TOWN OF SIMSBURY **–** CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, December 6, 2018** – 2.5 pages

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by David Bush, Chairman, in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall. Other commission members who were present included Gerry Wetjen, Kelly Kearney, Gerry Post, Steve Spalla, and Lori Coppinger. The C. P. & R. Director, Thomas Tyburski; the SF Golf Course Superintendent, Michael Wallace, and the SF PGA Golf Professional, John Verrengia, were also in attendance.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Approval of the September 27, 2018 Meeting Minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

**Public Session**

No one spoke during public session.

**Presentations**

*John Cody, Eagle Scout candidate.* Scout was not present to give an update of his project.

*Joe Buda, Simsbury Thanksgiving Trail.* A 22-page report was distributed. Mr. Buda, President of the Simsbury Historical Society, proposed constructing an outdoor attraction that would highlight Simsbury’s 10,000-year history of human habitation. The Wagner Foundation and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving will fund the project. The Simsbury Historical Society will oversee and maintain it. Spanning about 26 miles, it is meant to be a fun, drivable historical tour of the town. Five to six stops along the trail will feature educational displays as well as monuments or sculptures of different themes and time periods. All stops will have ample parking and handicap accessibility. It is an idea that is being considered in other American towns. The trail in Simsbury would be the first. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to endorse the Thanksgiving Trail proposal so that it could be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for its approval. Mr. Post seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed. Mr. Wetjen suggested that this new trail be incorporated as an addendum to the town-wide Parks & Open Space Master Plan.

**Old Business.**

*Simsbury Celebrates Wrap Up.* The Firetruck Parade and Fireworks Display were held earlier than usual because of impending rain. Mr. Tyburski reported that it was well-run, budgeted and attended. Mr. Bush commended the new committee for the success of this year’s event.

*Natural Gas Line Construction - Update.* The gas lines have been installed at the Farms. The existing heating equipment will be converted in the next couple of weeks.

*Parks and Open Space Master Plan Process – Update.* Five quotes were received. They are being reviewed by members of the Open Space Committee, the C. P. & R. Commission, and town staff. The top three candidates will be selected on or about December 20. Interviews will be conducted in late January.

*Friends of Simsbury Farms – Report & Approval of New Board Members.*

A Board of Selectman Meeting Agenda Submission Form, titled “Seeking Approval of the Friends of Simsbury Farms Board Members,” was distributed. Ms. Coppinger made a motion to approve the proposed slate of FoSF board members listed in item #5. Mr. Wetjen seconded the motion. Most were in favor. Mr. Kearney abstained. A quorum was met, so the motion passed.

*Golf Fifth Green Construction Project – Update.* Mr. Wallace noted that construction on the fifth green took two times as long as usual because of the constant rain. It is finally completed and is due to open in the spring.

*Golf Course Irrigation Study – Update.* Mr. Wallace reported that the audit of the irrigation system was recently completed. With diligent maintenance, this 25-year-old system could work reliably for another five years. A full replacement, completed all at once, was recommended within that time span.

*Golf Course Financial Report / End of Season Report.* A spreadsheet titled, “Simsbury Farms Golf Course Annual Income” was distributed. It compared 18 years of greens fees and rounds from March through December 2000 to 2018. Figures were collected through the end of November. Mr. Wallace and Mr. Verrengia

reported that as a result of 55 inches of rain during the golf season to-date, revenue has been down. Despite the weather, however, they made sure the course was ready and repaired so that outings could take place. Mr. Verrengia noted that four new tournaments were booked this season. After following up with the organizations which held outings at SF this year, he reported that all agreed to come back next year. In 2019, the staff will experiment with: 1. Offering a series of beginning level, ladies-only, LPGA 101 courses; 2. Creating a PGA Junior League team, and 3. Coordinating specials with the on-site restaurant and Pro-Shop to boost revenues for all three facilities.

**New Business**

*Golf Fees 2019 Rate Proposal.* A 2-page spreadsheet titled, “Simsbury Farms Golf Course Annual Fee Schedule,” was distributed. In order to increase profits, streamline the fee structure , and decrease the number of specials offered, the golf course staff is recommending a one-rate system for 2019 Daily Greens Fees. The only new addition will be a 6-hole Friday Evening Rate. 2019 Season Pass rates will continue to be offered at last year’s pricing. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to approve the simplified rate structure, as proposed on the spreadsheet. Ms. Coppinger seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

*Offering Resident-Rate SF Golf Season Passes Farther Afield.* Mr. Tyburski added this item to the agenda during the meeting. The proposal is to offer SFGC resident-rate season passes to nearby towns which do not have a competing local course. Each town’s Recreation Department would be responsible for advertising, collecting payment, and forwarding the registrant’s information and fees to Simsbury’s C. P. & R. Department. A $50 credit for each purchased season pass will be given to the town Recreation Department responsible for selling it. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to begin selling resident-rate golf season passes through the Recreation Departments of select nearby municipalities. Mr. Spalla seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

*Golf Course Restaurant Contract Renewal.* Mr. Tyburski provided the board with copies of the original 16-page Lease Agreement dated February 22, 2017, and the newly created 3-page Amendment to the Lease Agreement. The amendment extends the contract to the end of 2020, and more clearly states the expected hours of operation. The concessionaire is also requesting that the end time for events using an outdoor tent be moved back from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Commission members were concerned about nearby residents, and asked Mr. Tyburski to consult with the Zoning Officer. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to approve extending the current lease agreement between the Town of Simsbury and Farms KRG, LLC for another two years, subject to consultation with the Zoning Officer. Mr. Post seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

*Ice Rink Report.* A 1-page spreadsheet titled, “Simsbury Farms Ice Rink Revenue Report 2018 – 2019,” was shared. Figures were collected through the end of November. The season opened to cold weather and good revenues. Lessons and public skate revenues are ahead of last year. Two large group rentals have left, but new groups are actively being sought. This year, half-rink rentals are being offered for children’s birthday parties. It has been well received.

*Simsbury Farms Tennis Courts and Pickle Ball Lines Proposal.* Handouts included: 1. A July 2018 article from “Tennis Industry” titled, “A Blended Court Solution?” 2. A satellite view of blended tennis courts at Sycamore Hills Park in Avon, CT, and 3. A July 2018 list of outdoor pickleball places to play in CT and southern MA. Pickleball is a growing sport across the U.S. The tennis courts at Henry James Memorial School and Tariffville Park have been striped to accommodate pickleball players. Most pickleball players are retired and prefer to play on weekday mornings or early afternoons. Since HJMS uses its courts for gym classes most of the year, pickleball players do not have enough town courts to play on. A local donor is willing to fully fund lining the tennis courts with pickleball lines at SF. While all tennis classes and camps would still go on as usual, , there has been some concern raised from the local tennis community regarding adding pickleball lines to the Simsbury Farms courts. It was determined that this will require further discussion and will remain as an agenda item.

*C., P., & R. Commission 2019 Meeting Schedule.* Mr. Kearney made a motion to approve the proposed 2019 meeting schedule, detailed in a November 6, 2018 letter from Mr. Tyburski to the Ms. Butler, Town Clerk. Ms. Coppinger seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Kearney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Post seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

**Next Meeting**The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 7 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie McElligott

*Commission Clerk*