

## **Somers Parks & Recreation Board**

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**Kevin Westerman**  
Chairman



### **MEETING MINUTES**

**April 27, 2022**

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

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

Stephen Krug and John Zattola were absent.

Michele Werney has resigned from the Board.

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

Open Space Committee/Tree Board members Jan Antonucci, Michael Barnhart, Bob MacGregor, Gail Simpson and Rosey VanWart were also present.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was covered under New Business – Bailey Park Project Discussion with Somers Open Space Committee/Tree Board.

### **MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mrs. Sanz to approve the minutes of February 23, 2022 meeting as submitted. Mr. McCormack seconded the motion. All were in favor.

### **MR. RALSTON'S REPORT**

Through a connection with a SYSO Baseball Board member, Voltage Brothers Electric donated their time and labor to completely replace, rewire and upgrade the breaker panel at the R4 (Dugout Field). They also installed a timer and light in the closet, as well as a timer for the batting cage lights. This was a needed significant upgrade and now allows for access to the field lights and scoreboard without needing to go into the breaker panel. Voltage Brothers Electric did exceptional work and were thanked for their time and expertise.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Bailey Park Project Discussion with the Somers Open Space Committee/Tree Board –**

As a result of the discussion that took place at the January meeting regarding the Bailey Park Project, a unanimous decision by the Board as to the next steps was as follows: The Parks Board will draft a public statement of facts regarding the project to be sent to the Town Board and, perhaps, outlets such as The Somers Record. Meetings will be scheduled with the Landmarks Committee, Architectural Review Board and Open Space Committee/Tree Board for their input. Changes will be made to the design as deemed appropriate by the Parks and Recreation Board based on the feedback received from those boards and committees.

The Somers Open Space Committee (OSC)/Tree Board was invited to the meeting this evening to discuss their concerns outlined in their letter of July 19, 2021 to the Town Board. They appreciated the opportunity for discussion. Mr. Westerman apologized for the need to cancel last month's meeting, as for the first time since he has been on the Board, a meeting had to be cancelled due to a lack of quorum. The Parks Board requested that comments and discussion be focused on the Bailey Park proposal and the issues raised in the OSC's letter to the Town Board.

Mr. Barnhart explained that the Somers Open Space Committee is also the assigned Tree Board for the Town. The OSC/Tree Board's guidance on the trees is welcomed. Mr. Barnhart referred to the arborist report that indicates that two trees should be removed, but the OSC believes that only one of those trees needs to be removed. One has major rot and needs to come down, but the OSC opines that the other tree, near the intersection of Routes 202 and 100, can be salvaged with trimming and regular maintenance. In his opinion, another arborist's recommendation is needed, though specifics were not offered. Mr. Westerman reminded him that regardless of whether a project moves forward at Bailey Park, the recommendation to remove those two trees is a safety issue. Mr. Westerman further noted that deciding to not remove a tree after arborists reports recommended removal creates both potential risks to the public and liability to the Town, should that tree fall after a storm. Mr. Barnhart said that he was mindful of those concerns.

One of the underlying concerns for the OSC/Tree Board is how the root system may be impacted by the proposed project. They believe that it is important that the roots not be compacted by construction. The OSC opines that the location of the majority of the pavers on the original proposed plan would stress the tree roots. It was also pointed out that the root system of sugar maples, of which there are several in the park, is very close to the surface as that is how they get their water. In addition, their roots grow out 8 to 10' from their trunk, so nothing should be happening within 10' of them.

The OSC/Tree Board suggested that the garden includes native and some pollinator friendly species. Mr. Westerman indicated that the Parks Board members would support that as their proposal simply followed the recommendation of the landscape architect. An issue to consider, however, is that because water access is limited, any proposed plantings in the park must be able to thrive with little or no maintenance.

There is concern over a screen of non-native viburnum shrubs that are proposed to be planted on the property's west end. Mr. Westerman said the planting of those shrubs is no longer part

of the project and clean-up of that side of the property is currently underway by the Highway and Parks Departments.

The OSC/Tree Board doesn't think it is prudent to add non-porous paving blocks to the landscape as it already suffers from stormwater problems. It was reinforced that any proposed plan will account for appropriate drainage.

In closing, the OSC/Tree Board had concerns of the overall maintenance of the plantings and trees in the park. Mr. Westerman stated that the Parks and Recreation Board would support efforts of the OSC to improve or support the vegetation at Bailey, which we all want to flourish. Those general concerns that are not related in the proposed project can be shared in writing to the Town Board. The Parks and Recreation Board will be copied on that letter. In the meantime, no changes will be made until Mr. Ralston is directed to by the Town Board and, in addition, at some point in the future, an RFP will be done for all the necessary tree work needed to be completed in Bailey Park.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Administrative Staff** – The County denied the request to add the Recreation Assistant position and has created a Recreation Leader position that does not meet the needs of the Department. This will continue to be a work in progress with the County.

**Day Camp Updates** – As of today, there are 130 registered for Day Camp. This is a bit surprising considering that all restrictions have been lifted, a rain site secured, and extended hours made available. At the moment, enough counselors have been hired to accommodate the number registered to date, but that number cannot be increased without hiring more staff, which has been a difficult task. Perhaps it is time to consider offering the Day Camp in three, two-week sessions or two, or three-week sessions. On a positive note, for the first time in many years, a Nurse has been secured. The administrative positions have all be committed to as well.

**Programs Updates** – Andrew Johnson continues to work on summer program offerings.

**Angle Fly Preserve Conservation Easement Modification Update** – Mrs. Schirmer received an update from the Supervisor's office on February 28, 2022: The Angle Fly swap is moving in the right direction, and they are waiting for the New York State Comptroller to approve it.

## **MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Ralston had no additional comments this evening.

## **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Westerman reported that on April 21<sup>st</sup>, he and Mr. Ralston met with Supervisor Scorrano at Bailey Park so that Supervisor Scorrano could share his vision of what he would like to see done in the park. In some ways, it was a very different design than what was proposed by the Parks and Recreation Board. Supervisor Scorrano would like to: remove a section of railing to widen the gazebo steps and shift them so that the gazebo opens to the expanse of the park; add a small bluestone landing at the bottom of the gazebo steps; take down the dangerous trees; add plantings around the park and expand the Unity Garden; and

perhaps add some picnic tables at some point in the future if deemed appropriate. At that April 21 meeting, Supervisor Scorrano said he would be sharing his vision with the Town Board that evening. The Parks and Recreation Board members all agreed to continue the Bailey Park re-design efforts pursuant to the express directive of Supervisor Morrissey and the Town Board at the December 2, 2021, Town Board meeting. The Parks and Recreation Board will meet with the Architectural Review Board (ARB) at their May meeting. After that meeting, all comments, suggestions, considerations, etc. collected from Supervisor Scorrano, the ARB, OSC/Tree Board and the Landmarks Committee will be reviewed and taken under advisement as a final proposal will be prepared and presented to the Town Board with a request to vote their approval at a Town Board meeting.

Mr. Penzine thought it might be nice to put an article in The Somers Record thanking the Voltage Brothers Electric for their time and dedication on the recent project in Reis Park. Mr. Ralston agreed, but wanted to run it by them first.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. and the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> 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