

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, September 29, 2022** – 3 pages

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Dave Bush, Chairman at Simsbury Town Hall. Other commission members who were present included, Lori Coppinger, Kelly Kearney, Danielle Celli, Christine Boswell, Rachel Wellman, Liz Keppel, and Michelle Lipar. The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski, Recreation Supervisor, John Thibeault, Program Coordinator Caitrin Huysman and Board of Selectman Liaison, Chris Petersen were also in attendance.

Public Session:

Duane Royce, 26 Harvest Hill Road, spoke in support of additional pickleball lines being added at Simsbury Farms.

Rich Murphy, 24 Watson Drive, spoke in support of additional pickleball lines being added at Simsbury Farms.

Judy Gessford, 37 Carver Circle, spoke in support of additional pickleball lines being added at Simsbury Farms.

Bill Donahue- 36 Hildurcrest Drive, spoke against additional pickleball lines being added at Simsbury Farms.

John Eckel, 10 Vincent Drive, questioned why there can't be both tennis and pickleball lines on all courts.

Lori Swenson 111 North Saddle Ridge, spoke against additional pickleball lines being added at Simsbury Farms.

Richard Utican, 325 Knobs Way, asked if there are pickleball courts at the High School.

Jennifer Eudicone, 325 Millers Way stated that there appears to be less usage of the courts for tennis than pickleball.

Wendy Mackstutis, 16 Hunting Ridge Drive, shared that during the summer at her pickleball lessons in Granby there seemed to be no issue with the pickleball and tennis players sharing space.

Timothy Ryan, 10 Oakwood Road, submitted a written comment in support of painting the additional pickleball lines at Simsbury Farms.

Andy Brower, 17 Shady Lane, submitted a written comment in support of adding additional pickleball lines at Simsbury Farms.

Welcome to new Culture, Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Michelle Lipar –Mr. Bush welcomed the new Commission member.

Presentation – Nick Powers, Eagle Scout Candidate – Mr. Powers shared that his project will take place on the trail off West Mountain Road. He will be renovating three existing benches and creating a rock garden as well as signage talking about invasive species and wildlife.

Mr. Bush asked what types of funds are needed for his project and his efforts to secure those. Mr. Powers stated that he has been promised \$150 by the Town and will need to raise \$150 more. He stated he will need 5-10 scouts to accomplish the work and he is trying to get it done before winter.

Presentation- Simsbury Youth Hockey- Mr. Melanson shared that Simsbury Youth Hockey is still a community sport and an all-volunteer organization. The Board consists of 17 members. They try to keep the cost down and that's where Simsbury comes in with the partnership with the Farms. There are over 250 kids in program and tryouts are held in September/October. They use the three rinks in Town but the Farms is the greatest purchase of ice time. Mr.

Melanson stated that he appreciates all the support he has received from Mr. Tyburski and Mr. Thibeault over the years. He also stated that soccer, lacrosse and hockey communicate regularly about when tryouts are going to be, etc.

Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission Member Comments

No comments.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Bush declared the July 28, 2022 minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

New Business

Simsbury 50th Anniversary Celebration Recap – Mr. Tyburski introduced the new Recreation Coordinator, Caitrin Huysman. Mr. Tyburski thanked all of this staff for all the events they pulled off this summer, stating that everyone pitched in and made it happen.

Summer 2022 Aquatics Season Recap – Mr. Thibeault shared that there was over \$277k grossed, an increase of over \$39k. The biggest driver of expenses was staffing due to the minimum wage increase. The snack bar grossed \$2k more, passes did better however they didn't sell as many. Mr. Thibeault stated that they will be thinking of different packages they can sell. They grossed over \$8k in lessons and over \$3k in swim team. Usage was up and they did over 24k visits for public swim. Mr. Thibeault acknowledged his staff and stated he is fortunate to have a great team.

Mr. Bush asked how was the usage of the picnic area was. Mr. Tyburski stated that it was light, the food truck didn't really succeed there.

Ms. Celli asked what the thoughts on the future of Memorial Pool. Mr. Thibeault stated that camp has big usage at the pool, however, Memorial is basically used by the public for the wading pool. They have made attempts to open the big pool but they just don't get the numbers. Mr. Tyburski stated that Memorial Pool is in the Capital Plan so the Town will have to make a decision on the viability of the pool. The place holder in the budget is for replacing the existing pool with a splash pad.

Summer 2022 Camp Season Recap – Ms. Huysman shared that in the sports camps and programs they had over 900 kids, enrichment camps over 200 kids, Camp Stuff-Ta-Doo over 700 kids. They also had a new disc golf camp at Tower Ridge and will be offering an adult clinic in October as well.

Mr. Bush asked if waitlists are an issue. Mr. Tyburski stated some with swim lessons, nothing else is filled within days. He also stated that ski registration starts tomorrow morning and skating lesson registration starts Saturday.

Additional Pickleball Lines at Simsbury Farms – Ms. Boswell shared that she is getting pressure from the group of people many of whom were in attendance tonight. She stated that on any given morning 14-22 people show up to play. They played at Henry James all summer, then moved to the Farms once school resumed. They have tried to come up with a solution to the courts, she stated she bought some temporary lines, however when it is windy they come up and could also be a tripping hazard. She has taught over 70 people in pickleball lessons in the last 6 months. Ms. Boswell stated that there isn't enough tennis usage at the Farms versus the people wanting to play pickleball. She stated she hasn't found anybody there that says the pickleball lines bother them playing tennis.

Ms. Coppinger asked if when the new pickleball courts open in Tariffville, the lines will be removed from the Farms.

Mr. Tyburski commented that they would likely leave them there as Tariffville's courts won't have lights and it costs money to take the lines off the courts. Ms. Boswell stated she would be happy to pay for the painting of the additional lines. Ms. Keppel questioned who would pay for them to be painted over if it was determined they should be removed.

Mr. Kearney stated that he felt that the Commission needs more data to get the complete picture, needs to hear from pros, regular recreation players, parks and rec directors from around the state. Mr. Tyburski will ask additional questions of the CT Parks and Recreation Association's membership for the Simsbury Culture, Parks and Rec Commission.

Ms. Coppinger made a motion to table any action on adding the additional lines to allow Mr. Tyburski the opportunity to do some additional fact finding. Mr. Kearney seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Boswell opposed.

Mr. Tyburski made the Commission aware of the fact that if this item is tabled until the next meeting, it will be too cold to paint the additional pickleball lines this fall if an approval came at that time.

Old Business

Friends of Simsbury Farms Golf Tournament Update – Mr. Tyburski stated that there are 152 golfers signed up for the tournament. Mr. Bush recognized Mr. Kearney for all his marketing on the tournament.

Simsbury Farms Playground Renovation Subcommittee – Mr. Tyburski shared that the subcommittee has met and discussed the playground and got ideas back from them. One vendor is offering a grant program and have got one design from them but it came back over budget. They will have to meet as a group again to decide what they want to include in the playground to make it as accessible as possible. It is the goal to get it installed by next Spring.

Parks and Open Space Master Plan Update – Mr. Tyburski shared that West Mountain playground was installed in August. The plan is to add an expression swing there as well. He shared that their parks' maintenance software is up and running and they will be getting work orders on their phone. A small sign will be put at trail heads and recreation facilities, if you see something amiss or vandalism scan the QR code to notify the Parks Maintenance staff of the issue.

Adjourn

Ms. Keppel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kearney seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be October 27, 2022 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,
Commission Clerk