

May 8 Trumbull Parks Commission Notes

Present: Kevin Bellows (Chairman), Nancy Walsh, Ed Ritacco, Jonathan O'Brien, Brian LeClerc, Mike Travisano

Absent: Cat Lamy

Also Present: Abigail Relkin (Clerk), Dmitri Paris (Superintendent)

Public Comment Opened: 7:05pm

Daniel Viera, Buttercup Lane

LIVFree Tournament –

Comment: Request to use Unity Park for a benefit softball tournament either September 23/24 or September 30/October 1. I've already spoken with Greg MacDonald about the tournament, and he is accepting of the plan to adjust the little league schedule to accommodate. The tournament would require all little league fields, but we would also like to use the Babe Ruth field if it is available. Games could be staggered to accommodate parking. Finally, requesting the fees to use the fields be waived.

Ken Martin, Huntington Turnpike

Woods Estate, Trumbull Historical Society –

Comment: The greenhouse was suddenly gone one day, and since I've had several conversations with Dmitri Paris to understand why it was taken down. When a historic building is deemed destroyed or needs to be demolished, it must go before a board. There needs to be a review to see if there is a possibility to restore and it did not happen. Obviously, there was a safety issue and parks commission were not made aware of it. If something like this happens again, would the proper avenues be traveled.

The two barns are undergoing restoration for the last 10 years however budgetary issues and utilities have stopped this. This is a destination for people to see the history of our town, and we want people to know and respect it.

Response: Dmitri Paris –

I've been involved with the area since the day I started with Trumbull. We've talked deeply about the project, and I believe the facility has come a long way. However, the primary function of the Parks Department is cutting grass, running pools, keeping parks clean, etc. It is a sacrifice of efficacy of project, price and limited resources.

They have started to restore the greenhouse, saving pieces of it in the shop over the past few years. The tree came down and hit the chimney causing a domino effect with brick and cement going through the center of the greenhouse. The gas line was exposed and damaged. There was an urgency to terminate the gas line and get everything removed.

Question: Ken Martin –

What would be required to get these things operational again?

Response: Dmitri Paris –

When there was a demo permit the gas company came out with an urgent response to shut the line off. They did not communicate that once you terminate the line, they will not reconnect it after so many days. It has been reported that it would take \$11,000 to put gas where it was.

Genevieve MacGrath, Teeterock Road
Woods Estate, Trumbull Historical Society –

Comment: I also have concerns about the Woods Estate and the limited communication about park projects and updates. Where was the notice that there was no way to save the greenhouse when it got destroyed to see if there was a way to use it in another capacity?

I would like to bring the great tree to your attention. It needs pruning and fertilization, and I hope a professional to assist.

What is the budget of the area looking like? What are the short- and long-term plans?

Arwin K., Palomino Pass
Volleyball Courts

Comment: Working with commission for 3 years to get volleyball courts fixed up in Unity Park. As of last year, the commission did an amazing job, and the courts are in great shape last summer. 2 questions: 1. Towards the end of the season there were wooden planks there (that are too short and not stopping the ball), maybe to move towards a fence? 2. During the mornings, the sun hits hard on one side. We cannot ask you to change the sun, but would like to request that the nets be moved to the grass for the time being? If we could do this, we're willing to sign waivers.

Response: Dmitri Paris – A possibility would be to have something at the water line to hopefully stop the ball from making it to the water.

Response: Dmitri Paris – it would make the most sense to put nets or something similar. If there's an installation, it's a bit more complex.

Dmitri Paris, Superintendent
Pickleball

Comment: When it started, there was no certainty that Pickleball would be a going concern or have the popularity it did. We painted some courts, and it started something bigger with rapid evolution from there. There was a formation of "social play."

- The first challenge became, how we can support the community beyond residents? Permits, parking passes, etc. are used to manage the system. We moved forward with Unity Park to see if it would be problematic. It's not like anything else we have; it doesn't fit neatly. Worked out times, no ranger patrols going in in earnest, seemed to work well.
- Year 2- There were petitions for more courts and we were able to get additional funding to set the stage for Island Brook transformation. This changed the whole system in that the social construct

is so strong that everyone is talking to each other to manage time (which is different from a league). When Island Brook grew, we started to hear complaints from a group of other pickleball players beyond the social group. They wanted to get together with friends vs the leagues. There were no residents on the courts. Trying to get a sense of whether it was appropriate, we're people in-line with permits. Other towns are also going through this, it doesn't fit neatly into community structures to thrive while ensuring residents have fair opportunities. We have tried to take and many pieces from other communities and talked to subgroups and the social group.

