

PARK COMMISSION

MAY 10, 2010

The regular monthly meeting of the Park Commission was held at Town Hall at 7:30 p.m. with the following in attendance:

Robert Ferrigno, Presiding
Joseph DeSabia
John Scippa
Diane Mayo (7:36 p.m.)

Kevin Bellows
Kenneth Martin
Anthony Chmielewski
Gene Cellini (8:40 p.m.)

Also,
Dmitri Paris, Park Superintendent
Mary Markham, Recreation Director
Town Attorney Edward Walsh

Guests:

Doug Bogen, L.H. Fire District
John Mellardo, L.H. Fire District
James Blöse, 110 Old Tree Farm Lane, Trumbull Titans, New U10 Travel Team
Phil Becchetti, 40 Essex Lane, Trumbull Titans, New U10 Travel Team
Jeff Blueweiss, Trumbull Little League
Paula Passaro, Donna Festa Tournament Fundraiser
Pat Festa, Donna Festa Tournament Fundraiser
Zoltan Szabo, Donna Festa Tournament Fundraiser

Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Public Comments:

Doug Bogan, 26 Bassick Rd, and John Mellardo, 22 Lafayette Drive, Long Hill Fire District:

Concerning their request for permission to use a small portion of Island Brook Property behind 5400 Main Street in conjunction with their planned firehouse expansion parking area construction. Distributed preliminary land layout plans for Long Hill Fire Station expansion on Wilmot Avenue, contiguous with Island Brook Park. They have purchased two properties, 5400 Main Street, and 37 Wilmot Avenue. Part of the new proposed parking area with entrance from Wilmot Avenue would impose on Park Property. They are looking to utilize that small portion (indicated on the map submitted) of Island Brook Park (approximately 1/8 acre) behind upper level 5400 Main Street to allow for a small number of additional parking spaces. Park property from this point goes downhill to the park. They plan to appropriately landscape the entrance to the parking area along the Park entrance roadway. The building is a two-story, three-bay firehouse fronting on Main Street. Currently nothing responds from the lower-level below. Present building will become an administrative building and storage.

Park Superintendent commented that having viewed the work that town fire departments have done, he has no doubt that the project will go splendidly once they get going.

James Blose and Phil Becchetti on behalf of Trumbull Titans

Mr. Blose stated last month some issues of discussion he wanted to address. How do we correct the minutes. Park Commission minutes state two out-of-town players. Not true. We have one out-of-town resident. Notation in our minutes of 100 percent rule. We weren't here when it was researched. Notation doesn't mention when it was researched, during or after the meeting. (Clerk stated that letter to Ball Field Users on 100 percent residency was with her at the meeting, actual minutes researched the next day.) Laws in the Charter questioned. How do you become a "Core Organization"? And, Mr. DeSabia is listed on the American Legion Baseball Commission...listed as a Commissioner of American Legion Baseball. A conflict of interest.

Park Commissioner DeSabia commented that he is no longer involved. His name must stay there for one year; and, I abstain on any votes on American Legion.

Mr. Blose continued noting that it seems like we have to be put into Trumbull Little League for getting anything. Still have 100 percent residency looming over us. Are we going to be able to get fields or not? Yankee United, in 1987, got 8 in and 8 out. We should have access to fields. Same ability to get fields. We have thirteen 8/9/10 year old boys to have fun. To fight for fields is very frustrating.

Chairman Ferrigno asked are you already on fields at Tashua Elementary School?

Responded, Yes.

Chairman Ferrigno, so Town of Trumbull is providing field space for you. Not being denied. You do have an opportunity to play.

Response, Practice. Initially we were, not now.

Jeff Blueweiss, 63 Coventry Lane, President Trumbull Little League:

Explained, Little League got request early-on from Jim and Phil for fields in the town for their team to play more competitive ball...an 8 year olds tournament...which we allowed. They did a very good job, parents behind it, it was a very good thing to do. They wanted to make a team to play out-of-town.

He noted that the first email he received for this season, Little League did do what they could to support fields for them that Little League maintains, not on only the Unity fields but on the Board of Education fields. Little League has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into town fields we maintain. If we had fields available, we would have to schedule for Little League program first...fill their program first. Titans is a team. We want to support any baseball organization that serves the desire for kids to play. It's a team, not a program. The programs in town should get first preference... wide range of kids... every child who wants to play, not just those with talent.

