

PARK COMMISSION
DECEMBER 13, 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	Anthony Chmielewski
Kevin Bellows	John Scippa
Joseph DeSabia	Kenneth Martin
Diane Mayo	

Also,
Dmitri Paris, Park Superintendent
Mary Markham, Recreation Director
Dan Nelson, Town Hall Chief of Staff (Stop-In)

Guests:
Gary Bean, 163 Hilltop Circle, Babe Ruth League
Mark Fritz, 133 Fernwood Road, Babe Ruth League
Jim Blosser, 110 Old Tree Lane, Trumbull Titans
Phil Becchetti, 40 Essex Lane, Trumbull Titans
Pam Georgas, 117 Broadway, Trumbull Nature Center
Bonnie Lindsay, 33 Wisteria Drive, Trumbull Nature Center
Frank Grazynski, 21 Sharon Road, Trumbull Nature Center
Derek Clarke, 2690 Reservoir Avenue, Architect-Unity Church Barn

GUESTS:

Gary Bean and Mark Fritz, Babe Ruth League:

In attendance concerning the proposed Batting Cage location which was selected for Babe Ruth Unity field area. Commissioners Ferrigno and Martin visited the site and Park Superintendent and Mark Fritz visited as well, with all agreeing that placement was best end-to-end to the current Little League batting cage. They need to know what is required of them to proceed.

Chairman indicated that the commission will require a detailed plan for construction which meets Town Engineering approval, with size, height, footings, etc. to meet building requirements, security, warranty, etc. and would put additional thoughts concerning the project together to assist them with their planning. He questioned funding and was the project planned with all Babe Ruth funds.

Mr. Bean said Babe Ruth will fully fund the project, although they may need help with site preparation.

Dr. Bellows questioned if they are going to change it to a fenced cage so that they can lock it?

Chairman noted that this would be a Park Commission mandate.

Mr. Bean said if fencing is required, they will go along with it.

Mr. Martin said the Commission wants consistency with what Little League has. Metal fencing, design and structure.

Mrs. Mayo questioned if they have a plan of what they are going to do to better the field?

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Mr. Bean indicated they have a landscape architect currently preparing specs for them. They will take that information and obtain three bids to do the work. They would then come back with the scope of the work.

If they have to take the field down for a period of time, they will do it.

Chairman noted that the Commission feels the field should have higher priority o the batting cage construction.

Mr. Fritz said if field conditions become a concern for safety reasons, the field comes first. He noted that last year the backstop at Jane Ryan was unsafe and they had it repaired. Their projects are completed in an order of priority with safety first, enhancement next.

Chairman thanked them for their attendance.

Jim Blosser, Phil Becchetti, Trumbull Titans:

Presented their request for Titans to use fields for spring practice. They will have two teams U10 (14 players) and U11 (12 players), all Trumbull residents. Each team is going to play in East Haven 30 games. They have completed their 5013c forms and their IRS form was properly filed. Forms will be available and submitted to the Park Commission at year end. Last year they practiced at Madison as well as at THS varsity soft ball field. They are requesting two days a week, 90 minute slots.

Chairman indicated we would get back to them once the field use plan is in place and spring scheduling is completed.

Pam Georgas, Bonnie Lindsay and Frank Grazynski, Trumbull Nature Commission:

Pam said that after last month's meeting, she realized that the Park Commission doesn't know a lot about the Nature Commission and what they do. Their Commission started five years ago as an environmental and nature center. Town agreed to their use of the Wagner property and would pay for infrastructure and they would pay for programs. Town pays utilities, etc. they were starting something new at that time. They have a lot of organizations and companies involved with the program. The Nature Center has become a network with different organizations. They have 20 companies coming to the center to help with painting, etc. they are self-funding for programs. But, they are faced with a building in need of repair. They worked with Bullard Haven Technical School for some repairs. The building is not going to meet their needs for long-term growth..tiny rooms and spaces. When the idea to sell the property and build a new center came up, it fit their needs. They were asked to look at places and see what would work for them. Came up with Twin Brooks Park. Questions on feasibility, were reviewed with Antonozzi Architects, the Park Superintendent and Director of Public Works.

Chairman Ferrigno said that this proposal has only just come to the Park Commission at our November meeting and the consensus is that they acknowledge that the Nature Commission has given its time, effort and review to the proposal, and the Commission now wants to do its own study and review of proposed sites for a planned Nature Center/Ranger Station within the park system as well.

Pam Georgas noted that they did speak with the Park Superintendent and narrowed it down to Twin Brooks Park.

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Chairman said we feel we want to take our time and due-dilligence and will study the proposals and come up with an appropriate location within the park system for this facility. The Commission will come up with our recommendation for a location.

Pam Georgas questioned whether the Commission doesn't want them to be a part of this decision?

Chairman indicated that the Commission would like to focus on selecting the appropriate location. We are amenable to siting within the park system.

Pam Georgas said that their program is focused on young children. Kaatz Property has a deep pond and a cliff. The location needs to be safe for little pre-school and elementary age children.

