be paid out of Recreation Fees. Everyone agreed to move forward with this project. Mr. Penzine and Mrs. Werney offered to help with selecting replacement equipment for the project. Mr. Ralston will review both proposals with the members

COVID Memo Review – Mr. Ralston prepared a COVID memo for the residents for the winter season. From now until next spring, the maintenance staff do not work on Fridays and weekends, so asking them to be available to clean the handicap bathroom pursuant to county and CDC regulations would require overtime pay and would be cost prohibitive. As having a bathroom open to the public is not required, all agreed to keep the bathroom locked until next spring when staff can maintain it seven days a week.

OLD BUSINESS

Bailey Park Eagle Scout Project Update – Last month, the Board met with Boy Scout Robert Moore, who presented a PowerPoint describing his Eagle Scout Project, to install a National Park Service prototype 2' by 3' sign that denotes the Somers Hamlet as being on the National Registry of Historical Places and provides information on the history of Somers including the American Circus and being part of the journey made by Washington and Rochambeau Trail in Bailey Park. In addition, the sign will have a QR Code linking to a website with additional information. The Board members were quite impressed with Mr. Moore's project and believe it will blend in nicely to the improvements made in Bailey Park. The major concern is approving this signage without having a final plan for the Bailey Park renovation. It was suggested that Mr. Moore ask the Boy Scout Council if they would allow for the sign to be temporarily placed in Bailey Park with the understanding that it may have to be moved to another and permanent location in Bailey Park once the renovation is completed. In addition, at that last meeting, Life Scout Moore was asked to provide the Board with copies of the proposal that was submitted to and approved by the Boy Scout Council.

Mr. Moore returned this evening. As requested, all members received a copy of the proposal that was submitted to and approved by the Boy Scout Council. He spoke with his Eagle Scout Coach about the placement of the sign in a temporary location with the understanding that it may have to be moved to another and permanent location once the renovation of Bailey Park is completed. Mr. Moore's coach had no objections nor did the Boy Scout Council. The sign has a 10-year warranty so maintenance shouldn't be an issue in the near future and if so, his Troop would take on that responsibility as well as checking the website. Mr. Westerman commended Mr. Moore for doing a great job executing of his project. Mr. Moore thanked the Board and Mr. Ralston for their support and he will keep them posted as the project progresses.

Bailey Park Renovations Update – At the meeting in October, the Board was anxiously awaiting the requested color renditions as promised by Landscape Concepts for the Bailey Park proposed improvements. Unfortunately, Mr. Ralston never received them. Thanks to the assistance of Mr. Penzine, the color renditions were secured and a special meeting was held on November 19th. A lengthy discussion took place and all agreed on a list of revisions that would be submitted to Mrs. Rivera as well as a request of her to join the Board at their December meeting. Mr. Boniello offered to outline the plan in Bailey Park so everyone has an opportunity to see all the elements to scale.

This evening, all thanked Mr. Boniello for outlining the plan in the Park. Prior to Mrs. Rivera entering the meeting, a further discussion ensued as some members had changed their thoughts about certain aspects of the project since everyone met last. Mr. Westerman thanked Mr. Krug for starting that conversation and although contrary to what was decided at the November 19th meeting, it is quite beneficial. Although the underlying thought is to make Bailey Park more aesthetically pleasing so that it will be used, everyone agrees the renovations must be practical and tasteful. In doing so, the Park should remain as natural as possible and not to look like a plot covered in concrete, especially since it will not be used for large gatherings 99% of the time. Perhaps three family gathering areas are not needed, and rather than reduce them in size by half, let them be somewhat smaller to allow for an anchored down café table with four benches and the ability to place lawn chairs around the perimeter. If at some point in the future they need to be expanded it can be done. It was also suggested that something permanent be placed in the middle of the patio so that it doesn't appear to be so large and empty. The size of the patio and family gathering areas have to fit the purpose of the renovations. There should also be enough grass areas to accommodate people that just want to spread out their lawn chairs. In reducing the size of the patio, the landscaping has been deepened. Perhaps there should be a walkway of grass between the edge of the patio and the landscaping to accommodate more seating. A combination of bluestone and Unilock is now being proposed for the walkway, patio and family gathering areas. There was concern over mixing the products and not having a consistent look. A question came up as to ultimately how much should be spent on the project. The project could be done in phases as not to have to lay out all the money at one time, but don't lose sight of the fact that this Park is right in the center of Town and should be attractive as well as welcoming.

The color renditions provided and member's updated suggestions were reviewed as well as discussed with Mrs. Rivera. The pros and cons of Unilock pavers versus bluestone were discussed. If installed with a deep solid base, bluestone is more practical because the stones are larger than the Unilock pavers. At present, they also don't differ that much in cost.

Although the two products are definitely different, they can be blended nicely if colors that complement each other are used. Mrs. Rivera doesn't necessarily agree with a grass walkway behind the patio, as it will track down, get muddy and be a maintenance nightmare. However, she does agree that the family gathering area next to the patio can be removed. Although NYSEG has completed any of their needed tree removal in the Park, Mrs. Rivera will take another look at the remaining trees in the Park. If some don't have much life left it makes sense to remove them as part of the renovation. Replacement of any that may be taken down is very much encouraged. Mrs. Rivera will take all the suggestions into consideration and provide updated renditions with 4 or 5 options, including her thoughts as a result of the discussion this evening. Everyone was most appreciative of this offer as it would give a most beneficial perspective in assisting the Board in making a final decision about the renovations in Bailey Park. In the meantime, if anyone has any additional questions, comments, etc. they should pass them on to Mr. Westerman or Mr. Ralston. Mr. Westerman thanked Mrs. Rivera for her time, flexibility and suggestions.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ralston had no further comments.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Boniello asked if any consideration has been given to having a pickle ball court in Reis Park. It has been talked about as an amenity when the land swap is finally completed. Mr. Ralston said putting down lines is feasible on the existing tennis courts, but providing the players with a net is the issue as there are no longer attendants monitoring the tennis courts. Two pickle ball courts can fit on one tennis court. Mr. Ralston will talk further about this with Mr. Johnson. It was also suggested that an Intro to Pickle Ball class be offered if this idea comes to fruition.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. and the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 27th at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Parks and Recreation Board

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