On behalf of the League, we would cooperate as best we can. George Hesse (new field scheduler this year) did have problems in the beginning with the computer program and scheduling and there was a delay. As soon as that was determined, we gave you a number of fields that were available. Rules ... Park Commission jurisdiction...fields have to have 100 percent residents. Little League was playing

by the rules. I indicated we are going to follow that rule. We cannot give you a Park Commission controlled field. We did give you a Board of Education field for practice time. Gave 2 ½ to 3 times more to your team than we give to our teams. Your latest question you posed is can you get a Unity Field. We are guided by the rules because you have other than Trumbull residents.

Mr. Becchetti commented, Sundays, we do games instead of practices.

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Mr. Blueweiss answered, fine with it, if the Commission gives permission and if you don't get bumped by us (Little League). There is limited field space.

Mr. Blose said they are sympathetic with problem George had with scheduling. Doesn't seem a problem for Little Legion to have its fields. The field we were requesting was taken away from us. It was used. Most recently, we received a field when Mr. Herbst met with us. Did not want to interrupt or interfere with Little League scheduling. First Tournament April 9th or 10th. Got called 9:00 p.m. for a field on the next day, Saturday. Field scheduling a major problem for the town of Trumbull. Bunch of organizations that don't get along with each other, clearly. I read five years of every minutes of every meeting...all over the place. So, should another organization follow all the guide lines. Can't get the same field scheduling.

Mr. Bellows questioned, did you form your team first before you came to us?

Response, started in January, wasn't a not-for-profit organization. All tax paying residents. Assumed that they would be entitled to use fields.

Mr. Becchetti made a suggestion that scheduling should be done by one organization. In New Jersey, all scheduling done by the parks and recreation department.

Mr. Bellows commented on fields availability that he is a Little League coach. They had 3 practices before the season started. Called the night before in each instance...4:00 p.m. call for 11:00 a.m. next morning.

Mr. Blose questioned what makes us different from Little Legion.

Chairman responded, Trumbull established teams getting the same protocol as you are.

Mr. Blose, Little Legion does not get last minute calls.

Town Attorney Edward Walsh:

- In reviewing, the Town Charter empowers this Park Commission to manage and care for all the grounds used for park purposes. The Park Commission is empowered to do that. They do that in good faith and based on its ability to do so.
- Mr. DeSabia clearly abstains when concerned or a problem.
- All rules you set-up. You have sole authority to allow or deny any uses or give fields. There are a limited number of fields. Number of parties want to take them. I think you are acting in a fair manner and impartial.

Mr. Blueweiss stated he understands their frustration with not having sufficient notification for use of fields. But, treated unfairly, not true. Recently there was a less than friendly discussion on use of fields between Little League and Little Legion scheduling of a field. This was because of confusion with scheduling. Mr. Hesse was not familiar with the software.

The request for Little Legion...they are a program which contributes and compliments the Little League program and they are there because I want to enable kids to play in some travel programs. You cannot have a travel program affiliated with Little League. Now, players must play both Little League and Little Legion.

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Mr. Blose and Mr. Becchetti said they were instrumental in starting the Little Legion program and questioned who schedules Little Legion practices? Getting the practice time three days a week on upper Madison.

Mary Markham, Recreation Director, said both are scheduled equally.

Mr. Becchetti questioned are they (Little Legion) going to be sanctioned for using a field that they didn't schedule?

Mary Markham said she uses that field for co-ed and men's practice as well. If there is a request for a field and scheduled for a certain time, the field is that teams. If it's not scheduled and no one shows up with a permit, no one is going to put you off.

John Scippa questioned if the schedule for the rest of this month can be determined.

Recreation Director said she can't schedule yet because of Co-Ed and Men's practices.

Superintendent noted that some of the problem this season was the early season wet conditions. Little Legion program opening at Spring Hill was lost as Spring Hill was unplayable. People migrated looking for fields. We never wanted to get into sanctioning fields. We are finding you a place. That's what happened with Little Legion, too. Just wanted to get you guys on a field somewhere. Now, who has priority gets involved. There are A condition fields, B fields and all down the line...different field conditions. We also have residents, fathers with unorganized kids who just want to play a game. We get them in somewhere too. There are no steadfast rules for this. Apologize for the difficulty you had. We tried to find a place for your team.

Jeff Blueweiss said the two issues...Little League Madison used four days by us (Monday, Tues, Wed, Thursday) Titans get Friday and Saturday.

Superintendent said we now have people looking for different avenues of sports.

Mr. Blose said scheduling of fields needs to be addressed.

Recreation Director said they requested fields before they were even released. Mr. Hesse didn't have the schedule until the third week of April. She said, in one instance the Superintendent moved Little

Legion to play at a field and Christian Heritage was there. Little Legion has three teams, three nights; Titan has one team, Friday and Saturday.

Mr. Becchetti said the word is out there that other teams have preferential treatment.

