

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, October 27, 2022** – 3 pages

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Kelly Kearney, Vice Chairman at Simsbury Town Hall. Other commission members who were present included, Lori Coppinger, Danielle Celli, Christine Boswell, Rachel Wellman, Liz Keppel, Tim Walczak, and Michelle Lipar. The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski, was also in attendance.

Presentation – Joshua Moon, Simsbury Little League President- Mr. Moon shared that Simsbury Little League has a great volunteer base, 9 executive board members, and pushing 400 volunteers every season. For spring enrollment this year they had 434 kids enrolled in baseball, 48 teams, about a 3% increase. Softball had 141 kids (15% increase). They also had 70 kid umpires and they are the only league in the greater Simsbury area that does that. For fall 2022, 174 kids signed up for baseball, 51 kids for softball and they had 30 youth umpires. They also have a summer All-star program and compete in the little league international tournament every year. Mr. Moon stated that 85% of all they do is at Memorial, however, they also use West Mountain, and Squadron Line. Their goals for 2023 are (1) continue to increase registration; (2) continue to invest in player development; (3) develop deeper relationships with other youth sports; (4) identify alternatives to the Squadron Line baseball field; and (5) evaluate opportunities to improve Memorial Park field 5. They have begun efforts to delineate responsibilities so SLL is providing time and resources to maintenance and improvements. In the coming months, they hope to put together a 5 year improvement plan for the uppers fields in consultation with Town, SHS and Simsbury Babe Ruth.

Mr. Kearney asked how participation is with the Challenger League. Mr. Moon stated they had about 15 kids participate.

Ms. Coppinger asked if Town Forest could be used for the All-Star games. Mr. Tyburski stated no because the bases are at 90 feet.

Presentation – Simsbury Performing Arts Center, Inc. update- Mr. Dornenburg, President of the SPAC shared that they are hired by the Town, not part of the town. An addition is scheduled to begin after season of 24 and through the winter of 25. The band shell was phase 1, phase 2 has been sitting idle for 17 years. The project will include permanent bathrooms that face the playground and street, a place for staff to be on site, a greenroom for VIPs, conference room, and additional storage space. He stated that they have about half the money they need right now. He stated that the symphony is always well attended and that they would like to have one recognizable name a year. They would also like to have 3 or 4 FAVARH style fundraisers that are open to the public but that also bring their community with them. Mr. Dornenburg stated that he feels as though there is room to experiment with community involvement and outreach. He stated that the annual fund is going on right now and this year they are going to be a little soft. Ticketed events are 30% down across the country. He stated that one problem they are trying to solve is off-site parking as the shuttle program is not advertised well, the buses aren't nice enough and there is no real reward for the people that utilize the off-site parking. They also want to have a better Uber station.

Mr. Kearney commented that the signage about the events could be larger and easier to read. Mr. Tyburski commented that they have tried to address that through a grant. Mr. Dornenburg stated they would love to have bigger signs and will work on that for next year.

Ms. Coppinger asked if the new construction on Iron Horse is expected to cause any traffic issues. Mr. Tyburski commented that the plan is for maybe 100 units and it has been vetted by local traffic authority.

Ms. Celli commented that she loves the concerts but they can be expensive, an idea might be to offer a ticket deal if they use public transportation. Mr. Dornenburg commented that by and large they are a rental facility, renters aren't very supportive of ticket discounts however, they will be proposing that it be more expensive to sell the 6k-8k tickets.

Public Session – Comments limited to 3 minutes per person. Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Mr. Donohue, 36 Hildercrest Drive, spoke stating that he believes the tennis community will be fine with whatever the Commission decides. They essentially need to ask themselves if they want tennis at Simsbury Farms or not. He also suggested that they ask the community in Tariffville what they would like to see at the 300k renovated courts

Member Comments Minutes – September 29, 2022 Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Ms. Coppinger stated that she was taken aback by public session last time, and she felt that people's opinions were not respected.

Ms. Celli commented that she liked that Mr. Tyburski did the survey, it was not what she expected to hear.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Kearney declared the September 29, 2022 minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

New Business

Simsbury Celebrates 2022 – Mr. Tyburski shared that Simsbury Celebrates will be held Saturday, November 26th from 5-8:30. There will be food vendors, live music, bubble mania show, Hartt School of Ballet, a children's performer, Santa pictures, CT Ukes performing, trolley, ice carving demonstration, and an inflatable slide. Mr. Tyburski stated that UCONN Health has come on as the presenting sponsor and a made significant sponsorship agreement with parks and rec, they will also be purchasing 12 new pole banners for next year. There will also be fireworks at the bandshell and a firetruck parade at 7:30. He stated that the events always needs volunteers.

2023 Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission Proposed Meeting Schedule- Ms. Coppinger made a motion to approve the meeting schedule as present. Ms. Keppel seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Old Business

Proposal to add two additional sets of pickleball lines to Simsbury Farms courts- Mr. Tyburski stated that this would be for the courts closest to the playground. He also stated that he received 35 responses to the survey back from members of the Connecticut Parks and Recreation Association and that was shared with the Commission.

Ms. Keppel stated that there are six proposed court coming to Tariffville in 2023. The only court with lights available to the public is at Simsbury Farms.

Ms. Boswell stated that there is a big demand for pickleball at night, and the only lit courts are at Simsbury Farms. Mr. Tyburski commented that lights probably won't be put in at the Tariffville courts. He stated that there will be youth and adult tennis instruction at Simsbury Farms next summer. He stated that Ms. Boswell's foundation would pay to have the lines painted and that that donation would have to be accepted by the Board of Selectman, the painting wouldn't be able to be completed until the spring due to the weather if it were to be approved

Ms. Lipar stated that she is thinking in terms of what is going to get the most use.

Mr. Walczak thinks that half and half is a fair compromise for the courts.

Ms. Wellman stated that if the lines won't be painted until the spring, it's right around the time when the new court will be built, maybe it makes sense to re-visit the issue then.

Ms. Boswell made a motion to add the two additional pickleball lines to the courts at Simsbury Farms. Ms. Celli seconded the motion. The motion failed with Ms. Wellman, Mr. Walczak, Ms. Coppinger and Ms. Keppel opposed.

Simsbury Farms Playground Renovation Subcommittee –Mr. Tyburski stated he is trying to schedule a time for committee to meet in next two weeks to discuss what pieces are the most important to them at the playground.

Parks and Open Space Master Plan Update – Mr. Tyburski stated that the Town's contractor is starting work on the Town-Bloomfield bike trail connector this fall and it will start back up in the spring. A Rec Department project is out to bid right now to start replacing fencing at the Weatogue commuter lot to Avon and to taking down fencing behind Mitchell Auto.

Adjourn

Ms. Keppel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kearney seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be December 1, 2022 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,
Commission Clerk