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Cc:

CULTURE, PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
January 28, 2010
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were Commission members David Bush, Joe Grace, Kelly Kearney, Harry Ryan, John Pendergast, Mary Liljedahl, and Director of Culture, Parks & Recreation Gerry Toner.

Mr. Bush stated that the Chairman Johnson would not be in attendance at tonight's meeting.

II. Minutes – December meeting

Several edits were made to the minutes.

Mr. Kearney made a motion to approve the December 3, 2009 minutes as amended. Mr. Grace seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. FY 2010/11 Fee Proposals – Golf Course, Pools

Mr. Toner stated that they will be going in front of the Board of Selectmen regarding the budget. The Simsbury Farms Complex Committee reviewed and made recommendations regarding fees. In deciding the increases, the Committee used a survey that the Board had done in the past as well as compared different golf courses in surrounding Towns. The Complex Committee felt that the increases were warranted, although they wanted to keep them modest. Their vote was unanimous regarding these increases.

Mr. Bush stated that one of the categories, non-resident, 18-hole weekday has gone up \$1. He questioned if there was any discussion regarding this by the Complex Committee. Mr. Ryan stated that they are trying to encourage people to come to Simsbury Farms; this seemed like a competitive number to the Committee.

Mr. Bush stated that they have always been sensitive to the senior rate. As they try to generate more revenue to the Town, he questioned if there was any discussion by the Complex Committee regarding increasing this rate also. Mr. Toner stated that he does not believe that there was any discussion regarding the senior rate.

Mr. Bush stated that he feels that \$11 for the senior 9-hole weekday was on the low side. Also, the weekend special, he feels, should be increased \$1 instead of 50 cents. He stated that this would be total additional revenue of \$20,000. He feels that this would be justified because of budget demands. Mr. Toner stated the budget number for revenue increases for 2011 because these will have an effect on the FY 2001-2011 budget. The increases that the Complex Committee would like to make now will help the FY 2009/2010 budget as well as have an impact on the next fiscal year.

Ms. Liljedahl made a motion that the Culture Parks and Recreation Commission not accept the proposed golf fees as submitted by the Simsbury Farms Complex Committee because of the new information of increased revenue demands in the FY 2010/2011 budget. Mr. Pendergast seconded the motion.

Ms. Liljedahl stated that she feels that everything should be increased \$1 instead of 50 cents, including the senior play. Mr. Toner stated that the Complex Committee has worked hard to keep the 9-hole rate at the 60% level of the 18-hole rate.

Mr. Pendergast suggested that they could give these proposed increase figures back to the Complex Committee to reconsider because of this new information. He stated that this Commission could recommend that they look at specific items.

Mr. Bush stated that if there are budget issues, he would like to avoid big increases in one year. If they Complex Committee could come up with a two year plan, he feels that this would be a benefit.

Mr. Bush asked each member which categories the Complex Committee, they feel, should take a closer look at.

Ms. Liljedahl feels that anything that went up 50 cents should increase \$1.

Mr. Grace questioned if the \$1 increase is appropriate. Mr. Toner stated that he would hesitate because the Complex Committee has been very diligent; they are trying to keep the increases in a competitive range.

Ms. Liljedahl stated that she does not want the increases to be \$2-3 dollars next year; the increases need to be done in smaller increments over time.

Mr. Bush stated that he would also like to see the Complex Committee give this Commission input on a 2 or 3 year plan in light of these new budget demands.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Toner stated that the Complex Committee took the pool survey into consideration. There was quite a bit of debate regarding the fees; some felt that all of the passes should increase \$5, although some felt they should increase \$20. The family passes increase \$10 per family; individual passes increase \$10; seniors increase \$5; the adult daily fees increase \$1 and the children fees stay the same. Mr. Toner stated that the non-resident passes are also growing, which is good for the Town.

Mr. Bush questioned if the same rational logic applies to the aquatic fees as did the golf fees. Mr. Toner stated that he feels these increases are reasonable. This will generate an additional \$12,000, which will impact the current budget year.

Mr. Ryan made a motion to accept the aquatic fees as proposed. Ms. Liljedahl seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IV. FY 2010/11 Capital Improvement Plan, Proposed Budget

Mr. Toner stated that the 5-year capital improvement plan is to outline the major capital improvements. The major item that they have been working on is the Simsbury Farms Complex renovations. Since the last meeting, this went to the Board of Selectmen. At that time, the project was \$ 3.5 million, although the Board of Selectmen felt that this cost was too high because of the economy.

Mr. Toner stated that, after that Board of Selectmen meeting, the Simsbury Farms Complex Committee tried to lower the number, which they did, and still make it a viable project. He feels that the \$2 million figure was the threshold. He stated that if this goes forward, they will be back to the Public Building Committee and they will also be working with the architect.

Mr. Toner stated that the more pressing need was the existing building; to work on the shell of the building was important, which would make the building more code compliant and family friendly. He stated that in the future they hope to be able to fund the new construction.

Mr. Toner stated that the Board of Selectmen will not approve a project if it is not placed in the first two years of the capital improvement plan. He stated that the golf course improvements came out of the survey. The

Memorial Park pool improvements have been in the 6 year plan; this will come up next year.

