

Trumbull Nature Commission – October 20, 2015

Trumbull Nature Commission
Tuesday, October 20, 2015
7:00 pm
Nichols Room, Trumbull Town Hall

Present: Barbara Pezzulo, Genevive Molgard, Nancy Wentworth, Nancy Gottschalk, Jeffrey Kunkel

Also Present: Kevin Malone, Giovanni Amore and Scot Kerr (entered at 7:50pm)

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by the Chairman, Mrs. Molgard followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Past Minutes: Motion was made by Mrs. Pezzulo, seconded by Mrs. Gottschalk, to approve the minutes as written. Approved unanimously. Mrs. Gottschalk thanked Mr. Malone for his very informative updated on the TNAC. She asked Mr. Malone for clarification on the marketing techniques used to get the kids involved. Mr. Malone noted paper flyers are distributed twice a year to the schools at the elementary level in Trumbull as well as the Library and other locations in town. He also noted there is an electronic backpack that is used to distribute this flyer. They also advertise in magazines such as Fairfield Kids and others. He will provide the Commission with a list of the media outlets used, including Facebook and Twitter. They also email a monthly newsletter to interested people who supply email addresses at outreach events.

Field trips were also discussed. Each teacher gets a field trip flyer in the elementary schools in Trumbull. Inquiries from other schools receive this information in a PDF form with a questionnaire regarding number of students and date of the event. This is a targeted effort going to the elementary school teachers. They try to get information for neighboring towns from the websites.

Several individuals are involved in the effort of disseminating information. Flyers are printed and then hand delivered to the schools, E-mails blasts are done and the backpack messages are sent. Once the flyers are distributed, they do see a spike in responses to the programs.

Mrs. Molgard requested a detailed budget report of the TNAC from January 1, 2015 through October 1, 2015 to include all expenses including utilities and the cost of sending materials. Mr. Malone noted utilities are in-kind and are covered by the town. TNAC has no employees, only contractors. Mrs. Pezzulo noted her garden club is interested in projects at the Nature Center and wondered about the price and who buys supplies. Mr. Malone noted he could work with them on this. It was also requested that liability insurance coverage should be included with the expenses and income and anything else the organization covers. Mr. Malone noted the TNAC Board would discuss this request at their next meeting. This report should be done on a quarterly basis thereafter. This could be part of the new policies to be established.

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Old Business

Two items from Old Business were discussed.

- a. Adoption of Policies and Requirements for 501(c)3 organizations who use the Nature Center
- b. Formation of sub-committee to develop policies and procedures for the Nature Center

Mr. Malone questioned what organizations would be included in (a) as some of the groups who use the center are not non-profit. Does this include such groups such as the Boy Scouts? Mr. Kunkel stated that the Commission will adopt new policies to allow other organizations, other than TNAC, to use the facility noting the criteria, rules and regulations. What about other non 501(c)3 organizations such as someone who would like to use the grounds for a fund raiser? There is currently a group that uses the facility weekly but there are no policies and procedures to cover this or any other group. Section (b) is almost the same. Discussion was held regarding the development of the policies and procedures. It was noted that any document written by the Commission would need to be reviewed by legal counsel. It was suggested that a representative from the town be on the committee.

Mr. Kunkel made a motion that committees be made to talk about policies and procedures. No second. Discussion was held regarding the formation of these committees and it was agreed, instead of a separate committee, to have the Commission meet to formulate opinions and then bring the information back to TNAC. Mr. Malone noted any questions can be presented to the Patrons for information. Mr. Malone was asked what policies they think would be important. Both sides will write down their ideas for discussion. Several ideas were brought up as possible topics for policies including a liability waiver, background checks and protection training. Mr. Kunkel spoke on the physical plant and how it is taken care of. Mr. Malone noted the town Parks and Building Departments come in to do this work. He noted there were a number of things the previous commission had interaction with through the town. Another topic to cover is a town coordinator. Wifi was discussed and its importance in the learning environment for the classrooms as well as acoustic tiles for sound.

Mrs. Molgard noted it is uncertain if there will be a long term agreement. In perpetuity essentially means forever until someone changes it. The Town Council would have to change this since they established it. That particular phrase was used by the Council and cannot be changed by any other body.

Discussion was held regarding the possibility of looking for another site. Mr. Malone gave a brief background on the current building noting that students from Bullard Haven had completed a job and they were going to work on the garage project to make it into a gallery. The First Selectman requested this project be put on hold because the town was looking to move the Nature Center to a park. Nothing has been done in the building since that time. The first attempt did not result in a decision. The Nature Center was then urged to go back a second time through the location selection with the Parks Commission and tell them the First Selectman and the Town Council would like another discussion regarding the possibility of moving to a park. The Parks Commission gave a suggestion that was an

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unacceptable location for the Center and requested certain criteria that could not be met by the Nature Center. The Parks Commission does not want the Nature Center in any of the parks.

Discussion was held regarding the Parks Commission and the new Parks Director. Stuart McCarthy is the new Director of the Parks Department. He is not a member of the Parks Commission but gives a report to them as Director of the Parks Department.

Report from TNAC

Mr. Malone gave an update noting he had received a request from the Cub Scouts to use the facility but he told them no policies and procedures were in place to allow that type of use. He asked who should be contacted for inquiries like this. It was noted a good policy and procedure would cover this type of inquiry and all the boxes would be checked. People go to the TNAC because they are running the programs and their information is on the website. Mr. Kunkel noted the town owns the property and procedures may change for everyone using it. He felt that Mr. McCarthy should be involved with this process since he offered his assistance as a resource. The Commission should not be micro-managing but overseeing the management of the center.

Mr. Kerr entered the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Mrs. Molgard requested Mr. Malone to show the Commission what guidelines they have in place so the Commission can review them. Mr. Malone stated many procedures are internal and only include a check list used by TNAC when they have programs.

Mr. Malone noted his board meets next week and they will discuss these requests. Mr. Kunkel offered to attend this meeting. Mr. Malone noted there are no activities that the Commission needs to act on at the present time.

Mr. Malone asked for guidance regarding his report to the Commission. It was noted he should provide a quarterly report with budget information and any information related to what has happened at the Center. Mr. Kunkel noted no keys or codes should be given out to anyone for security reasons. It was suggested that this type of report should be given for the first six months until the Commission is familiar with the operation of the Center and after that can be given quarterly.

Mr. Malone reiterated there needs to be liaison between the Nature Center and the town to facilitate any work or upkeep necessary.

New Business

Motion was made by Mr. Kunkel to have a committee of five to go through the policies and procedures. Seconded by Mrs. Gottschalk and approved unanimously.

Discussion was held regarding recent donations. Fees for programs were discussed.

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Meeting dates for November and December were discussed. Mrs. Molgard suggested the November meeting be held on November 18 due to the holiday and that the December meeting be cancelled. Motion was made by Mrs. Gottschalk to move the November meeting to the 18th and cancel the meeting in December. Seconded by Nancy Wentworth and approved unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm was made by Mrs. Gottschalk, seconded by Mrs. Pezzulo, and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk

These minutes are considered a draft until approved at the next meeting of the Trumbull Nature Commission.