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

Subject to Vote of Approval – Special Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, October 28, 2021** – 3 pages

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05p.m. by David Bush, Chairman via Zoom video conference. Other commission members who were present included Kelly Kearney, Rachel Wellman, Sarah Cramer, Lori Coppinger, Liz Keppel, Tim Walczak and Danielle Celli.  The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski and Parks Superindent, Orlando Casiano were also in attendance.

**Public Session:**None.

**Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission Member Comments**

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

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

**New Business**

*Welcome to new commission member Timothy Walczak*- Mr. Bush welcomed Mr. Walczak to the Commission and encouraged his input and opinions.

*Parks Maintenance Professional and Park of Merit Award –* Mr. Bush recognized Mr. Casiano for receiving the Parks Maintenance Professional of the Year Award and thanked him for all his hard work. Mr. Casiano stated that he takes a lot of pride in the community and loves working with the staff and volunteers. Mr. Tyburski stated this was a great opportunity to recognize the great work of Orlando and his staff. He stated that Mr. Casiano will be recognized at an awards ceremony at Mohegan Sun on November 23rd. The Commission members thanked Mr. Casiano for all his hard work and dedication.

*Friends of Simsbury Farms Golf Tournament Recap –*Mr. Bush thanked the entire committee that worked on the Friends of Simsbury Farms Golf Tournament, stating the tournament was a huge success. Mr. Bush stated that they raised more money than they ever had before on a net basis. Mr. Kearney stated he thought it was a well-attended event, he also recognized Mr. Bush’s hard work for the event. Mr. Bush stated that Friends of the Farm are always looking for new input and new people to join. Mr. Bush announced that Ms. Cramer will be resigning from the Commission when her term ends and thanked her for her service.

*Update on Simsbury Celebrates fundraising and event planning –*Mr. Tyburski stated that Simsbury Celebrates is trying to go back to being more traditional. There will be a high concentration of outdoor events and food vendors, some of the indoor locations used in the past have asked to be on pause for one more year. There will be a fireworks show and a firetruck parade (not drive-thru). Mr. Tyburski highlighted various events and activities there will be such as various bands, s’mores station, an ice carver, the gingerbread house competition and possibly a fire dancer. He stated the committee has been working hard to create a special event. They will be lighting the street along Hop Meadow, there will lights on every pole from Town Hall to Drake Hill Rd on both sides. Santa and his favorite elf will also be at the library. Mr. Tyburski stated that if anyone is interested in donating to Simsbury Celebrates that can be done through C.P.R.’s website or at simsburycelebrates.com. They are also looking for volunteers and anyone interested can email Mr. Tyburski. The event will be held from 5-7:30 on November 27th.

Ms. Coppinger made a motion to add approving the 2022 meeting dates to the agenda. Ms. Keppel seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor. Ms. Keppel made a motion to approve the 2022 C.P.R. meeting dates. Ms. Coppinger seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

*Facility improvements update –* Mr. Tyburski shared that they went out to bid to paint the Simsbury Farms main building and they received a lower than budget bid so that project came in significantly under budget. That project was just completed today. He also stated that the road lighting project has been completed. They are still working to finish the basketball court lighting project and have been dealing with supply line issues, wiring issues and quality issues. Mr. Tyburski shared that in the spring they had the control panel installed at the rink and as the rink will be starting up next week, they did a dry run, they are working out a couple bugs but by the end of tomorrow that should be complete and then in the spring they will do the project that was approved in this current year’s budget, which is the chiller. They will also be replacing benches on the bike trail and in some of the parks for people who contribute to a memorial bench. Mr. Kearney commented that the basketball courts could use a few benches. Mr. Tyburski stated that that is on the list. Mr. Tyburski also stated that they are starting to speak to playground vendors about West Mountain Park and they have a couple designs they are reviewing from one vendor for Simsbury Farms. The vendors are being very candid with them that supply lines are tight and materials are costing more. They are going to focus on getting the West Mountain playground done first as that’s a smaller playground. The Town budgeted $200,000 for the Simsbury Farms playground, however the first quote they got back was well over budget so that project may be stalled until prices go down.

