East Haddam Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2021

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

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 April 19, 2021 meeting.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2021 MEETING AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. Committee Reports

- **Music on the River (MOR)** - Ms. Conroy reported that four concerts are scheduled for August 2, 9, 16, and 23. She stated that the committee currently plans to hold the concerts on the Goodspeed lawn; however, in case of inclement weather, the Tuesday night back-up venue will be at the Middle School.

  Ms. Conroy advised that the committee's fundraising goal for this year is $9,000.00 and, to date, they have received approximately $5,000.00 in donations. She stated that they plan to have a shuttlebus to bring people who park at Eagles Landing across the bridge and they are working on a brochure for the events.

- **Disc Golf** – Mr. Laffan reported that 18 new baskets were purchased for the course. He stated that the Middle and High Schools each bought 4 of the old baskets and he is planning on adding a second practice basket using one of the old baskets. Mr. Laffan stated that he would like to expand the course by adding another 9-hole loop using the remaining supply of baskets and he asked for the Commissioners' approval of the plan.

  MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. CARBO TO APPROVE MR. LAFFAN'S REQUEST TO EXPAND THE DISC GOLF COURE BY TO ADDING A SECOND PRACTICE BASKET AND CONSTRUCTING AN ADDITIONAL 9-HOLE LOOP AT THE SITE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

- **Adult Softball** – Ms. Conroy reported that the league began games two weeks ago. She advised that there are fifteen teams and they play at Nicols Field Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. She noted that the league hires ASA umpires for the games.

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5. Director's Report

A. Spring and Summer Programs Review – Ms. Conroy provided the following report:

- The soccer program is finishing up and she plans to hold an awards ceremony this year; there were 82 participants in the program.
- Pickle ball and 18+ basketball are running 3x and 2x per week respectively. They are both going very well; however, the participants have expressed a desire to be allowed to play without face masks.
- There are 119 registrants for the Little Noises summer sports camp. Other summer programs include Skyhawks basketball, track & field, and Mini-Hawks sports, as well as a Lego camp, soccer camp, and open gym for ages 14-19.
- She reviewed the 7-week summer camp program and advised that registrations have been very strong.
- Seven 5-day swimming lesson sessions are scheduled and the ratio of instructors to children is 1-to-3.
- Two experienced lifeguards are returning this summer and there will also be four new, recently certified lifeguards, added to the staff. Daily coverage will be scheduled when school is out of session.
- Coach Sarah Anderson is planning on holding a 4-day basketball program for ages 4-8 years.
- Yoga is considering a hybrid program for the summer session.

Ms. Conroy advised that there had been reports of people not cleaning up their trash at the Town Beach last weekend. She stated that there is video footage of the individuals and she will share the video with the life guards and ask them to speak with the individuals about respecting the Beach rules if they visit the beach again. She noted that the individuals could be barred from using the beach facilities if they continue to disregard the rules.

There was a general discussion regarding the incident and Mr. Goodie suggested posting signs that visitors are required to clean-up after themselves.

B. Planning for Fall – Ms. Conroy reported the following:

- She hopes to go back to the traditional soccer program in the fall. In response to a question from Mr. Grillo, she advised that the Soccer Club program is for age 9 and above.
- She plans to contract with Skyhawks for several of their sports programs.
- Other planned fall programs include guitar lessons, cooking lessons, and open gym for Middle and High School participants.

C. Improvements/Updates

Ms. Conroy reported the following:

- The new volley-ball system for the gym will be installed in about 4-weeks.
- She would like to purchase new soccer goals for Nichols Field and possibly football goals.
- New sand and mulch were added to the Town Beach and she plans to have the bathhouse doors painted. She expects to replace the doors next year and the building's floors and walls also need to have work done on them.
- Bids were received from two contractors to refurbish the tennis courts and she expects a decision will be made next week.

6. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business discussed at the meeting.

7. New Business

A. Budget update – Ms. Conroy called the Commissioners' attention to a handout on the Recreation Commission's budget. She referenced a statement made by Linda Stuhlman's in her Letter to the Editor in the latest edition of the East Haddam News claiming that the, "*Recreation and Leisure [budget] is increased by $100,000 to $640,884 (a 10.7 percent)".* Ms. Conroy noted that she does not know where Ms. Stuhlman received information; however, it is not correct.

Ms. Conroy reviewed the Recreation Commission's 2021-2022 budget and noted that the overall increase was actually $5,721.04 which is a 4.1% increase from the previous year. She advised that, other than a 2.8% COLA increase to salaries, the bulk of the increase is for the cost to replace the bathhouse doors and upgrading the remaining basketball hoops in the gym to be adjustable.

Ms. Conroy also addressed salary increases mentioned in two of the Letters to the Editor. She advised that the Town had commissioned a survey to compare staff salaries to those paid by similar sized CT towns; the survey collected information on the minimum, average and maximum salaries paid. She stated that the survey found that the salaries of several department heads, herself included, were below the minimum paid by other towns. Consequently, in anticipation of the eventuality of replacing staff, the Boards of Selectman and Finance decided to increase the applicable salaries to at least the minimum range in an effort to remain competitive with surrounding towns. Ms. Conroy emphasized that she had not requested a raise but she also did not have a voice in the decision.

There was a general discussion about the need to pay Town staff a fair and competitive wage. Ms. Conroy noted that she had provided the above information so that the Commissioners could have the actual facts if they are asked about Ms. Stuhlman's comments.

In response to a question, Ms. Conroy confirmed that the Recreation Commission's request for funding in the 2021-2022 budget to replace the jungle gym at the Town Beach was denied.

8. <u>Adjournment</u>

Ms. Conroy noted that the next regular Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for August 23; however, the final Music on the River concert is also scheduled for that date. The Commissioners discussed alternate dates of August 18th or 25th and Ms. Conroy agreed to poll all members to see which date works best.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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