East Haddam Recreation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2024

Attending: B. Free; T. Goodie; C. Grillo; P. Laffan; M. Roberts; F. Tremblay
Absent: M. Davis; B. Thiele; Jamie Kehlenbach
Guests: L. Conroy

1. **Call to Order** - Mr. Grillo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

MOTION MADE BY MR. LAFFAN, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the October 23, 2023 meeting.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GOODIE, SECONDED BY MR. LAFFAN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF OCTOBER 23, 2023 AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. **Committee Reports**

- **Music on the River (MOR)** - Ms. Roberts reported the committee is working on their band selections and noted that the event is acquiring a good reputation among New York agents. She stated they are taking into account the potential for bridge closings during some of the concert nights.

  Ms. Conroy advised that they are running a t-shirt design contest with the High School A.P. Arts students; winners will receive a $125 prize, have their designs used on this year's t-shirts, and be acknowledged in the MOR concert program.

- **Disc Golf** – Mr. Laffan reported that construction of a 9-hole beginner's loop at the disc golf course is under construction.

5. **Director's Report**

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

- The Skyhawks basketball program for 2 yrs. olds thru 2nd grade is finished and the basketball program for 3rd and 4th graders have two more games before finishing up.
- The Elementary Dance Project, taught by a High School student for her senior project, was well attended and will end on February 14th.

- The adult volleyball, indoor soccer, and pickle ball programs are doing well; pickle ball offers several clinic options and private lessons.
- Open gym was offered to home-schooled students and a local challenged teen/adult group.

B. **Spring/Summer Preview**

Ms. Conroy reported the following:

- Spring programs include Mad Science, Legos, indoor and outdoor youth soccer, track & field at the High School track, and Abbra Kadoodle, which added a second instructor.
- The tennis courts are scheduled to be opened May 1st.
- She will be applying for another programs grant to fund the cost of hosting several special events for the day camp program.

Ms. Conroy also distributed a flier about the summer programs and reported that camp registration opens April 1st. She advised that the Camp Director and several staff members are returning this summer and she plans to hold a Counselor-In-Training program again this year prior to camp beginning.

Director Conroy advised that six lifeguards will be returning this summer and two individuals have also expressed interest in working as lifeguards at the Town beach. She stated that she plans to send out a newsletter next week with information about the March, April, and May programs.

There was a general discussion regarding alternative payment methods, other than cash, for the adult drop-in programs.

C. **Budget Update**

Ms. Conroy reviewed the Commission's proposed FY2025 Operating Budget and noted it represented a 7.43% increase over last year's budget. She noted that the Maintenance line had increased $499.00 primarily due to the cost for trash pick-up and mowing at the Dog Park and responded to several questions about the condition of the park. She also provided information about several wage increases that she would like to make and the following motions were made:

MOTION MADE BY MR. LAFFAN, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLAY, TO REQUEST AN INCREASE IN THE FY2025 HOURLY RATE OF THE ASSISTANT RECREATION DIRECTOR OF $2.00 PER HOUR, IN ADDITION TO THE 2.5% ANNUAL COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO REQUEST AN INCREASE OF $2,664.00 IN THE FY2025 LIFEGUARDS SALARY & WAGE BUDGET LINE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. LAFFABN, TO REQUEST AN INCREASE OF $1,200.00 IN THE FY2025 SUMMER INTERN SALARY & WAGE BUDGET LINE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO REQUEST AN INCREASE OF $1,837.00 IN THE FY2025 BEACH ATTENDANT SALARY & WAGE BUDGET LINE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Conroy reviewed two capital requests she had submitted for FY2025: replacement gym wall mats ($12,815.00) and slides for the beach playground ($50,000.00). She confirmed that the projected cost of the slides includes installation and there was a general discussion regarding the high cost of installing playground equipment.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MS. FREE, TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING CAPITAL REQUESTS IN THE FY2025 BUDGET: $50,000.00 TO ADD A COMPLEMENTARY CLIMBING AND SLIDING STRUCTURE AT THE TOWN BEACH, AND $12,815.00 TO REPLACE THE WALL MATS IN THE MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING GYMNASIUM. UNANIMOUS AYE.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Parks Updates

- **Skate Park** - Ms. Conroy reported that a car was observed parked in the middle of the skate park and she responded to questions about the incident. She also reported that the port-o-potty at had been vandalized and she is considering cancelling the service for the winter months.

7. New Business

A. Resignation of Rec Commissioner and New Appointment Discussion

Ms. Conroy advised that Rec Commissioner Michael Davis is currently residing out of town and, consequently, he had submitted his written resignation from the Board.

MOTION MADE, WITH REGRET, BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. LAFFAN, TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF MICHAEL DAVIS FROM THE BOARD OF THE RECREATION COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Conroy advised that a Rec program participant and parent of a camp counselor has expressed an interest in joining the Recreation Commission.

B. **Eagle Project**

Director Conroy advised that Aaron Allen has offered, as his Eagle Scout project, to construct eight benches, with granite-ends, for Nicols Field (4) and the Town Beach (4), as well as an 8-slot kayak rack for the beach.

8. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

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