Ms. Keppel stated that she went to the Farms to look at the pickleball lines that were painted. Mr. Tyburski stated that back in June after a lot of discussion, ultimately the Commission approved the lines be added to two tennis courts and a donor paid for the lines. However, when the contractor got up there they didn’t follow the sketch and extended the lines out too far to the sidelines. Once you put acrylic paint down it is very hard to clean up, they did their best but it’s not acceptable. Mr. Tyburski stated that they are at the end of life for the existing top coat of the playing surface so what they offered to do is repaint the interior of those two tennis court and then all the lines would be repainted as well. Thankfully, the Town had end of year funds and they applied for them to consider the cost of redoing the entire court with two coats of paint and they’ve agreed to do it so that will be done next spring as soon as the temperatures allow.

**Old Business**

*Update on Facility Maintenance Technician Recruitment –* Mr. Tyburski stated that they narrowed the applicants down after the practical exam to six people to interview, two backed out and they ended up interviewing four. They did not find the candidate they were looking for. They regrouped and have started a new recruitment and they have already received some good applicants so far. He is hopeful that at the December meeting he will be introducing a candidate.

*Update on Meadowood Open Space Acquisition –* Mr. Tyburski stated that they have closed on the Meadowood property. They held a ribbon cutting ceremony a few weeks ago on site. Mr. Tyburski recognized the Trust for Public Land for all their work on this project.Mr. Tyburski shared an update on the barns on the property and he is hopeful that they can save a couple of the barns. They are going to work to evaluate the two visible ones on Hoskins and there is going to be some work done to stabilize all of the barns that are along the roadside. There are six barns that are currently being leased to a tobacco farming company and two that aren’t being used. They will be putting some signage up over there in the next couple weeks and over the winter and will begin to evaluate putting in some trails over the next year. The Town will be putting an RFP out soon in hopes of securing a farmer on the Hoskins side. Mr. Bush stated as he lives in the vicinity he would love the opportunity to be involved as people start discussing where to put trails in particular on the Hoskins property.

*Parks and Open Space Master Plan Projects Update –* Mr. Tyburski discussed the general recommendations listed in the Master Plan. The first item discussed was additional staff for the maintenance department; they are recruiting and they did get that position funded last year. They are also working on maintenance software. The parking project and ADA improvements at Simsbury Meadows were priorities in the Master Plan; right now they are in the local permitting process for that. That project is currently scheduled to go out to bid in January. Another recommendation in the Master Plan was improving trail signage; they have a local eagle scout who is working at Onion Mountain Park this fall improving the trail marking and signage, he will also be putting in a bench or picnic table as well at the trailhead as well as near the parking area. They have another eagle scout who is almost complete with his work at West Mountain basketball court sealing, doing some crack filling and painting new lines. Mr. Tyburski shared that one of the goals was to get the trails on a website or digitally mapped to improve the accessibility while out on the trails. He is working to get all the trails on the Trail CT website. Another goal was to preserve land and open space and they have done that with the Meadowood acquisition. The Open Space Committee is also working on their open space acquisition criteria. The Parks and Golf staff is working with the new Simsbury Pollinators group to expand the pollinator’s pathways on Town property. From a programming standpoint, they are finishing up the first season of the mountain biking classes for kids and adults and they have been very well received and they will continue working with that group next year. Another noted problem in the Master Plan was the illegal dumping on open space which they continue to deal with on a daily basis. Mr. Kearney suggested a town-wide campaign and a slogan. He also stated that the Chamber of Commerce could be a good resource. Mr. Tyburski stated that they are working on some messaging with the Board of Education.

Mr. Kearney commented that 9/30/22 is the Simsbury Farms Golf Tournament celebrating 50 years at Simsbury Farms.

Ms. Coppinger suggested getting a group text together for important announcements and reminders.

**Adjourn**

Ms. Coppinger made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kearney seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

**Next Meeting**

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be December 2, 2021 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,

Commission Clerk