

MINUTES

Cromwell Recreation Commission Regular Meeting

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Present: Commissioners Dan Brisson, Ruth Checko, John Schmaltz, and Jim Vinchetti and Recreation Director Scott Kieras

Also Present: Jack Henahan, Town Council Liaison and Ann Grasso, Cromwell Creative District

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. Approve Minutes:

a. May 6, 2021

Commissioner Vinchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner Brisson, to approve the minutes of May 6, 2021.

The motion passed 3 to 0 with 1 abstention. Commissioner Checko abstained.

3. Program Report

a. Director

Recreation Director Scott Kieras clarified for Commission members that this is a Recreation Commission and that they should not be discussing park issues. Town Manager Anthony Salvatore has directed him to advise the Commission that parks can no longer be discussed at Recreation Commission meetings and that the Recreation Director is not able to respond to any questions or concerns regarding parks. Any questions or concerns need to be directed to the Director of Public Works Lou Spina or the Town Manager.

There was a brief discussion on this directive from the Town Manager by Commission members.

Scott reported on damage done to the Cromwell High School baseball field over the Memorial Day holiday. It was felt that a policy needs to be in writing on what happens to an organization if they use the fields when they are closed. Councilor Jack Henahan questioned that what if this was just was a group of kids out playing.

Jack Henahan reported to the Commission on his discussions the day after the last Recreation Commission meeting in May with the Town Manager and the Mayor.

Scott Kieras confirmed that he has no supervisory control over the Parks Department and that Director of Public Works Lou Spina oversees that department.

Dan Brisson questioned why other towns that he has visited throughout the State have such groomed fields and Cromwell does not.

Upon questioning by John Schmaltz, Scott clarified that the Recreation Commission oversees recreational programs. John Schmaltz pointed out that November through March recreational programs are typically held inside and if there were custodial issues the Recreation Commission and Recreation Director would need to address these. John stated that from March through November recreation and sports programs move outside and need fields to operate. If there are issues with the fields for these programs, John felt that it was up to the Recreation Commission to address these issues. John felt that the Park Department needs to report to the Recreation Director and that this matter should be brought to the Town Council.

Jack Henehan indicated that the Town Council Agenda has already been set for next week's meeting but he would be happy to put this on the next Town Council Agenda if he receives something in writing from the Recreation Commission with respect to this.

Ruth Checko confirmed that she agreed that the condition of the parks is an extension of the recreational offerings in the Town and that these organizations are the Town's guests and deserve to be heard.

Scott refrained to comment on park related issues.

b. Parks

Commission members requested that the Director of Public Works Lou Spina come to a Commission meeting and advise the Commission what has been done or is being proposed to be done to improve field drainage, particularly for the fields at WIS. John Schmaltz spoke about a former proposal for WIS and other fields in Town.

Scott refrained to comment on park related issues.

4. Old Business: None

5. New Business

Scott Kieras presented Commission members the Watrous Park-Trail Map put together by Cromwell resident John Sokolowski of NEMBA, New England Mountain Bike Association, showing updated bike trails at Watrous Park through the middle school cross country trail on Town-owned property. He noted that this mountain bike trail is also open for passive recreation as well. Scott indicated that they did a very professional job of cleaning the trails and did not disturb any habitats. A temporary kiosk will be installed for now and a permanent kiosk is being constructed by an Eagle Scout which should be completed by September. The kiosk will contain the map showing the trails, the rules and regulations and a QR code which will show the map and where you are. The trail map will also be given to the Town Police and Fire Departments.

Ruth questioned who will maintain these trails in the future. Scott confirmed that if the organization sees something they will try to clear it up themselves. However, it is Town-owned property and will need to be maintained by the Town if necessary.

Scott reported that camp registration is low for the summer, possibly due to the uncertainty of what COVID-19 protocols will be.

The Farmer's Market will be running again on Friday evenings at Riverport Park starting June 11, and they will be using the adjacent field for parking.

a. Report on initial meeting regarding Space Needs Study

Scott reported on the Space Needs Study that is being done of the former Department of Public Works building behind Pierson Park. A company has been hired to assess the buildings and the viability of remodeling for a community center/senior center. Scott noted that there are three options: a standalone senior center, a combined senior center/community center, or a standalone senior center and the Recreation Department would take over the senior center space in the Town Hall. Scott did not feel that the third option afforded enough space for additional programming and spoke on the benefits of shared space with the Senior Center

Ann Grasso, from the Cromwell Creative District, spoke on the potential new facility and the benefits she foresees. She noted that there are 15 non-profit organizations in Cromwell and they typically are low on the totem pole when it comes to what they need. Ann noted that CCD is in desperate need of space. This district encompasses a narrow geographic area in Town, the

forgotten Main Street (next to Pierson Park). She indicated that CCD would be happy to endorse a community center.

Scott pointed out that a community center would need to have adequate space and rooms for non-profits and sports organizations to hold meetings and other activities. It would also open up availability of space to add additional new programs, activities and facility rentals. There was a brief discussion on this by Commission members.

6. Commissioners Comments

Jim Vinchetti spoke on an issue Cromwell Little League is having with a newly renovated dugout at the softball field at WIS. He noted that CLL paid \$7,000 and the Town of Cromwell paid \$2,300 for these renovations which were to have a "galvanized metal roof" according to the original quote. However, it was completed with a fabric roof. He confirmed that the invoice had been paid in full. Scott briefly reported on the original meeting with all parties at the site. Scott refrained to further comment on park related issues.

Dan Brisson questioned if the concession stands could be open this year. Scott indicated that they should check with Sal Nesci, the Public Health Coordinator, although Scott felt that they would be allowed to be open.

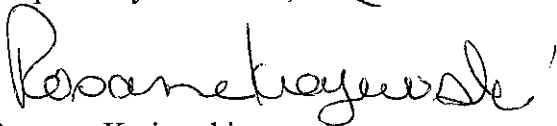
Scott confirmed that there are no meetings scheduled for July or August and that next meeting is scheduled for September 2. Scott indicated that he will keep the Commission apprised over the summer and reach out if any assistance is needed with anything.

There was a brief discussion about the potential for a new or renovated middle school and the need to talk about adding a turf field to the project as part of that funding.

7. Adjournment

Motion was made by Dan Brisson to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Motion seconded by Jim Vinchetti. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rosanne Krajewski