

From: SimsburyCT Postings 5/4/12 11:21:57 AM
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To: SimsburyCT_ParkRecMin
Cc:

Culture, Parks, and Recreation Commission

Regular Meeting: Thursday, April 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 Kelly Kearney, Frank Salls, Harry Ryan, Bill Mullen, Barbara Koff, Gerry Wetjen, plus new member, Gerry Post. Others present included: Gerry Toner, C. P. & R. Director and Sean Askham, Selectman. Mr. Bush welcomed and introduced Mr. Post, who is a representative from the Simsbury Farms Complex Committee and a new member of the Commission.

II. Minutes

Mr. Wetjen made a motion to approve the March 2012 C, P, & R meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kearney, and was unanimously passed.

III. Simsbury Farms Main Building Project

Mr. Toner reported that the Simsbury Farms Main Building Project is going well. So far, it is remaining on time and close to the projected budget. Mr. Toner and department staff meet weekly with contractors from Millennium. He noted that they are very proactive and respectful of our June 16 deadline. Crews continue to work on weekends. Recent, visible improvements include a redesigned arched entranceway, new concrete decking, and fresh cedar shingles. Less visible improvements include the restoration of electricity to all buildings in the complex. Within the next 2 weeks, Mr. Toner will be meeting with both the town building inspector and the fire marshal to create a workable plan if construction continues beyond June 16. The main goals of the plan will be to keep the building open, operable, fully accessible and safe. Further consultations will be made

with a sign maker and a computer/network specialist to plan for:

1. Indoor and outdoor directional signage, and 2. Maximum capacity, speed and reliability of the complex's networked computers. See "Item V: Golf Course Web Site" for further explanation.

IV. Simsbury Farms Golf Course Improvements

Mr. Toner handed out a 4-page report which lists the current status of 2012 bunker renovations. This report will also be posted and updated monthly on the golf course web site. Golf course improvements are moving along as expected, and very close to the projected budget. The top expenses include drainage, sand, labor and a polymer spray layer to cover the bases of the bunkers throughout the course. Old irrigation heads are being replaced hole by hole, as renovations are being done. This will keep the new heads from being destroyed during construction. The C. P. & R. Department will keep some of the old irrigation heads as back-ups, and will attempt to recycle the rest by offering them to the parks maintenance department.

V. Golf Course Web Site

Mr. Toner reported that the new website is fully operational. There were a few glitches when it first went live, but changes were made within the week. The online tee-time sign-up system is working well. Before and after pictures of renovations to the course will be posted as they are completed, with a disclaimer that reminds golfers that the ability to play is subject to weather conditions and staff time and availability. Mr. Kearney and Mr. Toner praised John Verrengia—the head golf professional at Simsbury Farms—for being the guiding and organizing force behind the new web site. Mr. Kearney reemphasized the site's main goals: 1. To be a useful, up-to-date information tool that will encourage repeat visits, 2. To serve as a marketing tool to teach outsiders about our course, and 3. To target as wide an audience as possible.

Mr. Toner reported that he will be hosting a conference call with the town's head of IT and a consultant tomorrow to discuss the most significant problem for the web site and the whole complex. All the computers in the complex are interlinked and extremely slow.

Mr. Toner and the committee are concerned that transactions taking place on the site, at the ProShop and at the restaurant will require golfers to wait too long. Sales and customers might be lost as a result. Wireless connections and service to the whole complex will be evaluated and changed as necessary. Mr. Toner and the committee agreed that it was better to spend the time and money on capacity issues now, to avoid future issues, especially during busy times.

VI. Golf Course Master Plan

Discussion focused on the March letter forwarded to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) from the Simsbury Farms Men's Club (SFMC) in which they proposed giving a grant to the C. P. & R. Department to develop a Master Plan for the golf course. They also proposed splitting the cost of the grant with the town, up to a maximum of \$5,000. If the BOS voted to approve the grant, the committee questioned how the matching piece would be allocated. Sean Askham advised the C. P. & R. Committee to ask the BOS to list the topic as an agenda item, and to come up with a tighter estimate of how much they expect the overall project to cost. The BOS may put out a RFP (Request for Proposal) to determine the costs, or the C. P. & R. Committee could put out their own RFP/ RFQ (Request for Quote).

VII. Golf Course Concessionaire Contract

The committee discussed reevaluating what kind of restaurant contract would make sense for Simsbury Farms in the future. Attilio's 2-year contract with Simsbury Farms has been extended through November of this year. While Attilio's has been an excellent vendor, the committee felt that a subcommittee should be formed to research options, determine best practices, and examine what our particular market would support. Levels of service, length of contracts, and hours of operation would be reexamined, and an expert from the food and restaurant business would be consulted. Mr. Post, Mr. Wetjen and Mr. Bush volunteered to be part of the subcommittee. Mr. Toner suggested that this topic be an agenda item for the next C. P. & R. Committee meeting.

VIII. Proposed Change in Budget Format

Mr. Wetjen introduced the concept of financing the Simsbury Farms Complex using an enterprise fund. He explained that an enterprise fund helps a municipality run like a business, allowing depreciation of assets and reserves for equipment maintenance and replacement. All financial decisions are made exclusively by the Board of Trustees, and all profits go back into the complex. From an accounting standpoint, Mr. Wetjen noted that an enterprise fund could make the Simsbury Farms Complex a self-sustaining entity within the town. This concept would have to be researched further, and if feasible, approved by the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman, and brought to a town meeting. Currently, the Simsbury Farms Complex budget is built into the Parks and Recreation budget, and is financed from the town's Revenue Fund.

IX. New / Other Business

Ms. Koff attended her first Simsbury Celebrates meeting as a liaison from the C. P. & R. Commission. She reported that the Simsbury Celebrates team is busy and has many volunteers. They are concerned about having good access to Simsbury Farms this year for their fund raising tag sale, so they have pushed the date back.

Mr. Kearney introduced the idea of having automatic emergency defibrillators (AEDs) available at youth sports events in town. He cited an article in a recent U.S. Lacrosse magazine about a young player whose heart flat-lined after he was hit by a ball. Having an AED on site could have saved his life.

Mr. Kearney noted that coaches would need special training to use them properly. Mr. Toner suggested that this topic be an agenda item for the next C. P. & R. Commission meeting. He mentioned that all town life guards are trained in their use, and that 3 AEDs are stored at various sites in the Simsbury Farms Complex. Liability, transportation, storage and security issues would have to be examined and addressed if AEDs were purchased for youth sports games.

Mr. Bush made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie McElligott
Commission Clerk