

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Chairman David Bush, via Zoom video conference. Other commission members who were present included Kelly Kearney, Rachel Wellman, Lori Coppinger, and Liz Keppel. The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski, was also in attendance.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

No changes were made to the April 22, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes. Mr. Bush declared the minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

Public Session:

The following public comments were read regarding adding 2 lines (on each side of the net) to make one or two of the existing four courts at Simsbury Farms pickleball friendly.

Timothy Ryan commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.
Bob Jendreck commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Andy Brower commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.
Tom Clarke commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Steve Ballentine commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Stuart Yaffee commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.
Brynn Brown commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.
Teri Carrier commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.
Heather Calabro commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.
Pamela Mohr commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Uma Mehta commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Awani Mehta commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Noel Bodenbug commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Bill Donahue commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Liz Keppel commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Charlotte & Phil Couchon commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.

The following comments from non-residents were read:

Sally Stapleton commented against making the courts pickleball friendly.
Molly Welch commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.
Susan Greer commented in support of making the courts pickleball friendly.

New Business

Pickleball Lines at Simsbury Farms Courts Proposal– Mr. Duane Royce shared his proposal of adding four blue lines to two tennis courts at Simsbury Farms. Ms. Boswell also shared that in 2019 they were pursuing the same issue and got turned down. They started to monitor the Farms usage on school days in the morning and for the most part no one is there during the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. When they play at Henry James there are often mixed groups of tennis and pickleball players and there have not been any noise issues. She would be happy to pay for the lines as well. Mr. Murphy spoke in support stating they need to play in the morning when it's cold not just after school hours. He stated that there needs to be a place to play pickleball in Simsbury so people don't move on.

Mr. Bush commented that the Commission should vet the options to find the best solution. He would suggest that the Commission look into seeing if there are other alternatives that are cost effective. He would like the opportunity for Mr. Tyburski and his staff to investigate and look at it thoroughly before a decision is made. This item will be added to next month's agenda for further discussion.

Ms. Coppinger stated that with tennis camps beginning at Simsbury Farms, there is a lot to think about.

Ms. Boswell stated a few years ago they tried to play pickleball on the skating rink at Simsbury Farms, however the Farms determined it was too slippery.

Mr. Murphy stated that Hopbrook Tennis Club tried the overlay and it had too many seams and it just doesn't work.

Hilltop Grille at Simsbury Farms Update – Mr. Sparks shared that as of two weeks ago they have obtained their liquor permit and that they are pouring beer and wine. The patio has been filled, weekends have been busy and there is live entertainment tomorrow. They are looking into having live entertainment on Sundays as well. This past Sunday, they introduced a brunch menu and it was well received. They will have more weekly specials starting next week. They have had numerous private events and tournaments under the tent and they have had good feedback. They are working on QR codes for the beverage carts as well as signs leading people to the Grille.

Ms. Coppinger stated her concern that the length of time it takes to get served is long. She stated that it has taken 45-60 minutes to get their meal. Mr. Sparks stated that it is tight quarters in the kitchen and they will be using the outdoor grill area in the summer. They also might be utilizing a food truck to take pressure off the kitchen. Mr. Sparks stated that staffing has been challenging as they have brought in many entry level employees and are still in the process of training them and learning the menu. He also stated that they want to further develop the grab and go menu.

Old Business

Simsbury Farms Golf Course Update – Mr. Tyburski shared that the numbers are exceeding last year's totals and that Mr. Johnson and his team continue to do a fantastic job of maintaining the course. They should finish the fiscal year at the end of June in a very good position.

Update on Meadowood Open Space Acquisition – Mr. Tyburski shared that the Meadowood Acquisition passed at referendum. Town staff is working to secure the remaining grants and are working towards a fall closing on that property.

COVID-19 Summer Program Updates- Mr. Tyburski shared that enrollment has been incredible and pool season pass sales have been through the roof. The CT Department of Health did not put any restrictions on them for the summer, it will look very much like a normal summer. There will be no pre-registration for afternoon public swim. They will have a sign by the front gate recommending mask usage while in the facility if unvaccinated.

Mr. Bush asked if it is a requirement for camp staffing, lifeguards, etc. to be vaccinated. Mr. Tyburski stated that it is a personal choice, not mandatory.

Mr. Kearney stated that he would love to have the Commission consider a new addition to the format they use at their meetings. He suggested they dedicate five minutes to where they are vs. the strategic plan. Mr. Tyburski updated the Commission that as part of the master plan they are adding a learn to mountain bike program for kids and adults.

Adjourn

Ms. Keppel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Coppinger seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be June 24, 2021 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,
Commission Clerk