- What could work and how it would relate to parking, residents, etc. trying to create a program. Everything we're trying to work on, whoever has a permit, has the authority to be there. Because the social program is not a true league, the only way for it to be honored is if it were created under the parks and recreation name. I am sure it is not perfect but there are elements that are key to preserving the group without collapse. It is a work in progress still, trying to figure out the best point for the fee in relation to the amount of play possible, preserved communal activity, resident has a benefit for the tax dollars vs nonresident so they can afford to participate.
- UPDATE: Looking towards opening Tashua (8 new lit courts) but there are so many things to consider. Carving a spot for social play in one location, remaining courts to stroll on our permits for the times.

Comment: John Paul F., Pinewood Trail

- I've been involved for 5-6 years; we've had a great thriving community for like few years. Parks and rec have done a wonderful job by building courts and accommodating needs. With that said, the idea of the program is a good idea. It seems like it's an easier place to get what we want as a group, premium play time in the evenings, money can go to the courts. I support the program idea on that level. Hopefully we can use the money brought in for improvements to the courts. If there's a program, it's easier to get these things than as individuals. I think there's a lot we can do. Right now, it's fractured but I know once there's a resolution it will be fine.

Comment: Lucy MacArthur – nonresident, Monroe. Past Trumbull resident.

- Bits of confusion on "teamreach". I agree with John that if we get funding it could help but I know there are plans and there may be a fee that will cover May – November. When will there be a final plan? What about people who have already paid?

Response: Dmitri Paris, Superintendent

- The biggest challenge is reaching everyone. We've attempted to get the information out to the best of our ability. One bit of information can overwhelm the truth or cause a simple misunderstanding.
- Current fees are for the year.

Comment: Lucy MacArthur – nonresident, Monroe. Past Trumbull resident.

- Resident vs nonresident- if every community does this, there are parameters around the community. And now breaking the community. The community seems to already be breaking. We need to communicate this sooner than later.

Response: Dmitri Paris, Superintendent

- Some places have restrictions. Not pushing for this but trying to allow everything to work.

Comment: Joan Schoenleber, Trumbull Resident

- Have been dismayed that the group had 3 blocked and now 6 blocked off. Rangers will stop people from going on those courts if they aren't scheduled on it.
 - o I think the number of courts blocked should be comparable to the number of people signed up, we just want to be able to play.
- I'm thrilled with the support and the courts blooming.
- The idea of a parking permit for nonresident is wonderful. Charge for parking and let them come.

Response: Dmitri Paris, Superintendent

- When we blocked Unity, it was to make sure that island brook was available.
- Our intention is to foster the community in all ways people want to play. It makes my job worthwhile. We are trying to get the message out to the social play group to understand and to get the universal buy in.

Comment: Marla Rubin, Lycett Street

- At Unity, if no one is there, the ranger will not allow open play on the court. Then Island Brook is packed with a mix of walk ins and social play.

Response: Dmitri Paris, Superintendent

- What we are trying to do is to have the structured time, so people will use Unity as they did previously. If it were just a walk on, no one will be at island brook. This is all still evolving.

Comment: Vicki Tesoro, First Selectwoman

- My goal was to give everyone an opportunity to play. The social club has about 80 people between morning and afternoon signed up. I cannot answer why they are not playing. If those that sign up don't want this, we should not have it, I cannot defend the courts not being played on. This is still very new, only been a week. 3 of those days it has rained.

Comment: Community member – Communication is needed. Website is not user friendly.

Comment: Joann Zambo, Woosley Avenue

- There have been reservation system issues – a friend made a reservation, someone else got a permit by calling for the same time.
- Why is there a cap?

Response: Dmitri Paris, Superintendent

- Call to office to speak to Noreen or Gretchen. If anyone has issues signing in, we can walk people through it. Once in the system, it's very easy to sign up.
- The system is currently based on individuals, but everyone in the household can take a permit. People have monopolized on this and blocking courts. The intent is to allow as many people to play.

