East Haddam Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2020

Attending in Person: T. Goodie, M. Roberts; F. Tremblay
Attending via Phone: M. Davis; P. Laffan
Absent: D. Carbo; C. Grillo; M. Larson; T. Piscotti
Guests: L. Conroy; S. Wheeler

Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the October 5, 2020 meeting.

MOTION MADE BY MR. DAVIS, SECONDED BY MS. ROBERTS, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2020 MEETING AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Committee Reports

- **Indoor Putting League Disc Golf** – Ms. Conroy stated that current health department guidance limits participation in events such as a disc golf clinic to four individuals per session. Mr. Laffan stated that he feels the group could work with that limitation, however, he will poll the other golfers to see if there is enough interest. Ms. Conroy agreed to discuss the format of the clinics with Chatham Health District to see if there might be any exceptions to the limit.

  Ms. Conroy advised that she had received the "No Dogs Permitted" signs for Nichols Field and the disc golf course. Mr. Laffan agreed to pick-up and install the signs. Ms. Conroy stated she would contact the resident who had informed her of the violations at the Park and advise her that new signs are being installed.

- **Music on the River (MOR)** - Ms. Conroy reported that Ms. Quinn of the Colchester Recreation Commission had contacted her and asked if East Haddam would like to regionalize the Music on the River events. She stated that Ms. Quinn suggested alternating performing the events in several neighboring towns and live-streaming it to the others. Ms. Conroy stated that she had spoken with several of the MOR committee members and the initial reaction is not to move to a regionalized format at this time.

  Ms. Conroy stated that the committee is considering a number of options to make the events as safe as possible, including delaying the start of the program until August and changing the location to facilitate a "tail-gate" audience. She also stated that they are brainstorming charging an entrance fee in lieu of fund-raising at the events.

Director's Report

a. Winter Programs Review – Ms. Conroy provided the following report:

- She is investigating the possibility of offering an after school program for the children of East Haddam Board of Education staff during the schools' half-day schedule. She stated that it would require one counselor per four students and, due to staffing and space limitations, participation will be limited to 12 students. She is currently polling the Board of Ed staff to determine interest and is also looking into transportation needs.

- A number of high school students volunteered to participate in Project Jingles on December 15th. They will write responses to the letters to Santa "mailed" at various locations around Town.

- Recent changes to COVID-19 restrictions have required a reduction in Pickle Ball participation from a maximum of 16 individuals per session to four per 90-minute session. Ms. Conroy stated that participants now reserve time in the gym and it has been going very well.

- The virtual programs are running smoothly and several, including guitar lessons and e-Games are being co-sponsored by the East Haddam and Haddam-Killingworth Rec Departments.

- The start of the Skyhawks evening basketball clinics for participants in grades 1 thru 8 has been pushed out to January 23rd. The HoopsterTots program registration is still open.

- Plans for a Futsal program have been tabled for the present.

- On inclement weather days, Boot Camp is being held in the gym and participants must wear a mask.

- An Activity-to-Go program has been scheduled for December and January where children who have been registered can pick-up a package for a variety of projects to be completed at home.

b. Planning for Spring & Summer – Ms. Conroy reported the following:

- She is putting together another on-line boating class program.

- She is hoping for a traditional soccer experience this Spring.

- Boot camp and Gentle Yoga also may return to a traditional experience.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Goodie, Ms. Conroy stated that there were four days last summer when visitor limits at the Town Beach were exceeded and people had to be turned away. She advised that she will revisit the visitor limits for the Town Beach in the Spring.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

a. 2021 Recreation Commission Meeting Dates – Ms. Conroy called the Commissioners' attention to the proposed list of meeting dates for 2021.

MOTION MADE BY MR. DAVIS, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLAY, TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING DATES AS THE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE RECREATION COMMISSION FOR THE 2021 CALENDAR YEAR: FEBRUARY 8, APRIL 5, JUNE 7, AUGUST 23, OCTOBER 4, AND DECEMBER 6, 2021. ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX, PARKS AND REC ACTIVITY ROOM. UNANIMOUS AYE.

b. Budget 2021-2022– Ms. Conroy reported the following budgetary items:

- She will be modifying the programming fee that outside instructors remit to the Parks and Recreation Department from a flat $10.00 per registration to 20% of each registration fee charged. To begin January 1, 2021.

- Work on refurbishing the tennis courts should begin in 6-8 months. The work will be paid for from the excess funds allocated for the renovation of the Municipal Office Building. The new courts will include lines for Pickle Ball.

- There have been a number of incidents of disrespect and poor behavior by several users of the Skateboard Park. Consequently, the Town is planning to install a fence around the park and institute rules about hours of use. She noted that the fence will allow for "time-out" periods to be implemented in necessary.

  Mr. Goodie suggested that if fences are being installed around both the Skate Park and the tennis courts, it might be cost-efficient to contract for both projects at the same time. Ms. Conroy stated she would bring his suggestion to the attention of the First Selectman.

- She would like to replace the Department's soccer goals at Nichols Field and the jungle gym at the Town Beach playground.

- She plans to budget for upgrades to the fields behind the Municipal Office Building, such as filling-in holes, aerating, and over-seeding.

Ms. Conroy stated she would like to begin planning for a multi-age community playground in Town. The Commissioners supported her proposal and there was a general discussion regarding potential locations. Ms. Conroy stated she will meet with Land Use Director Ventres to get his input on which Town properties could accommodate a large playground and related amenities.

MOTION MADE BY MR DAVIS, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO INITIATE PLANNING FOR A COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Adjournment

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, MR. DAVIS MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLAY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary