East Haddam Recreation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2022

Attending: D. Carbo; M. Davis; B. Free; T. Goodie; C. Grillo; P. Laffan (remotely); M. Roberts; F. Tremblay
Absent: T. Pisciotti

1. **Call to Order** - Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

   MOTION MADE BY MR. DAVIS, SECONDED BY MR. CARBO, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

   The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the December 6, 2021 meeting.

   MOTION MADE BY MS. FREE, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLAY, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2021 MEETING AS WRITTEN. Ms. Roberts had not attended the December meeting, therefore, she abstained from the vote. THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

4. **Committee Reports**

   - **Music on the River (MOR)** - Ms. Roberts reported that the Music On The River committee is in contract negotiations with most of the bands for the 2022 season and that the Goodspeed had again offered their lawn space for the concerts on Monday nights. She noted that they have not committed to making the space available on Tuesday nights for rain dates so the committee is still looking into making rain date arrangements.

     Ms. Roberts reported on several other aspects of the committee's work and she and Ms. Conroy provided information regarding creating a standalone webpage for the event as well as an Instagram account.

   - **Unified Events** – Mr. Carbo reported that the group is planning to hold a family kickball event in the spring.

   - **Disc Golf** – Mr. Laffan reported that, due to weather delays, there is no new update on the 9-hole expansion at the disc golf course. In response to a question raised by Ms. Free, Mr. Laffan noted several locations where disc golf equipment could be purchased.

5. **Director's Report**

   Ms. Conroy distributed fliers that listed a number of the winter and spring programs.

   A. **Winter Programs Review** – Ms. Conroy reviewed the following programs:

      - Youth and 18+ basketball teams and schedules.
      - Yoga continues to be virtual.
      - Skyhawks is hosting a pre-K to 2nd grade program.
      - Futsal training sessions and Friday night matches – coached by Zane Barber and Joey Plude

- Bootcamp has approximately 12 participants.
- Pickle Ball – she is watching participation to see if it warrants adding another session.
- Activity camp for February is focused on Valentine's Day projects

B. **Planning for Spring and Summer**

Ms. Conroy reported the following spring program plans:

- CPR Class for Babysitters in March.
- Abrakadoodle for two age groups.
- A 4-week session of Family Dodge Ball for ages 10+; which may spin-off an adult program.
- The Volleyball program is going well and will begin again in April.
- She is working on scheduling a Basketball Clinic in the spring.
- Spring Youth Soccer (4/30 thru 6/12) is filling up quickly.
- The Noises Sports Academy Camp, a fund-raiser for the Town's athletic programs, is scheduled for June and July.
- Day Camp and After Care programs will run 7/5 through 8/12 and she hopes to schedule some field trips.
- Youth Soccer Camp begins 8/14.
- Lego Camp (two half-day sessions) runs 8/22 to 8/26.
- She is looking into a Skyhawks tennis program.

Ms. Conroy further reported that two lifeguards are returning this year and she has four open positions. She stated the Rec Department will reimburse the cost of attaining a lifeguard certification for new hires.

She also noted that some of the program fees had increased to compensate for the $2 increase in the minimum wage.

C. **Budget**

Ms. Conroy distributed information regarding the department's proposed 2022-2023 budget. She provided a brief overview of the Special Revenue Funds, the Operating Budget, and Capital requests. She noted that the Town has instructed all departments to submit a zero-based budget this year which means that any requested increases will have to be justified.

Ms. Conroy advised that the only significant change to the department's budget is that she is proposing to hire a 20-hr assistant this year. She noted that Bev Christopher, from the Town Clerk's office, had been assisting her for 10-hours per week; however, this year the Town Clerk needs some of those hours back. She noted that the department has been carrying $11k in each year's budget for the assistant position.

Ms. Conroy reviewed several of the Maintenance & Repairs projects and noted that the repair of the stairs that washed out at Nicols Field do not qualify for FEMA funds. She stated that she expects the Town to receive a donation for a climbing pyramid for the Nicols Field playground and she will submit a capital request for a slide and climbing apparatus for the Town beach playground. She responded to several questions from the Commissioners.

6. **Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business discussed at the meeting.

7. New Business

A. Covid Guidelines

Ms. Conroy reported that she has received some pushback about wearing masks from several program participants. She stated that she has advised participants that the mask mandate is still in effect and anyone that does not comply will be asked to leave the session; if the behavior continues, they will be removed from the program and their registration fee will not be refunded.

B. New Programs

Ms. Conroy reported that new programs that have been instituted include Volleyball, Dodge Ball Abrakadoodle, and Futsal.

C. Town Beach Multi-Sport Area Update

Ms. Conroy stated that she has been working with Land Use Administrator Ventres and Public Works Superintendent Hedler on this project. She reported that, due to several obstacles around the proposed site of the multi-sport area, the size of proposed field had to be downsized to approximately 100' x 70' which should accommodate a combination of two beach volleyball courts and a beach soccer field.

Ms. Conroy reported that Superintendent Hedler had provided her with a quote of $7,500.00 for the removal of trees/stumps in the area of the proposed court. There was a general discussion regarding the cost of tree removal.

D. Community Foundation of Middlesex County Grant

Ms. Conroy advised that the Community Foundation of Middlesex County had awarded the Recreation Department a $1,500.00 grant for summer camp programming. She noted that this is the second grant they have received from the Foundation.

MOTION MADE BY MR. DAVIS, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLEY, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT THEY MOVE FORWARD, THROUGH THE GRANT ACCEPTANCE PROCESS, THE $1,500.00 GRANT AWARD FROM THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Conroy advised that she has been working with Town Treasurer Maureen Goff to develop a more donor-friendly process for accepting financial contributions to the Parks and Recreation programs.

8. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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