Bonnie Lindsay noted that they have out-side classes, trail hikes and out-side events. They use out-side the building.

Chairman noted that the ponds in both Twin Brooks and Kaatz Property are about the same size, one acre. There may be other locations suitable as well.

Mr. Scippa referred to letters distributed concerning this proposal. The Town wants to sell the property for a revenue source. The plan was to free up two parcels to accomplish this proposal. We are talking about a new Nature Center and now none of that will go toward this project because of the economic climate with the sale of the property, which may not happen for five or six years.

Pam Georgas indicated that the sale of the Wagner property has no bearing on the plan for a new Nature Center.

Mr. Martin said that a different presentation was presented to this Commission. His opinion is that the proposed site should be changed. He doesn't think Twin Brooks is a good location. He does agree, however, that they should be moved.

Pam Georgas said they did consider everything that is safe for children with their recommendation.

Chairman said we have accepted their report and will complete our own analysis of where it should go within the park system. Once determined, we will accept their discussion. We will take a Tour together after the first of the new year. Just a question of where to locate. We understand there is a problem with selling the site where you are presently in order to build a nature center in a new location. The appraisal is at 1,700,000, which is too low. That's for the Town Council and Board of finance to decide. We are just talking about a site.

Mr. Martin noted that no one is disputing their mission.

Chairman concurred.

Mr. Scippa said this Commission has to do its due diligence and wants a public information session. We must maintain and keep the park system as viable and open to our residents as it has always been. These proposals need to be looked at closer as a commission so we can eventually go to the public. No one is going to give you 100 percent approval.

Chairman said residents look at a broader picture...what does it cost, will my kids use it, etc?

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Pam Georgas questioned our time frame?

Chairman said we can't commit to a time frame now. As soon as we can we will arrange a joint tour. Then we will do our own analysis. We are on board with the concept. We are not saying no to your presence in the park system. Location needs to be decided.

Mr. DeSabia expressed concern that this commission has not been privy to this information until recently.

Superintendent Paris said that there have been problems with the facility at Wagner. Our Department takes care of it. The thought of selling the property over the past year, they began to look at other sites. The possibility of entering the park system was viewed as a site location. It is ultimately the Park Commissions consideration on a site location that is suitable with the Nature Center charge. Their needs assessment was for themselves, not parks, which pre-dated what is coming to you now.

Mr. DeSabia noted that maintenance was the reason given when Dan Nelson came to us earlier in the year. It was a presentation to the Board on the sale of the Wagner property and Ranger station property.

Dan Nelson, Chief of Staff, who stepped in to the meeting responded that the bonding on the property is at around \$1,700,000 and the appraisal about the same. Could be now that we would hold on to the property for many years. It is not the best of times right now. Maintenance concerns for the building is the problem.

Mr. Martin stated that we would have two unfilled buildings here in time.

Park Superintendent said as a Commission you have the matter of where we could put it in the park system.

Mr. Scippa responded that this is the first point. Right now the only point was move the Ranger Station. The more he hears about the nature Center and their charge, the Park Commission becomes the land lord, they the tenant. That has to be fine-tuned. They are an operation unto themselves.

Superintendent said, much like Little League.

Chairman said, they have had six to eight months head start and want a decision in four weeks time. We need time on our side. We need time to complete our own review. The Nature Commission is pushing forward and wants immediate answers we can't give.

Superintendent said that another piece that can't be ignored is the facilities management level. His department cares for facilities.

Mr. Chmielewski said that the Park Commission's obligation is to come up with the best location within the park system.

Superintendent noted another example of Park Department caring for property other than parks is the Pequonnock Valley. He has just spent two weeks of tours of the Valley with the D.E.P. He has a relationship with the Nature Center because we care for their building...he is tethered to them.

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Chairman reiterated that the Nature Commission's focus is to establish a Nature Center, the Park Commission's focus is broader...they are just one small part of our resident community utilizing park facilities. We must look at impact to the residents of our community, not what is best for one particular group.

Mr. Martin said that we are very responsive to their request. We are looking at their proposal. As a Commission, we would like to do our own study, come up with an area that makes sense.

Mr. Chmielewski said the final decision has to be with us.

Dan Nelson asked that we consider a joint site tour after the holidays, then we would go off on our own. The Nature Commission is looking for what's best for their programs. The Town-side is ease of facilities and management. Much money going into the Wagner Property this year. We have good money maintaining that facility.

Mr. Martin stated that this is quite a "plumb". Town gives them building, then pays all its expenses. How much do we give to the Nature Center as Town residents? It is an entity unto itself. They want to come into the park system. There's a control factor to consider. It can be at Kaatz Property or some other location, it doesn't have to go into the park system proper.

Dan Nelson commented that Route 25 is a valuable location as a commercial piece if zoned different.

Discussion on Nature Center closed.