Mr. Blose said we are a 100 percent Trumbull resident team and want to use Unity Park. Twelve Trumbull players, one Shelton player. Kid will play out of town tournaments. Not top, not bottom. Father a Guidance counselor in Town of Trumbull. Not a big deal.

Town Attorney Walsh indicated this is not an issue here. Indicated that he has a lot of respect for the Commission's trying to get together. Everyone is acting in good faith.

Mr. Blose said moving to the Fall. How soon do they put their request in for Fall Practice.

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Recreation Director said he should submit through the Park Commission for scheduling through Little League and Recreation.

Mr. Blose said they have twelve Trumbull kids who want to play at Unity or Indian Ledge. Now 100 percent residency. (For out-of town games, 13 players.)

Recreation Director said they now have a field at Tashua School, and they have two or three times more scheduling than the core program teams.

Response: No benches. Safety fine. Backstop perfect.

Questioned when they got this field. Responded, April 22.

Jeff Blueweiss said that leagues got their schedules at the same time. They have not been given any better or worse treatment than all the Little League teams. You have been given equal treatment. Mr. Blueweiss said he answered all their emails. He reiterated that George Hesse is new at the job of scheduling. Everyone who depended upon him got the same treatment.

Mr. Becchetti said other teams were out there, we were not.

Mr. Blueweiss commented that, in fact, two members on Little League Board are part of the Titans Team.

Town Attorney Walsh noted that there are many similar scheduling problems in other towns. Park Commission is legally empowered to make your decision. Totally felt the best interest of the town definitely shown here tonight.

Dr. Bellows commented that there are going to be new teams started every year. In five years, we will have five teams looking for fields.

Town Attorney Walsh said Park Commission has sole and exclusive right to continue as done in an orderly fashion. Certain priorities take place. Only so many fields to go around.

Dr. Bellows said this group started a team before they came in to ask for a field.

Superintendent commented that we are now working through all these problems with the Board of Education. There is going to be a proprietary list of teams. Only so much space to play. The core programs first, anything next gets shared.

Chairman reminded that we said no to second soccer program. A precedent was set with soccer.

Mr. Martin said this team was asking only for practice fields, now it's game fields. This is going to continue and continue. Already talking about fall ball. This same formula of coming in with a new team can disrupt everything.

Superintendent said that if we have space for them and they are 100 percent residents we plug them in where we can.

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Jeff Blueweiss said that Little League supported the Little Legion because other travel programs were taking their kids away. Approved if set-up as a non-profit and they require that players must play Little League otherwise they can't play Little Legion. When we need coaches to help with field work, they give us that help. The synergy works for the program and the kids. This team is not a program, it is one team.

Jeff Blueweiss continued. Scheduling is based on eligibility (Town residents) and Availability of fields. If Little League has a field available in the fall at Unity they would schedule it but it would only be if Little League doesn't need it.

Dr. Bellows commented that the Freshmen at THS don't even have a field.

Guest Donna Passaro said the THS Girls have only had four games so far.

Superintendent said with weather conditions, field use gets moved around.

Town Attorney stated again, you are the Gate Keeper.

Chairman said we should not be afraid to say "no" to some of these groups. Once we come up with a unified position policy on field scheduling between the Park Commission, Recreation Department and Board of Education hopefully we will resolve these problems.

Chairman thanked both the Town Attorney and Little League President for attending.

Paula Passaro, 47 Quail Trail, Zoltan Szabo, Pat Festa and Jeff Blueweiss on behalf of the Paula Festa Fund Raiser Tournament:

Submitted written proposal for their 3RD Annual Donna Festa Softball Tournament planned for September 3, 4,5 and 6, 2010 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. to be held at Unity Park (excepting Unity #1). Looking to schedule Island Brook Park for two games on September 3rd. As in the past, they are sponsored by Trumbull Little League.

- Number of teams – 24.
- Entry fee: \$475.
- Three hosting teams will not pay entry fee. (These teams use their money to fund event.)
- All teams required to have valid liability insurance.
- All concession stands profits collected by hosting teams (CT Seahawks, Fairfield Light & Stratford Seahawks) will be distributed equally to those teams for their respective organizations.
- Outside vendors are not required to give portion of proceeds to tournament. In the event that one does donate a portion, the funds will be put into the Donna Festa memorial account.
- Little League will receive a donation in the amount of \$2,000 to be utilized for the purpose of improving Tr. Little League Girls softball program.
- All additional proceeds will go to the Fund, which will be donated to a charity of the Festa family's choice.
- They will be responsible to clean the park of any and all debris and garbage. A garbage container will be provided.
- No alterations made to fields.
- Staff responsible for parking. Parking on grass will be prohibited.
- They will provide one park ranger for the duration of the event.
- Food vendors required to acquire own Health permit.

