

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, January 24, 2019** – 2 pages

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by David Bush, Chairman, in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall. Other commission members who were present included Gerry Wetjen, Lori Coppinger, Sarah Cramer, and Dennis Fallon. The C. P. & R. Director, Thomas Tyburski, and the SF PGA Golf Professional, John Verrengia, were also in attendance.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

No changes were made to the September 27, 2018 nor the December 6, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes. Mr. Bush declared the minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

Public Session

Bill Donahue—a teacher at Farmington Valley Racquet Club in Simsbury, and Director of Fun Unlimited, which offers Tennis Camps through Simsbury Recreation—shared his frank opinion about the SF tennis courts being additionally lined or used for pickle ball.

Election of Officers. With Mr. Bush abstaining from voting for himself as Chairman of the C. P. & R. Commission for 2019-2020, a quorum was not met. This election will be an agenda item for next month's meeting. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to approve Mr. Kelly Kearney as Vice Chairman of the C. P. & R. Commission for 2019-2020. Ms. Cramer seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Old Business.

Natural Gas Line Construction - Update. The Golf Club House heating equipment is hooked up, and the Apple Barn and Restaurant heating equipment has also been converted and all are running smoothly. By March, all the inside work will be completed. Outdoor clean-up will take place later in the spring.

Parks and Open Space Master Plan Process – Update. Four firms were selected. They will be interviewed next Wednesday, January 30.

Belden Forest / Old Growth Forest Designation – Update. Due to the efforts of the Open Space Committee, Belden Forest in Simsbury is on its way to being designated as the first Old Growth Forest in Connecticut. Mr. Wetjen noted that it is assumed that the C. P. & R. Dept. will provide maintenance to all acquired Open Space properties, without also acquiring the funds to do so. Mr. Tyburski acknowledged that the Open Space Committee has appointed a “Subcommittee for Stewardship” to better define what stewardship is, and who will be responsible for providing and paying for necessary maintenance. This topic will also be addressed in the Parks & Open Space Master Plan.

Facility / Ice Rink Report. A one-page spreadsheet titled, “Simsbury Farms Ice Rink Revenue Report - 2018 – 2019,” was shared. Figures were collected through the end of December 2018. Mr. Tyburski reported that since the weather has cooperated, the revenue for Public Skating and skate rentals has been good. Skating lessons have remained steady, while Large Group Rink Rentals continue to shift. The new Half-Rink Rentals, which make winter birthday parties more affordable, has been popular.

SF Golf Course as a Trend Setter. Added to the agenda. In his ongoing research into what other local and regional courses are doing, Mr. Wetjen mentioned that Simsbury Farms tends to lead the way. Instituting a maintenance surcharge and going to a “one rate” fee structure are two recent examples.

New Business

Summer Aquatics and Day Camp Fees 2019 Rate Proposal. A two-page “2019 Aquatic and Day Camp Fees” spreadsheet was distributed. A one-page “2019 Aquatics and Day Camp fees – Local Area Survey” spreadsheet was also presented. Mr. Fallon made a motion to approve the proposed 2019 Aquatics Fees. Mr. Wetjen seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed. Ms. Coppinger made a motion to approve the proposed 2019 Day Camp Fees. Ms. Cramer seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed. These fees will be presented to the Board of Selectmen, for its approval, at their next meeting on January 28.

SF Golf Course In-Season Specials Review. A one-page DRAFT report titled, “2019 Simsbury Farms Proposed Specials (Discounted Greens Fees)” was distributed. Two new specials were listed, along with seven previously offered ones. Mr. Verrengia explained the options. Mr. Wetjen noted that while Groupon specials were initially profitable, and provided widespread publicity for the course, now Groupon’s profits tend to be much larger than ours. The commission discussed limiting Groupon specials while trying to publicize the course in other ways. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to adopt the recommendations in the “2019 Simsbury Farms Proposed Specials” draft report, except to strike out the words “~~Replaces Group On~~” after the “Website Page Special.” Ms. Cramer seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed. Going forward, course fee structure listings will be accompanied by a legal disclaimer about advertised specials.

FY 2020 Budget Process Update and Proposed Six Year Capital Plan. An accurate, true-picture C. P. & R. Department budget was turned into Town administration. The Town Manager and Finance Department staff will review and edit it before it is presented at the Board of Selectmen meeting on February 25. It will probably be further edited before being presented by the Town Manager at a March 2 department-by-department BoS budget meeting. A three-page spreadsheet titled, “Town of Simsbury: Proposed Six Year Capital Outlay Detail,” was handed out. Mr. Tyburski reported that within the next six years, infrastructure repairs will have priority over new renovations.

Review / Discussion of Potential Donor Projects at SF. A one-and-a-half-page report titled, “Possible Simsbury Farms Projects as Identified by Dept. Staff,” was distributed. It is a “Wish List” of projects that are priced, prioritized and divided among the SF facility, golf course, pool, Apple Barn, rink and pools. Requested by the Friends of Simsbury Farms Board for potential funding of projects, it will also give other potential donors information that they could use to assist with improvements at the Farms. It will be updated regularly.

Simsbury 350th Anniversary Celebration. Added to the agenda. Six selected pages from the January 14, 2019 Board of Selectmen meeting report titled, “Simsbury 350th Anniversary Celebration,” were presented. Many celebratory events are being planned from May through October of 2020. For the next year and a half, Mr. Tyburski will consult with his staff and commission members to consider how his department will be involved, what facilities will be used, and how much to budget for costs and possible damages.

Safety of Pool Tubes. Added to the agenda. Ms. Coppinger was concerned about how pool tubes—especially non-transparent ones—can obscure a lifeguard’s view. Mr. Tyburski reported that the town insurance company reviewed the pool at the end of summer and did not identify the use of the tubes as a liability hazard in a draft report. However, he agreed to look into current policies and will report back on the staff training protocols and rules concerning the tube use at the Simsbury Farms Pools.

Adjournment. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Fallon seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Next Meeting. The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 7 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Lorrie McElligott, *Commission Clerk*