Derek Clarke, 2690 Reservoir Avenue – Barn Donation Unity Hill Church:

In attendance at Mr. Martin's invitation. There is an historic barn dating to the 1880's belonging to Unity Hill Church, across from the Ranger Station on White Plains Road. The church has subdivided its property and want to raise the barn for roadway access. They are willing to donate the barn to the Park Commission if we will disassemble and take away. The Park superintendent has looked at it and finds it to be in good condition. The thought is that we could reassemble it in one of our parks. It is a great barn, an English bank red barn. Superintendent said he could accomplish the disassembling,

number the boards, and store within one of our facilities, and then reassemble once a location and time permit. The Park Commission would give a letter of approval to the Church to allow our Park

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, 2nd by Mr. DeSabia, to accept the donation of an historic barn from Unity Hill Church at 364 White Plains Road, to be dissembled, removed from the church property, stored and reassembled at a later date within the park system, the location to be determined by the Park Commission.

Discussion: Mr. Chmielewski stated he has taken many barns down before. They need to be immediately re-built or it becomes a nightmare. It should be rebuilt immediately; therefore, he cannot vote in favor of the motion.

Vote: six in favor, one opposed (Mr. Chmielewski), motion carried.

Election of Officers:

MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Dr. Bellows, unanimously passed nominating Robert Ferrigno to continue as chairman. Vote unanimously in favor.

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MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Mr. DeSabia, and unanimously passed nominating Kevin Bellows to continue as vice Chairman. Vote unanimously in favor.

MOTION by Dr. Bellows, second by Mr. DeSabia, unanimously passed adopting the second Monday of each month as the regular meeting date for the Park Commission Meetings for 2011, with meeting being held the following Monday, or a date to be determined, if the regular meeting date falls on a holiday or must necessarily be rescheduled.

MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Dr. Bellows, unanimously passed accepting the minutes of the November 8, 2010 meeting as distributed.

DISCUSSION:

Babe Ruth Batting Cage Proposal:

A letter will be issued to Babe Ruth containing items to be included for response or in their specs request to be presented at a future meeting:

- Plan overview.
- Type of construction. Size, height, concrete footings.
- Listing of warranty of materials.
- Area of use, proximity of rights of way, public access
- Landscape design.
- Easements (utilities) involved.
- Site plan relative to overall park plan
- Applicants, users
- Town building permits to code

- Use of, supervision by whom?
- Outside use other than Babe Ruth?
- Maintenance of daily, food beverages.
- Hours of use, daily and season.
- Liability, Insurance, attorney referral.
- Notification to Park Ranger, access by EMT, Fire Safety, Police.
- Yearly Inspections required by Building Department
- Yearly pre-season update of parks Commission
- Removal of abandoned storage trailer and remediation of site.
- Storage building, outside materials.

Dr. Bellows commented that if we allowed the net cage, and it were staked in, people could climb under.

Consensus is that the cage should be constructed as a fenced cage, similar to the Little League cage, rather than a net cage.

MOTION by Mr. Chmielewski, second by Mrs. Mayo, unanimously passed approving the initial request by the Babe Ruth League to construct a Batting Cage at the Babe Ruth Field with a location to be back-to-back with the current Little League batting cage as a fenced cage; with final approval once specifications are reviewed and approved as well as a response to listing of project requirements is provided and removal of abandoned storage trailer and remediation of site has taken place.

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New Business:

Mischee Brook Park:

The Town has given a sewer easement through Mischee Brook Park and a flooding problem has occurred with the culverts under a temporary roadway installed, with heavy flooding in the park. The Chairman and Mr. Martin have met with the Project Consultant who has had the contractor clean up the stock piling and debris as well as place larger culverts to remediate the disruption.

Superintendent commented that other sewer projects have through green belts have turned out beautiful walking paths once they are fully finalized.

Budget Review:

Superintendent reviewed items to be included in his preliminary budget for 2011-2012. He commented that we have inherited additional responsibilities with the Field Use Study and maintenance and over-view of the Board of Education fields.

Mr. Scippa indicated that the Commission should have this information earlier than right at budget submittal time. Projects Superintendent is aware of should be reviewed early on so the Commission can give input to the budget proposal.

MOTION by Mr. DeSabia, second by Mr. Chmielewski, unanimously approved the following items be included in the Budget Proposal for 2011/2012.

\$18,000	Tennis Courts Overlay Product
Up 2 ½ %	Increase to Chemicals Account
\$40,000	Mason Body Truck replacement
\$80,000	Toro Mower Replacement
\$23,400	Two Additional Ranger Attendants for BOE Fields.
\$27,000	Three Additional Ranger Attendants for Park Sticker Patrols Three months, 8 hours per day times 3, 7 days per week. Twin Brooks and Indian Ledge parks.
\$ 3,500	Two-Season Stickers for distribution 2012 Season.

To be discussed:

Resident Fee for Stickers to cover cost of Rangers.

Non-Resident Fee

CONSENSUS TO ADJOURN AT 10:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted: Joan E. Plouffe, Clerical Adm. Assistant

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