

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



MEETING MINUTES **February 24, 2021**

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, Michele Werney, Kevin Westerman, and John Zattola.

Councilman Tom Garrity 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, Men's Softball Board New Member Request and Old Business, Eagle Scout Project Review.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Boniello to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2021 monthly meeting as submitted. Mrs. Sanz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MR. RALSTON'S REPORT

Mr. Westerman asked about the Men's Softball League. It is anticipated that there will be 22 teams, maybe even 23 in the league this year as compared to 17 last year. Team rosters are due on March 14th with on-line registration starting on the 22nd. League Supervisor Jim Magrone is working on schedules with the hopes of a season opening on April 19th.

NEW BUSINESS

Men's Softball Board New Member Request – As the league is under the direct auspices of the Parks and Recreation Department, any changes, requests, etc. have to be approved by the Parks and Recreation Board. Steve D'Ambrosio addressed the Board. Currently there are only four Board members and need at the very least one more to break all ties. The Softball Board proposed Al Tiso to be added to the Softball Board. Mr. Tiso, who was present on the Zoom call, expressed interest in becoming a fifth member. A motion was made by Mr. Penzine

and seconded by Stephen Krug to appoint Al Tiso as the fifth member of the Men's Softball Board. All were in favor.

Mr. Garrity asked if the Softball Board has By-Laws, Mr. Ralston told him that they do not any longer since the Town took over the league.

OLD BUSINESS

Eagle Scout Project Review – Brunon Kaminski previously met with the Board to discuss his Bluebird Project proposed for Reis Park to place six bluebird houses behind the fence of the men's softball field. The project was approved and the plan was for Brunon to meet with Mr. Penzine and Mr. Ralston about their placement. Evidently there was a misunderstanding and the houses were erected. Brunon appeared before the Board this evening for their final approval so Mr. Ralston can sign off on his paperwork. Pictures of the final project were shared. The houses are facing south, 25' away from each other, 5 feet off the ground, and 5 ½ feet from the fence. The poles are 4' under the ground and made of galvanized aluminum which should prevent squirrels from getting up them. The shrubbery nearby is too weak for a squirrel to get to the houses from them and the fence should be far enough away. A game in play on the field shouldn't disturb the birds. They nest over the winter and Brunon was reminded that the houses have to be cleaned out after mating season. A request will be made to have scouts in Brunon's Troop 228 to maintain the bluebird houses for service hours once Brunon is no longer in the troop. All are in favor of Mr. Ralston signing off on Brunon Kaminski's Eagle Scout Bluebird Project.

Bailey Park Project Review – Mrs. Mary Ann Rivera, of Landscape Concepts, met with the Board at their January monthly meeting. A lengthy review and discussion took place about the proposal to rejuvenate Bailey Park. By the end of the meeting, the proposal was close to being finalized. It was understood that some tree work would have to be done as part of the project, but everyone wanted the nature and extent of any necessary work to be evaluated and confirmed by a professional arborist. Safety is the top priority but protecting any new design work and updates to the park is also an important consideration. The different types of patios available were discussed and Mrs. Rivera would provide quotes for a patio made of big Cambridge pavers laid in stone dust with a surrounding edge, and bluestone laid in concrete, with a surrounding edge of brick shaped grey. Everyone liked the red, natural, earth tone pavers. The same pavers will be used for the walkway and smaller patios, but they will not have an edge.

Mrs. Rivera was supposed to return this evening with the arborist report and final costs for the two options for a patio. Unfortunately, the multiple significant snowstorms since the previous Board meeting prevented an on-site meeting with the arborist and Mrs. Rivera still has not received all the price quotes needed. As such, she will meet with the Board at their next meeting on March 24th. There is general concern over how long it is taking to finalize this project. Starting it in the fall would be ideal. Hopefully no additional discussions have to take place after the next meeting and the project can be proposed to the Town Board for approval.

Day Camp Discussion – Additional information and clarification has been received by the Westchester County Department of Health on how to proceed with plans to operate camp, including COVID procedures and guidelines. They are very restrictive and will have a

significant impact on the traditional way camp has always run. The budget, program registration, staffing needs and park patrons will be affected. Examples of the impacts are: Tusker Trax cannot run; summer camp will only be offered to those entering Kindergarten through 7th grade; pre-and-post camp hours cannot be offered; the campers must remain at Reis Park each day; camp will not meet on rainy days; the registration fee per camper will increase in order to comply with all regulations, ie. each group has to be provided with their own supplies; the public cannot use the playground while camp is in session; a waterslide is not permissible; there can be absolutely no co-mingling of camp groups and their staff; the groups cannot be larger than 15 campers with 2 counselors; the campers have to be picked up at the car transporting and escorted to camp by only one of their counselors, parents are not allowed to exit their cars and, as a result, camp will begin 8:30 a.m. to accommodate this requirement; all campers and staff must wear masks for the entire day; lunches will have to be staggered so that area can be disinfected in between; etc.

The Board agreed that, under the circumstances, the per child fee being charged is not unreasonable. All camps in the County, both public and private have to follow the same rules. Private camp alternatives are certainly more costly, and calls have already been received from residents who have never sent their kids to the Town Camp but are interested now. Different scenarios are still be considered about the most efficient way to handle drop-off in the morning. Group assignments are a concern as every year numerous requests are received about campers being in the same group. These concerns will be heightened this year, as the groups will not be able to co-mingle, or even compete against each other in games. Information distributed will be bold and prominent so there are no misunderstandings. The registration form will require parents to check off their agreeance and understanding of following the rules. If a camper or staff member tests positive for COVID, the Department of Health will be contacted, and their instructions followed. Staff are in the process of being hired now to determine how many campers can registered as the ratio required must be strictly adhered to. Mr. Ralston is hopeful that whatever the final instructions are, everything will be handled.

All members received a draft of the flyer that will be distributed about camp for their review and comment. The final policies from the Department of Health will be issued on March 5th and perhaps they will be less restrictive. These policies and any changes thereto will be discussed at the March 24 Parks Board meeting.

SYSO COVID Protocols Discussion – Mr. Ralston forwarded all COVID guidelines to Kevin Marcus, President of SYSO. As they are given a permit to use the fields, it is their responsibility to follow and enforce the rules or games will be cancelled. Since they were allowed to play in the fall, it is the hope that everyone is used to what has to be done thus far.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ralston had no further comments.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Westerman stressed the importance of being very transparent about all of these rules when hiring staff and registering campers. If any assistance is needed, he is happy to assist. Mrs. Sanz echoed the same sentiment and is happy to help as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. and the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 24th 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