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Cc:

Simsbury Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Meeting: Thursday, September 22, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Chairman David Bush. Present commission members included Barbara Koff, Frank Salls, and Gerard Wetjen. Others present included Gerry Toner, C., P. & R. Director; Taryn Rea, Recreation Supervisor; Tom Adamowicz, eagle scout candidate from Simsbury Boy Scout Troop 175; and Linda Johnson, chairwoman of Simsbury Celebrates. Mr. Bush welcomed Gerry Wetjen as the newest member the C.P. & R. Commission.

II. Minutes

Since the number of commission members present did not represent a quorum, the July 28 minutes were not approved. The June 23 minutes also require approval.

III. Eagle Scout Project Presentation – Tom Adamowicz

Tom Adamowicz from Simsbury Boy Scout Troop 175 gave a presentation about upgrading and improving the Simsbury Skatepark for his Eagle Scout project. He offered a 5 page handout which included an overview of the project; a page describing the anatomy of a Suburban Rails ramp; and photographs of the new entrance sign, the existing Skatepark and the constructed ramp.

It is a three-phase project. The first phase, which was completed on Labor Day weekend, consisted of creating, staining and installing a new entrance sign.

The second phase, which will take place on the Columbus Day weekend, includes installing the new ramp onsite. Tom is planning a one day assembly, from about 8:00 a.m. until dusk. He is enlisting the help of 3 skilled carpenters, scout fathers and scouts. A representative from Rampage, the ramp manufacturer, will be present on the day of the build. He/she will safety-certify the ramp so that it may be used immediately. A video of the build will be taken and posted on the internet and perhaps on the local community channel, SCTV. Stormy weather might be the only deterrent. Electrical power from generators is required for the assembly.

The third phase involves setting up a Skatepark Committee. Tom envisions the committee consisting of about 6 to 8 kids from different age groups who regularly use the Skatepark. They would have a vested interest in the park and would meet periodically with Gerry Toner to suggest improvements or to report vandalism. Tom has spoken to a few kids in his neighborhood about volunteering. He expects that they will refer more kids. This phase is still in process.

The total cost of the project is \$3,200.00. Tom has currently raised \$2,600.00. Some materials have been donated, and money has been collected from a troop car wash, Skatepark donation boxes, and from letters to family and friends. Tom expects to raise the balance of funds in a variety of ways. Since Tom will be posting the build video on the internet, he hopes sponsors will put advertising banners on the video. He is also considering having a post-project skateboard competition sponsored by Sartorius Sports.

Tom expects his project will require very little maintenance other than wear-and-tear improvements about every 5 to 6 years. Gerry Toner praised Tom for his perseverance on a project that has taken more than a year to complete. On behalf of the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission, Mr. Bush gave his full support to Tom's project. The C. P. & R. commission wished him much luck.

IV. Special Revenue Fund / Revenue Reports

The 2011 Summer Camp Enrollment and Revenue Report. This report was prepared by Taryn Rea. Enrollment: 2011 numbers were contrasted against 2010 numbers. In general, enrollment numbers for all camps have been near or at capacity, except for the Koala Kids two-week preschool to kindergarten camps, the Ironworks / Chris Arnold Girls Hockey Conditioning sessions, and the specialty one-week camps that include Golf & Tennis and Fun Unlimited sessions. Competition from privately-run camps, preschools requiring a 12-month commitment, the inflexibility of 2-week sessions when parents plan their children's camps around vacation schedules, and the high expense of contractor-run camps may have contributed to the low enrollment

numbers for these particular camps. To address these problems, Mr. Toner, Ms. Rea and the commission members discussed offering the Koala Kids Camp in one-week sessions, developing camp surveys, distributing the surveys to previous year's participants to ask why they didn't sign up this year and what improvements could be made, and collecting parent feedback to use when planning next year's camps. C. P. & R could also advise private contractors on how they should price their camps for greater enrollment, and foster more partnerships (rather than straight rentals) with outside contractors. Revenues: Overall, it was a good summer. Total revenues were \$391,198.00, an increase of \$23,855.50 from 2010 to 2011.

The 2011 Aquatic Revenue Report. Membership totals were compared from 2008 through 2011. They have steadily increased, with a slight rise from 2010 to 2011. Daily admission totals and swim lessons were slightly down from 2010. Overall, total revenue from the combined 2011 Simsbury Farms Aquatic Sessions was slightly down from 2010, but still higher than the previous six years. Significant changes included an increase of about \$900 at the Pool Snack Bar from last year, and a loss of about \$3,000 for not offering Lifeguard Training classes this year. In 2012, the renovations to Simsbury Farms Main Building will make the facility even more vibrant and attractive to families.

The Annual Income Report for Simsbury Farms Golf Course. Greens fees, season passes, the Pro Shop, and rounds revenues were compared from 2010 to 2011. All were down from previous years. This downward turn is consistent with 2011 national and local reports. The weather has also been a deterrent. 16 days were lost to bad weather this year, versus 3 days last year. Many of these days were higher-grossing weekend days. Plus, the over-saturated course has required more staffing hours for constant maintenance.

