East Haddam Recreation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2021

Attending: D. Carbo; T. Goodie; C. Grillo; T. Piscotti (telephonically); F. Tremblay
Absent: M. Davis; P. Laffan; M. Larson; M. Roberts;
Guests: L. Conroy

1. **Call to Order** - Mr. Grillo called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

   The meeting followed a standard order of business, therefore no approval of the agenda was required.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

   The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the June 7, 2021 meeting.

   MOTION MADE BY MR. GOODIE, SECONDED BY MR. CARBO, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2021 MEETING AS WRITTEN. Mr. Tremblay had not attended the April meeting, therefore, they abstained from the vote. THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

4. **Committee Reports**

   - **Unified Kickball** – Mr. Carbo reported that the Unified Kickball event held on October 16th was very successful, noting that there were 49 participants at the approximately 2-hour event. He advised that the Board of Education had donated funds for ice cream for the players. He responded to several questions raised by Mr. Grillo.

   - **Music on the River (MOR)** - Ms. Conroy reported that four concerts and 5 bands were scheduled for this summer's Music on the River program. She stated that the concerts were well attended and went off well, with only one – the Christine Ulhman event - having to be rescheduled due to inclement weather.

     Ms. Conroy reported that $10k in pre-concert donations were received and an additional $6k was contributed at the events. She stated that there were approximately $8k in expenses, leaving roughly $8k to start the 2022 season. She noted that the Committee would like to hold six concerts next summer and would like to bring back a few of the headliners, if possible. She stated that they will need to confirm the availability of the school grounds as a back-up site in case of inclement weather on the scheduled dates.

   - **Disc Golf** – Ms. Conroy reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission approved the application for a 9-hole expansion at the disk golf course. She advised that disc golf baskets will be installed at the High School and Middle School and she will be looking into the potential to have the transfer bus transport students to the course in Moodus.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Grillo, Ms. Conroy provided the following Treasurer's report:

- There is a balance of $5k left in the Special Revenue Fund which will be used for outstanding repairs.
- Receipts for summer camp were $2k which was much better than last year.
- An additional $3,660 for adjustable basketball hoops was approved in the department's 2021-2022 Equipment budget; however, the cost has increased by $1,100 which can be covered by a surplus in their 2020-2021 Maintenance & Repairs budget.
- An expenditure was made to prepare the gym floors for the volleyball nets; however, the equipment is on back-order.
- A FEMA application was submitted for repairs to the Nicols Field stairs which washed out during tropical storm Isaias; however, FEMA will only provide funding for repairs to bring property back to its pre-storm state. Ms. Conroy stated she wants to replace the existing steps with concrete stairs which cost an estimated $4,500.
- Four new pickle ball nets will be ordered for the outdoor pickle ball courts; however, one is being donated.

5. <u>Director's Report</u>

A. **<u>Summer & Fall Programs Review</u>** – Ms. Conroy provided the following report:

- Youth volleyball open gym had 11 participants and basketball open-gym had 20.
- There was a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Town Beach for the bird's nest swing.
- Noises Sports Academy went very well this summer. The High School coaches ran the program and attendance was up 20% from 2019. The program raised $13,144 for High School programs.
- Summer camp went very well and there were 61 registered campers. The police donated a "Dunk Officer Dave" tank for summer camp. Ms. Conroy complimented the camp staff.
- Adult softball had six teams participating but it often stormed on the night of the games, consequently, they will try to set up rain dates for next year. She is also looking into the possibly of holding the games at the High School where night lighting is available. There was a general discussion about possible improvements to the program.
- She provided updates on soccer camp, yoga, 18-year-old basketball, pickleball, and other summer programs.

Ms. Conroy also provided an overview on several of the regular fall programs, advised that she has been providing Halloween activity kits, and noted that fall soccer went very well. She also reported the following:

- Basketball registrations are low; however, the Skyhawks program on Saturdays for the little kids is going well.
- Other fall programs include an open gym for High School students, k-3 indoor soccer, a Cheer program for 3rd – 5th graders, an American Red Cross babysitting class.
- The 18+ yr-old indoor soccer will begin in November and basketball will continue through the fall.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Grillo, Ms. Conroy confirmed that 18+ basketball now requires participants to be registered for the program and walk-ins will be discouraged.

Ms. Conroy added that the Elementary School is opening its gym to Rec programs

B. **Planning for Winter**

Ms. Conroy reported that she hopes to plan a dodge ball program for late winter

C. **Improvements/Updates**

Ms. Conroy reported the following:

- The tennis court rehabilitation project has made progress but was delayed due to cold weather. The cost of the rehabilitation, $220k, is being funded by a surplus from the Municipal Office Complex project. Ms. Conroy advised that four pickle ball courts will be included on the new tennis courts and reviewed the layout of the courts with the Commissioners. There was a general discussion regarding use of the courts for both tennis and pickle ball games.

- She reviewed several repairs/maintenance projects undertaken at the Town Beach.

- The playgrounds were inspected and the Town Beach playground is in excellent condition with only minor repairs needed; however, it was recommended that the mats at the Nicols Field playground be replaced with mulch.

Ms. Conroy advised that she plans to consult with InCord regarding adding playground equipment for older children at the Nicols Field playground. She noted that she would also get input from the Bula family.

There was a general discussion about potential funding sources, including Consumer Reports, and Ms. Conroy stated that she had received a grant of $1k from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, for this year's summer camp program, and she would like to submit an application for $3k for this year.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GOODIE, SECONDED BY MR. CARBO, TO AUTHORIZE RECREATION DIRECTOR CONROY APPLY FOR A $3,000.00 RECREATION GRANT FROM THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY. UNANIMOUS AYE.

6. **Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business discussed at the meeting.

7. New Business

A. **New Programs**

Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

B. **Town Beach Multi-Sport Area**

Ms. Conroy reported that Zane Barber, Vice President of the Soccer Club, proposed constructing a 120'x90' sand-based soccer field and two volleyball courts at the Town Beach. She discussed potential expenses and funding sources and it was noted that there may be wetland issues with the location. Ms. Conroy confirmed that the new fields would be the responsibility of the Parks & Recreation Department.

There was a general discussion regarding potential conflicts with the proposed new playground and the planned playing fields behind the Municipal Office Complex. The Commissioners discussed prioritizing projects, implementing the plan in stages, as well as possible locations for a multi-sport site. The Commissioners agreed to continue discussion of this topic. Ms. Conroy said she would invite Mr. Barber to a future meeting to discuss his proposal.

C. **Recommendations for Recreation Commission reappointment**

Ms. Conroy advised that Mr. Tremblay, Ms. Roberts, and Ms. Larson are coming to the end of their terms on the Commission. She noted that Mr. Tremblay and Ms. Roberts expressed a desire to be reappointed to another 3-year term; however, Ms. Larson will be stepping down. Ms. Conroy further stated that Barbara Free has expressed an interest in joining Commission.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GOODIE, SECONDED BY MR. CARBO, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT FERN TREMBLAY AND MARGY ROBERTS BE REAPPOINTED TO ANOTHER 3-YEAR TERM ON THE RECREATIONS COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GOODIE, SECONDED BY MR. CARBO, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN ACCEPT, WITH REGRETS, THE RESIGNATION OF MICHELE LARSON FROM THE RECREATION COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GOODIE, SECONDED BY MR. CARBO, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN APPOINT BARBARA FREE TO A 3-YEAR TERM AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE RECREATION COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

8. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

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