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Residency is not an issue. This is a fundraiser event, not a season scheduling team. The fund brings \$2,000 to Girls Little League.

Jeff Blueweiss, Little League Chairman, stated on residency, this is a Fund Raiser Tournament, sanctioned by Little League, in honor of a Little League family. This is not a team request. District Tournaments are similar. Part of program, always with a full-roster Trumbull team playing an outside team.. Fall and Summer is not as big an issue for field scheduling. Also, tournaments bring business into our town.

Mr. Scippa noted that we should separate out annual programs in categories—Tournaments, Special Events, Fund Raisers, Post Season Play –with core programs doing their scheduling and as long as we can say “no” at any time.

Superintendent said that by the time we put the planned Field Use Policy together, 99% of these problems will be taken care of.

Chairman Ferrigno: Our policy is in place on residency. We were presented with a problem and have solved it with the help of the Town Attorney and Little League Chairman.

Jeff Blueweiss noted that Trumbull Little League has always had a Trumbull residency policy. He indicated that on Opening Day Little League commended the Park Commission and Superintendent for the support given to their organization and program.

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second Mr. Scippa, unanimously passed to close Public Comments portion of the Agenda and return to the order of the agenda.

Joseph DeSabia, exited meeting at 9:05 p.m.

MOTION by Mrs. Mayo, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously passed to accept the minutes of the April 12, 2010, meeting as distributed.

PARK STICKER DISTRIBUTION:

Chairman reported that he has met with the Director of Public Works, Superintendent and Park Ranger and it has been decided to keep the stickers in place for this year. Thought is to determine prior to next year whether we want to have increased security in the parks system in conjunction with the vehicle stickers. We should explore what kind of coverage is desired and could consider a flex time program (9:00 a.m. to Noon, Noon to 3:00p.m., 3:00 p.m. to dusk), time frame perhaps Memorial Day to Labor Day. Noted that there is a comfort level for residents knowing that someone is in the parks providing security. A cost for a program such as this and the particulars need to be determined. Superintendent pointed out several areas of concern...transportation to locations and resources to fund the program. A Fee for Stickers could cover these concerns.

Recreation Director Markham said that AYSO reported to Recreation a men's team from out-of-town were playing at Indian Ledge Park.

Ken Martin reported to Rangers that this past weekend there was a non-permit Girls Team with a coach playing at Twin Brook's Park.

Superintendent suggested that Commissioners submit ideas for a patrol security system at our next meeting as a beginning to review and consideration.

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MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second by Mrs. Mayo, unanimously passed to accept in concept utilization of approximately 1/8 of an acre of Island Brook Park with an easement of perpetuity by the Long Hill Fire Company in conjunction with their Fire Station expansion plans and need for a small area of additional parking at the upper level of the park behind 5400 Main Street with review by the Town Attorney and appropriate Town departments and commissions authorizations in place with final review and approval by the Park Commission.

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second by Mr. Scippa, unanimously passed approving request by the Donna Festa Softball Tournament Committee for their 3RD Annual Donna Festa Softball Tournament planned for September 3, 4,5 and 6, 2010 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. to be held at Unity Park (excepting Unity #1) and Island Brook Park for two games on September 3rd.

Chairman reported that he will request a Deed Research of Beach Memorial Park to allow proceeding with proposal for the construction of a combined Ranger Station/Nature Center within Robert G. Beach Memorial Park as approved in concept and principal at the April 12, 2010 meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

- Pools readied for opening.
- Playground Inspections made.

- New equipment at Tashua Playground installed.
- Memorial Day flowers planted.
- Final grading and seeding at Indian Ledge #1.
- Not all Restrooms Opened. Those opened:
 - Two at Unity
 - Indian Ledge Upper Level
 - Island Brook
- Water drained at Old Mine Park.
 - We have a D.E.P. Permit to dredge that area.
 - Spillway taken out.
 - Dredged material on shores will be reused once dried out.
 - Hopefully, we will be able to have the vehicle bridge repaired.

Questioned if Old Mine would be returned to swimming. Superintendent said the problem of geese remains, and he is not making those plans at present. The same for Twin Brooks.

Mr. Martin questioned the location of the playground at Unity Park behind the tennis courts. He said it is like an oven during the day. Unable to plant trees because we are under the power lines. Recreation Director said that it is utilized at the end of the day by the families of ball players.

MOTION at 10:00 p.m. by Mr. Martin, second by Mrs. Mayo, unanimously passed to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted:

Joan E. Plouffe
 Clerical Adm. Asst.

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