Motion to close public comment

Motion to close by Kevin Bellows, Second by Brian LeClerc

Acceptance of March minutes

Motion to approve by Nancy, Second by Mike Trivisiano

Old Business

Comment: Nancy Walsh

- When will Old Mine trail be opened? Twin Brooks?

Response: Dmitri Paris, Superintendent

- Old Mine, two months max. Twin Brooks, less than a month to drive through, paving as we speak. Planting in next few weeks. Weather has played a part.

New Business

LIVFree Softball Tournament Proposal

- Comment: Jonathan O'Brien- I think it's fine if they check out on the Babe Ruth field. We will check in about little league.
 - o Question: Kevin Bellows- What about the fee? Should we waive the fee?
 - Paris – We didn't waive the fee with movie night at Indian ledge (easily managed event). A tournament is a tournament. Who's managing the facility? How many games? Who's grooming? Does this align with the event?
 - Bellows- If approved, the day fee for facility is paid and contracted with our field people that fees are paid. Not in favor of waiving the fee. Field is being taken for the whole weekend.
- Question: Dmitri Paris- What do they need? What are the details? Could we ask the teams using the fields to partner, would they shoulder the grooming costs? We've also charged other fundraiser fees to this group.
- Question: Nancy Walsh- Who covers insurance?
 - o Comment: Kevin Bellows- Insurance details are in their contract.

Motion to approve the tournament with approval of one little league, allowing fields to be available as well as grooming and maintenance fees and staying in compliance with field group policy.

Motion rescinded by Nancy to table discussion until more details are worked out.

Geocaching –

- Comment: Dmitri Paris- People have requested to do this through the parks department. Never had any issues with it.

Motion to approve the geocache placement at Twin Brooks

Motion made by Nancy Walsh, Second by Ed Ritacco

Volleyball

- Temporary net, Dmitri has no issue as long as they remove it. Can look into adding a net for next year.
 - o Comment: Mike Travisano– Worried about wildlife getting stuck in the netting.

Woods Estate, Trumbull Historical Society

- Comment: Dmitri Paris- Complimentary of work done. We cannot budget high dollar amounts because there are other priorities. We intend to use the barn for programming. It's well suited for recreational activities.
- Comment: Nancy are there any plans for the tree?
Responses: Dmitri Paris- I haven't noticed a significant problem with the tree. It's approaching end of life.

Pickleball

- Comment: Kevin Bellows – This system is new so we're hearing this for the first time too. Noreen sent changes out. We need to be better at getting the information out.
- Comment: Dmitri Paris- The issue is what is expected of the commission? We've had a number of meetings to get an idea. Do you want to preserve; 1. the social pickleball construct and 2. have a specified fee structure with residents and no residents but want to find ways to preserve it in ways other residents have commented? It will all likely expand again when Indian Ledge courts open. We need a mechanism to keep it in check to make sure it's not being abused
 - o Comment: Kevin Bellows- I think the current fee schedule is fair. There's a benefit for the resident to have a \$25 fee vs \$100 nonresident fee. We heard a lot that when there's no one on a court and a ranger won't let them play because they aren't on a list. But if they aren't there and the ranger is lenient but if someone comes that's permitted, you need to leave. Is this possible?
 - Comment: Dmitri Paris- Trying to find a way to encourage and ensure that people who are there are a part of the program. You can attempt doing what we did in the beginning, insist upon nonresident parking sticker, and don't manage. An additional effort to take out a permit, we can do that as well but only residents can do this.
 - Vicki—If the club has it set for a 3-hour block, they're still in the time period. They pay for the permit, and sign up

Superintendent's report, Dmitri Paris : Emailed out- Starting to get summer help. As you can see by the report sent out, there is a lot going on!

Recreation Report: Emailed out

Park Ranger Report: Emailed Out

Any other business before the commission:

- Comment: Nancy Walsh
 - o Any thought to open teen center as a teen center?
- Response: Dmitri Paris
 - o No intent, no. On the radar but site is not conducive, the way the concept evolved was managed well.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion made by Ed Ritacco, Second by Brian LeClerc

Meeting adjourned at 9:35