

From: SimsburyCT Postings 6/5/09 4:16:49 PM  
Subject: Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes 05/28/2009  
To: SimsburyCT\_ParkRecMin  
Cc:

Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission  
Regular Meeting – Minutes  
May 28, 2009

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. The following members were present: Chairman Linda Johnson, Commission members Karen Cortes, Kelly Kearney, Barbara Koff, Mary Liljedahl, and Harry Ryan. Also in attendance was Gerry Toner, Director of Culture, Parks & Recreation.

II. MINUTES – APRIL MEETING

Chairman Johnson stated that the April minutes would be tabled until the next meeting.

III. SIMSBURY FARMS ARCHITECTURAL STUDY

Mr. Toner stated that the Public Building Committee oversaw the architectural process of the Farms Complex. They would like to invite the Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission to their next meeting in order to hear from members and get their feedback and comments. Mr. Toner stated that the architect for the Golf Club House did a great and thorough job. Once the new maintenance facility is built, the Apple Barn can be vacated. The main building is a higher priority, although the Apple Barn should be looked at because the Town is lacking in program space.

Chairman Johnson questioned if the main building would be razed. Mr. Toner stated that they would probably at least keep the shell of the building. The architect will be at the joint Public Building meeting. Comments could be verbalized to him there.

The Commission discussed the revenue fund. Ms. Liljedahl questioned if

Simsbury Farms was self-sustaining at a better level than the sport fields and their use. Mr. Toner stated that the fields are more costly to the Town because there is no revenue return on them.

Ms. Liljedahl questioned if the taxpayers could handle if the square footage enlarges at the maintenance building and the Apple Barn. Mr. Toner stated that this is being considered in the study.

#### IV. DOG PARK – LINDA JOHNSON

Chairman Johnson stated that after the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission approved the dog park, it will now go on to the Board of Selectmen. They need a packet of information, which has been gathered. At the June 8th Board of Selectmen meeting, the public will have an opportunity to speak. The application also needs to go to the Wetlands Commission because of the uplands on the property, which is adjacent to the wetlands. A Zoning application can be filed at the same time as the Wetlands application.

Chairman Johnson stated that she did not think that the dog park would get any negative responses, although they did have one from the neighbor whose property is diagonal from the park. This neighbor will protest the park. Chairman Johnson stated that she does not believe there is a total understanding of what a dog park is. She is hopeful that the dog park will continue to move forward. There will not be any fundraising until the park gets approved.

Barbara Koff suggested sitting down with the unhappy neighbor and talking to them one on one to have a reasonable discussion.

Mr. Toner stated that this Commission needs to be aware that their motion was made thinking that no one opposed the dog park. There may need to be some discussion regarding this. Karen Cortes stated that she did not think they should rescind their motion to move this forward to the Board of Selectmen. She did not vote on this based on what the neighbors thought. Kelly Kearney agreed.

#### V. ATHLETIC FIELD SUB-COMMITTEE – REPORT

Mr. Toner distributed a memo summarizing the meeting. The Athletic Field Subcommittee held a meeting to address the study that the Economic Development Commission prepared for property on Iron Horse Boulevard. There has been some pressure regarding future field development. At this time, the Subcommittee would like to get a better idea of the lacrosse needs on a year round basis.

Mary Liljedahl stated that the lacrosse numbers caught them off guard. She stated that a better system needs to be put in place. If they had a better system, there may not be as much controversy.

Mr. Toner stated that lacrosse is planning long term for approximately 600 players. Ms. Liljedahl stated that the majority of the players range between 4th – 8th grades. She stated that she thought the field situation was under control, although this is not the case. The problem is that they have different fields in different places. All of the organizations want to have a home. The lacrosse teams wanted the fields constructed down on Iron Horse Boulevard. Mr. Toner stated that that area could be difficult to construct fields on, although there are other areas to look at.

Karen Cortes stated her concerns regarding investing money into fields that may become dormant because of a possible decline in school enrollment in the coming years. Mr. Toner stated that some sports programs, including little league and hockey, have already seen a decline in enrollment.

Ms. Liljedahl stated that she feels the Economic Development Commission saw the Iron Horse fields for lacrosse use as an economic boost to the downtown, but at what cost to the Town.

Chairman Johnson questioned if the Subcommittee would be reporting back to this Commission on a regular basis. Mr. Toner stated that they will receive an update when the Subcommittee meets; they do not meet every month.

Chairman Johnson thanked the Subcommittee for all of their work.

## VI. PROGRAM REPORT

Mr. Toner distributed a summary of camp registration which was a comparison of categories for the same time last year. Season pass sales have increased. He stated that 75% of the program registrations are now online; many people are taking advantage of this. Overall, the program registration is going well. He believes that given the economic condition, people are opting for programs rather than more costly options. He stated that the one week camps have a very large increase from last year; they are very popular.

Chairman Johnson questioned how much change there will be between now and the end of the school year regarding the registration numbers. Mr. Toner stated that some people register early because of the limited space for

some camps. Other people will now start to realize that it is the end of the year and they need to sign up.

#### VII. SCHULTZ PARK – DISCUSSION

Mr. Toner stated that Bob Hensley has been involved with a group who are getting new gateway signs for Simsbury. One area that they would like to do something in is Schultz Park. Although Mr. Hensley could not attend the meeting tonight, he will have plans for this Commission's review next month.

Karen Cortes stated that the new gateway signs will have a brownstone pillar with the sign attached. They are very attractive.

Mary Liljedahl questioned how much land there was at Schultz Park. Mr. Toner stated that the park is less than one acre. Parking is a big issue at the park.

#### VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Regarding the new road at Simsbury Farms, Chairman Johnson stated that she received a letter from a disgruntled resident about the road being so bumpy. This person stated that the road should not have been constructed if it is not going to be paved. There have been two other people who have made similar comments.

Mr. Toner stated that every week, new material is brought to fill in the low spots on the road. The road does get dusty, although they will try to control the dust. He stated that this road is a temporary fix and it will be finished as soon as possible.

Mary Liljedahl stated that what is on the road now is a good solid base of the future road. Mr. Toner stated that, best case, the road will be paved this fall. A grant was expected to pay for the road, although these funds have been frozen by the State.

Mr. Toner stated that Attilio has received an approval from the State regarding his liquor permit.

Mr. Toner stated that a letter regarding the skate park will be sent out soon. In the letter, it states the need for a parental board.

#### IX. ADJOURNMENT

Karen Cortes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Mary Liljedahl seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