Three things are being worked on which will positively affect golf course revenues:

1. Planned improvements to the course. (See item #VI).
2. In two weeks golfers will be able to use the EZLinks System (an online system of reserving tee times) to play at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course. It will be linked to the S.F.G.C. web site.

This system will allow golfers to select the date, time, location, and number of players.

Regular prices or discounted specials will be available and can be paid online.

3. S.F.G.C. web site improvements.

V. Simsbury Farms Main Building Project

The first bid opening in August only attracted one over-budget bid. Per the

Public Building Committee, this bid was re-bid and restructured to be closer to the \$2.5 million to \$2.6 million construction budget that C. P. & R. developed for the Simsbury Farms Main Building Project. The second bid opening took place today. It garnered 9 bids worth between \$2.607 million to \$3.3 million. The lowest bid came from Millennium Builders of Rocky Hill. C. P. & R. would like to make improvements to the ice rink first, before it gets into hockey and skating season. But since the first bid opening did not generate many bids, they are running about a month behind. Mr. Toner mentioned that the Public Building Committee assured him that they would get the process moving. They will hold a special formal meeting as soon as possible to review all the bids, formally accept a bid, sign a contract, and bond the bid. This will help C. P. & R. maintain its May 31, 2012 deadline for completion of construction.

VI. Golf Course Improvements

C. P. & R. has retained Doug Beech as architect for improvements to the Simsbury Farms Golf Course. No improvements will be made until after the beginning of October when outings and tournaments are finished. Mr. Toner and his ground maintenance staff are still determining the most cost effective ways to proceed. Options include strictly contracting out the job, doing renovations in-house and renting equipment, or a combination of the two. The combination option would require getting a “shaper,” or a person to come in and run the equipment while C. P. & R. oversees the job and provides materials and help.

The 18th bunker complex, the most visible, will be the first to be improved. This work will be done by Michael Wallace, the Superintendent of Golf Course Maintenance at Simsbury Farms. He is an accomplished bunker renovator and a qualified equipment operator. He will rent an excavator, install a different kind of bunker liner, and complete the 18th bunker renovations by the end of October. The schedule of further improvements will be determined after this project is completed.

VII. Simsbury Celebrates Event

Taryn Rea, Recreation Supervisor, and Linda Johnson, event chairwoman presented the planning report for this year’s Simsbury Celebrates. This year marks the 10th anniversary of this annual Saturday-after-Thanksgiving family event. This year, it will be bigger and better. It can handle up to about 13,000 persons. Currently, the committee has booked 19 indoor venues, 10 outdoor venues, and 10 food vendors. Taryn and Linda have been using a comprehensive spreadsheet to keep track of the scheduled events. They feel that they are well prepared.

New this year: 1. A longer fireworks show; 2. The event program will be redesigned in-house. It will feature larger type, a simple fold-out design, and a black-and-white color scheme, 3. Food will be offered. Booths will be set up near the library. The majority of food vendors will be selling desserts, 4. There will be two tracks where children can ride small Thomas the Tank Engine trains, 5. A raffle for a chance to win a ride in the fire truck parade. Two children will choose to ride in the lead car or in a fire truck, 6. The 3rd Annual Gingerbread House Competition, which will be displayed at Boy Scout Hall, will feature up to 6 judging categories (Youth, Teen, Adult, Family, Group/Team, and Professional). To prevent long lines to see the gingerbread houses on the evening of the event, Boy Scout Hall will have nighttime viewing hours on the Monday, Wednesday and Friday of Thanksgiving week. 7. New acts this year include Shaded Soul, a loud and outrageous 5 piece band; String Theory, a 3-person string ensemble who will be playing background music for the "Visit with Santa" venue; Silk City, a 40-man barbershop singing group; and Extreme Trampoline, acrobats who will be performing outdoors on a double trampoline with a Plexiglas divider. Additional events will be booked as the funds become available.

Publicity for the event has included a dedicated web site, a series of articles in local papers, a Facebook page, and ads on SCTV for the gingerbread house contest and fire truck parade. Flyers were mailed out during the summer, and handed out at Septemberfest. At the end of October, the committee will send flyers to the Board of Education to distribute to students in Simsbury schools. The Simsbury Celebrates web site contract has been renewed for another 5 years.

Fund raising for the event began early, in February and March, and has been spearheaded by Janet Calabro. So far, \$20,000 has been raised. A couple of weeks ago, the committee sent about 250 solicitation letters to local businesses and organizations in hopes of raising another \$6,000.

Volunteers are being recruited. There will be 3 shifts on the day of the event. Each shift will require 15 volunteers for indoor and outdoor events. On the Monday, Wednesday and Friday of Thanksgiving week, evening volunteers will be needed at Boy Scout Hall to cover the extended viewing hours of the gingerbread house display. Mr. Bush promised 100% participation from the C. P. & R. commission members.

VIII. New / Other Business. None.

Mr. Bush made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wetjen seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie McElligott, Commission Clerk