East Haddam Recreation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2023

Attending: M. Davis; B. Free; T. Goodie; C. Grillo; F. Tremblay
Absent: J. Kehlenbach; P. Laffan; M. Roberts; B. Taylor
Guests: L. Conroy and Conservation Commission Members: C. Beard; B. Gillis; G. Wilson

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

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLAY, TO MOVE AGENDA ITEM 6A – NICOLS FIELD TRAILS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION UP ON THE AGENDA TO FOLLOW THE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLAY, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

3. Approval of Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the August 28, 2023 meeting.

MOTION MADE BY MR. GRILLO, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 28, 2023 MEETING AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

6. Unfinished Business

A. **Nicols Field Trails and Conservation Commission –** Mr. Wilson introduced himself, as **t**he outgoing Chairman of the Conservation Commission. He also introduced Mr. Gillis and Mr. Beard as members of the Conservation Commission. He advised that the Nicols Field trails have not been under the Commission's stewardship and provided some background information. He stated that the Conservation Commission would like to take on the maintenance of the trails, exclusive of the disc golf course holes.

The Recreation Commissioners reviewed the map of Nicols Field trails drafted by Mr. Beard and there was a general discussion regarding the Conservation Commission's proposal. The Conservation Commissioners responded to questions from the Board and confirmed that their stewardship of the Nicols Field Trails would not preclude any future expansion of the disc golf course and stated that they would not have to be approved by the Conservation Commission.

In response to several questions from the Board, the Mr. Wilson and the other Conservation Commissioners reviewed their maintenance procedures and schedule, trails parking sites, and locations for planned map kiosks. Mr. Gillis suggested signs be installed on the trails advising hikers when they are crossing a disc golf hole location.

MOTION MADE BY MR. TREMBLAY, SECONDED BY MS. FREE, TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL THAT, GOING FORWARD, THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION SHALL MAINTAIN THE NICOLS FIELD TRAILS AS PRESENTED ON THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S MAP. IT WAS FURTHER AGREED THAT THE NICOLS FIELD DISC GOLF COURSE WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN SUCH STEWARDSHIP. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Conroy thanked the Conservation Commissioner's for attending the meeting.

4. Committee Reports

- **Music on the River (MOR)** - Ms. Roberts reported that submissions for the 2024 Music on the River have started to come in and she will compile a list for the committee from which they will make their selections.

- **Disc Golf** – Mr. Laffan was not in attendance at the meeting so, other than accepting the Conservation Commission's proposal to assume the stewardship of the Nicols Field Trails, there was no new update on this agenda item.

5. Director's Report

Ms. Conroy reported the following:

A. **Fall Programs** –

- The soccer program just wrapped up. Weather had been challenging; however, the Middle School gym was made available to them on several rainy days. Ms. Conroy stated that there had been a good group of parent coaches this season.
- Adult programs included boot camp, yoga, volleyball, pickle ball and pickle ball clinics, and indoor soccer.
- A new adult yoga program, in addition to the existing yoga program, has been added.
- Youth programs included Lego and Abrakadoodle art classes, basketball and cheer clinics, and a pony program.
- Project Halloween is scheduled for October 31st and Ms. Conroy provided an overview of the event plans. She distributed a list of new purchases that were made for the event, including several inflatables.

Ms. Conroy reported that she had scheduled a Skyhawk's soccer clinic for 2-3 year olds, however, it had to be cancelled due to low registration. She advised that, since many of the 2-3 year olds are in childcare programs, transportation to the Skyhawk's program was problematic. There was a brief discussion regarding potential solutions to the

transportation issues and Ms. Conroy stated she may re-schedule the program for a weekend.

B. **Winter Preview**

Ms. Conroy reported the following:

- She provided an overview of the basketball program and noted that registration for the 3rd to 6th grade groups is low but she is sending out fliers that she hopes will increase the numbers.
- A Skyhawks basketball clinic for the younger children is planned.
- Lego and Abrakadoodle art programs are on the schedule.
- As a senior project, a High School student would like to organize a dance program and Ms. Conroy is working through the details with her.
- 35+ Men's basketball is on the schedule.
- Kids Night on the Moodus Green is scheduled for December 1st. Additional events for that evening, such as a cocoa and cookies station and a Letters to Santa room will be hosted at the Town Hall.

There was a brief discussion regarding any conflict from or potential to coordinate with the Economic Development Commission's Santa Fly-In down in the Village.

C. **Budget Update** – Ms. Conroy called the Board's attention to several budget documents that she had distributed earlier. She reviewed the Special Revenue budget and noted that for the FY2022-2023 Revenues are up 37% with an increase of 12% in expenses. She stated that she expects Day Camp profits to be close to $15k this year; 50% of which will be transferred to the Rec Commission's scholarship program.

Ms. Conroy reviewed the year-to-date Operating Budget and said that, due to a mandated increase in the minimum wage, she proposes an increase in day camp tuition of $5 per week.

Unfinished Business

A. **Nicols Field Trails and Conservation Commission** – This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is covered in the minutes above.

B. **Park Updates** – Ms. Conroy provided the following park updates:

- **Nicols Field** – a contractor to install the Pirates' Tower has been identified and she is working with them to secure a date for the installation.
- **Dog Park** – the first planned pre-mowing clean up did not happen as planned; however, the mowing schedule for next year was posted and she is hopeful that the dog owners who use the park will do their part to police the area prior to each mowing. Mr. Travis recommended researching a slow growing, low maintenance ground cover to replace the grass.

- **Skate Park** – everything seems to be going well at the skate park. She would like to replace the Rules sign and will research the most appropriate low-maintenance type of sign to use at the park.
- **Tennis Courts** – the nets are holding up well. She would like to install two benches in the courts and possibly a picnic table outside the courts.

6. New Business

A. **Committee Assignments – Special Events, School Age Programs, Adult Programs, MOTR, Disc Golf** – Ms. Conroy stated that she would like to solicit more on-going input from program participants and suggested that the Board members involved in the programs act as committee chairs to gather the input. She proposed the following committee assignments:

- Special Events **–** Barbara Free and Travis Goodie
- School Age Programs – Fern Tremblay, Jamie Kehlenbach
- Adult Programs – Chick Grillo and Barry Thiele
- MOTR – Margy Roberts
- Disc Golf – Patrick Laffan

Ms. Conroy solicited input on the 2024 Recreation Committee's 2024 meeting schedule. There was a general discussion regarding scheduling the meetings for other than the first Monday of the month and Ms. Conroy agreed to research whether there are meeting rooms available for the 3rd or 4th Monday of the month.

7. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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