Ms. Liljedahl stated that the attendance at Simsbury Farms has gone up. She questioned if the same was happening at Memorial Park. Mr. Toner stated that the attendance at Memorial Park has gone down. He stated that other alternatives may be looked at, including spray parks.

Ms. Liljedahl stated that many years ago, this Commission suggested having an outdoor basketball court at Simsbury Farms, which she does not see under park improvements. Mr. Kearney stated that he agrees; this is a great need. Mr. Toner stated that the Complex Committee has discussed this. They felt that this was important, although other projects have always been ahead of it. He stated that it should be reflected in this 5-year plan; he will include this if the Commission would like. Mr. Toner stated that he would put this in the first two years, although they could look at including it in the park improvement allotment.

Ms. Liljedahl stated that she would also like to see a volleyball area. Mr. Toner stated that this was a popular activity in the past, although it became more of a recreational sport instead of a competitive sport. He stated that, over time, there was not as much interest. Ms. Liljedahl stated that she feels it would get used if constructed.

Ms. Liljedahl stated that she feels there is a lot of money for Memorial Park in the capital improvement plan. She would rather see things like Simsbury Farms buildings or the Apple Barn be renovated rather than the Memorial Park improvements. Mr. Toner stated that these improvements have been in the plan for a many years; this needs to be addressed now.

Mr. Kearney questioned that if they took out the \$720,000 from the budget, would it be moveable to the Simsbury Farms renovation project. Mr. Toner stated that he does not believe it could be moved this year. He believes that the Board of Selectmen would consider the project this year, although not at the higher number. Also because this has been in the Plan for many years, it cannot be taken out.

Mr. Pendergast stated his concerns with only doing some of the renovations now because of budget constraints. He does not want the Town to have to tear down projects to enact a new greater plan. Mr. Toner stated that this was also a concern; they do not want to happen.

Ms. Liljedahl made a motion that the Culture Parks and Recreation Commission approve the Capital Improvement Projects, including a basketball court at the old tennis court at Simsbury Farms in the capital improvement projects list for FY 2011/2012. Mr. Grace seconded the motion, which was

unanimously approved.

V. Park/Golf Maintenance Facility

Mr. Toner stated that the park/golf maintenance facility is on schedule. The sheet rocking is currently being installed. He stated that they are on schedule to get the facility open in early March. They are also on budget and have taken advantage of numerous cost saving measures. Mr. Toner stated that this is going to be a great addition for the staff and the maintenance operation.

VI. Simsbury Farms Access Road

Regarding the Simsbury Farms access road, Mr. Toner stated that they did get confirmation that the Town will be receiving a grant through the Office of Policy and Management. DEP will be administering the grant.

Mr. Toner stated that the expectation is, in early March once the new maintenance facility is operational, they will demolish the old building. He stated that once this is done, the road will go in. He is hopeful that the road will be paved in late March or early April. Also, the cart barn should be read by the end of April.

Mr. Toner stated that they would also like to work on the lighting in the parking lot and the roadway out of the complex. Mr. Bush asked if the lighting costs would come out of the grant. Mr. Toner stated that it this would be possible.

VII. Simsbury Farms Golf Course Restaurant

Mr. Toner distributed a letter from Attilio Ceneviva to the Commission members. Because Mr. Toner was meeting with Mr. Ceneviva, the Complex Committee met prior to that in order to address the restaurant based on what came out of the survey and what to talk to Attilio about at that meeting. The survey indicated that there are concerns about the restaurant; mostly the uncertainty about the restaurant hours. There has never been an issue with the quality of the food, although there is a concern regarding the content of the menu and consistency of schedule.

Mr. Toner stated that at the same time the business decreased, Attilio asked that the hours be decreased also. There was resentment from the users of the facility because of this; this was expressed to Attilio.

Mr. Toner stated that Attilio would now like to be open year round, which is attractive to the Town. Also, Attilio would like a long term contract. Mr. Toner stated that when he approached Attilio regarding the above

concerns, he did not disagree.

Mr. Bush questioned if a 5 year contract and 5 year option seemed long. He asked if there was any other contract that the Town has that is for that duration. Mr. Toner stated that he is not aware of any other contract for that length of time.

Mr. Pendergast questioned if the Town could dictate the hours of operation for the restaurant. Mr. Toner stated that minimum hours of operation are contained in the contract.

Mr. Bush stated that for Attilio not to have a website through the golf course section of the website is inexcusable for a business owner today. Also, weekends are the biggest golfing days; the restaurant needs to be open. He suggested having this put into the contract; inconsistencies with Attilio have been a problem. Also, the menu is a problem. He suggested Attilio should submit a menu along with pricing to the Town.

Mr. Kearney stated that, regarding the contract length, the Town should look at what other communities have. He also feels that 10 years seems long. He feels that the contract needs to have stipulations for Attilio to follow.

VIII. Other Business

Regarding the Special Revenue Fund, Fiscal Year Comparison, Mr. Toner stated that this comparison shows the actual numbers from the fiscal year 08/09 through the end of the year. He stated that this is what has been submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Toner stated that he sent out a letter to organizations for field use. They have all complied; they have all responded. He stated that he would forward all of the pertinent information to the Commission members.

IX. ADJOURN

Mr. Grace made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45. Ms. Liljedahl seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.