East Haddam Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 28, 2023

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

1. **Call to Order** - Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Since this was a regular meeting and the agenda has been posted in advance, approval of the agenda was waived.

3. Approval of Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the June 5, 2023 meeting. Mr. Tremblay noted that he had not attended the June meeting and the attendance list should be corrected.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 3, 2023 MEETING AS AMENDED. MS. FREE, MR. KEHLENBACH, AND MR. TREMBLAY ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE AND THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

4. **Committee Reports**

- **Music on the River (MOR)** - Ms. Roberts reported that, in spite of the construction work on the Swingbridge, the concerts had been very successful. She advised that pre-concert donations met the Committee's goal, which exceeded last year's pre-concert contributions, and that generous contributions were also made the night of the performances. She noted that $50 in foreign currency had been donated and solicited input regarding where she could convert it to U.S. dollars without paying a substantial fee.

- **Disc Golf** – Mr. Laffan was not in attendance at the meeting so the report on disc golf was postponed.

Ms. Conroy advised that she would like to establish committees for the Youth and Adult programs. She stated that she would be soliciting volunteers from the Board for individuals who could speak to those topics and there was a brief discussion regarding responsibilities and expectations.

5. Director's Report

Ms. Conroy advised that she had sent out a survey in the spring to families who had participated in Rec programs but only received eight responses.

A. **Summer Programs** – Ms. Conroy reported that the summer was very busy but went smoothly. She advised that a scoreboard and shot clock had been installed in the Town gymnasium and also provided the following program information:

- Noises Sports Academy has 143 registrations.
- Day Camp ran for six weeks with an average registration of 100 children per week.
    - A $7,000.00 grant provided for a number of additional camp programs.
    - There were twelve field trips scheduled.
- The Sky Hawks golf and tennis programs went well.
- Girls' open gym, basketball and volleyball were well attended.
- Adult boot camp, yoga, volleyball, pickle ball, and men's basketball went well.

In response to a question from Mr. Davis, Ms. Conroy advised that approximately 12-15 camp scholarships had been awarded this summer. She noted that the $6k-$7k scholarship expense was offset by a transfer of 50% of the camp profits from summer 2022 (transferred to Lukas Breton Scholarship fund) and donations to the scholarship fund.

B. **Fall Preview** – Ms. Conroy reviewed soccer registrations for levels pre-K through 4th grade and noted that she had a good turnout for coaches. She stated that she would like to try to find gym time to schedule an indoor adult soccer program and there was a general discussion regarding the potential to schedule gym times at the schools. Ms. Conroy responded to several questions from the Board members.

Ms. Conroy reported that the following programs are also planned for the fall:

- K-5th grade Cheer, Pony Care and Riding, and When I'm In Charge programs.
- A pickle ball tournament on September 16th.
- A basketball clinic for 4th through 8th grades.
- Abrakadoodle art and Lego classes.
- Lego and art classes for home-schooled students.
- Adult Boot Camp and Yoga.

C. **Budget Update** – Ms. Conroy reported that the Nicols' Field electricity project had been cut from the Rec Department's capital budget but will be paid for with ARPA funds.

She advised that the Department's Special Revenue account balance is approximately $200k and she plans to use some of the funds for several small purchases and projects such as a kayak rack for the Town Beach.

6. Unfinished Business

A. Playgrounds

Ms. Conroy advised that she had received a quote of $50k for the installation of the new climbing structure at Nicols Field. She stated it has been challenging getting additional quotes; however, a company from Florida stated it would install the structure for $15k if they could use Town equipment. She noted that Facilities Director Angersola did not believe the Public Works Department would allow the Florida company's staff to use its equipment.

There was a general discussion regarding alternative options and Ms. Conroy agreed to ask if the Town would be willing to let the Public Works staff and equipment participate in a joint installation project which the Florida company could oversee.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Grillo, Ms. Conroy stated that she has to follow up with the First Selectman regarding the Board's wish to name the gymnasium in honor of Mr. Parker.

7. New Business

A. Park Updates

Town Beach – Ms. Conroy reported that the summer season at the beach went very smoothly. She noted that there had been a change in the Transfer Station passes, which residents' also use for parking passes at the beach, which she will address next spring.

Skate Park – Ms. Conroy stated that a parent has complained about the graffiti at the skate park and there was a general discussion regarding how to monitor activities at the park. She noted that there is a video camera at the skate park but she does not have access to it. There was a discussion about whether or not dogs are allowed at the skate park and Ms. Conroy agreed to review the park's rules.

Dog Park - Ms. Conroy reported that the problem with dog owners not cleaning up their dog's waste has not gotten any better. She stated that since the Town no longer provides free woodchips that is not going to be the solution to the mowing problem. She said she would like to keep the park open and has one last option to try so the area can be mowed without mucking the Public Works mower. There was a general consensus that the Board will support her decision to permanently close the park if necessary.

B. **Nicols Field Trails** – Ms. Conroy stated that the Conservation Commission has asked for a copy of the Disc Golf trails to include in their Nicols Field Trails brochure. There was a general discussion regarding whether or not the Conservation Commission can take over the maintenance of the walking trails on the Nichols Field property and Ms. Conroy agreed to invite representatives to the Board's October meeting.

Mr. Grillo thanked Parks and Recreation Director Conroy for all her work managing the Town's parks, recreation programs and events. The Board members all concurred with his tributes to her efforts.

8. <u>Adjournment</u>

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 7:52 p.m. Ms. Conroy stated that the next meeting of the Recreation will be October 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

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