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Cc:

Simsbury Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Meeting: Thursday, January 26, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman David Bush. Present commission members included Frank Salls, Gerard Wetjen, Harry Ryan and Bill Mullen. Others present included Gerry Toner, C., P. & R. Director, as well as Gerry Post and Ron Patterson from the Simsbury Farms Complex Committee. Mr. Bush welcomed Bill Mullen as the newest member the C.P. & R. Commission.

II. Minutes

Since the number of commission members present did not represent a quorum, the September 2011 minutes were not approved.

III. Simsbury Farms Complex Committee

Mr. Bush preceded discussion about the Simsbury Farms Complex Committee (S.F.C.C.) by acknowledging the unexpected death of Tom West. He expressed his appreciation for all that Tom had done for the town through his expert care of the Simsbury Farms Complex. Mr. Bush then opened a discussion about whether the S.F.C.C. was still needed. As of June 1, 2012, when the renovations to the golf course, pools and the main building are expected to be complete, the mission and master plan set forth by the S.F.C.C. will be accomplished. Discussion centered

on: 1. Whether a new master plan for the Simsbury Farms Complex will need to be created, and 2. Whether S.F.C.C. members should become C.P. & R. Commission members or continue to work as an independent subcommittee that reports to the C.P. & R. Commission.

Mr. Toner mentioned that renovation projects on the Simsbury Farms Complex will continue over the next 6 years. While he didn't think that it was necessary to have a master plan for the whole complex, he did feel that

individual renovation projects should be planned for. These include the Apple Barn, the ice rink, and the golf clubhouse and restaurant. He also noted

that ongoing golf course improvements will continue to be necessary. Mr. Post, of S.F.C.C., added that looking at the future needs of the complex should also be ongoing, to prevent it from falling into disrepair.

Discussion followed about the ability of the C.P. & R. Commission and S.F.C.C. to move forward and get things done. Mr. Patterson noted that volunteers were still needed to work at the complex, but currently there is not as much work to do. Mr. Wetjen noted that the C.P. & R. Commission has not had enough members at its meetings to constitute a quorum. As a result, minutes from its June, July, and September 2011 minutes remain unapproved. The idea to invite members of the S.F.C.C. to be members of the C.P. & R. Commission was mentioned as a possibility. It would accomplish two things. Not only would it help the C.P. & R. Commission get the necessary quorum to pass motions and approve minutes, but it would also make the process of getting things approved for S.F.C.C. volunteers more efficient. An alternate idea was to decrease the number of Simsbury Farms Complex volunteers to about 2 to 3 members, and have them become a subcommittee. They would manage themselves independently, like the Simsbury Celebrates Committee, but report to the C.P. & R. Commission. In this scenario, Simsbury Farms Complex volunteers would be assigned specific tasks and would be able to act quickly. Unlike C.P. & R. Commission members, they would not be subject to party restrictions.

More discussion will follow as the C.P. & R. Commission determines how each of these ideas would work logistically and legally.

IV. Simsbury Celebrates

No report. Linda Johnson, chairwoman of Simsbury Celebrates, was unable to attend.

V. 2012 Golf Course & Swimming Pool Fees

Mr. Toner presented a 2-page report outlining the Simsbury Farms Golf Course Annual Fee Schedule from 1997 to 2002 and from 2005 to 2011, with recommended fees for 2012. He noted that the actual fees from 9 to 10 other similar golf courses were used for comparison and competitive pricing. While there was no fee increase in 2011, golf course expenses have averaged an increase of about 5% each year. These expenses have been factored into the 2012 golf course budget. The proposed 2012 increases for daily greens fees run about 50 cents to a couple of dollars above 2011 prices. Season pass fee increases run about \$30 to \$50 above last season. Cart and range ball fees remain the same. The proposed fees were arrived at following

recommendations from the golf professional and members of the Commission. Mr. Toner was hopeful that these minor fee changes for 2012 would maximize revenue for the golf course while retaining past golfers, attracting new golfers, and providing a fair rate and good value to both residents and non-residents.

Mr. Toner also presented a 1-page fee survey of Summer 2011 Aquatic Rates in Simsbury, in comparison to rates in 7 other Connecticut towns. 2012 recommended rates for daily admission, season passes, and lessons were increased. New this year: Swim lesson fees will be discounted for those with season passes.

VI. Proposed 2012/13 Budget & Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Toner presented a realistic 2013 budget template which showed insignificant increases in the general and operating fund budgets. He mentioned that fuel costs continue to increase. Trucks are essential for a well-functioning C.P. & R. department, and current vehicles need to be in better condition. The golf course has the replacement of about 500 sprinkler heads budgeted for, and remaining funds will be expended to complete renovations to the bunker complex. Most green side bunkers will be improved, but fairway bunkers will be done as needed. Upcoming proposed improvements in the FY 2012/13 budget: Repainting and staining the Simsbury Farms Golf Clubhouse, as well as improving the roadways and parking areas of Tariffville Park and the Pinchot Sycamore Tree Park. It was noted that the numbers in the budget were skewed because two projects were put into the C.P. & R. budget that are one time expenses: Expenses for Memorial Pool improvements, and expenses for the re-building of the storage barn at the Performing Arts Center.

VII. Report on Simsbury Farms Improvements

Mr. Toner reported that the improvements to the Simsbury Farms Main Building are going well. The Public Building Committee is overseeing the work of the contractor and the architect so that construction deadlines will be met. The team room in-fill was been completed for hockey season. Today, footings were poured for the rink guard building and check-in area. The pools will be ready for pool season. An Open House / Unveiling Event will be planned for the first weekend in June.

VIII. New / Other Business. None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie McElligott
Commission Clerk