

RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

February 21, 2008

Attending: C. Deming; J. Gowac; M. Michalski; B. Parker, V. Parkus, T. Quinn
Guests: T. McCabe

Brad Parker called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Guests and Audience

Ms. Quinn introduced Ms. McCabe and advised that she was attending tonight's meeting to talk about the Youth and Family Services' program of community mini-grants and their involvement in recreational activities.

Ms. McCabe distributed copies of a document titled "*Plan for Extending Activities from 2006-2007 Grant*", and provided a brief overview of the Plan. She summarized the strategies of the plan as follows:

Strategy One: To offer mini-grants to community groups and organizations that plan and develop Asset-building initiatives within their organization.

Strategy Two: To create structured community-based opportunities for positive youth-adult interactions.

Strategy Three: To develop a comprehensive school and community-based education campaign on the importance of Asset-building in Substance Abuse Prevention.

She noted that Strategy Two is the issue that she feels is of most concern to the Parks and Recreation Commissioners. She advised that the purpose of that strategy is to build Assets in and for the Town's youth. She stated that Youth and Family Services does not want to duplicate the efforts of the Recreation Commission and that the activities considered under Strategy Two are generally one-time events such as student-teacher soccer games or pick-up basketball games between the police and students. She noted, however, that they are trying to coordinate a board-game night at the Senior Center which would be an on-going event.

Ms. McCabe advised that Megan Ryczak has been hired with grant funds to coordinate these events and, while she is very good at the job, the position is temporary. Further, that Youth and Family Services is not invested in organizing recreational events and she would be happy to have Parks & Rec assume responsibility for coordinating the athletic Asset-building events.

Ms. McCabe stated that she believes part of the problem may stem from a lack of communication between the two organizations. She noted that Parks and Rec does not have a representative on the Local Prevention Council (LPC) where Youth & Family Services' Asset-building programs are often discussed.

In response to a question from Mr. Parker, Ms. McCabe advised that Youth & Family Services received a total grant of \$13,500 from the United Way, \$4,100 of which was designated for the Plan to build Developmental Assets for/in the Town's youth.

Mr. Parker stated that he is a strong-believer in building Developmental Assets but indicated that he felt Ms. McCabe should have reached out to Parks & Rec when she was developing a plan of recreational activities. He noted that athletic programs have historically been the domain of the Parks & Rec Commission and if there is a need for a particular program, the Commission has always been receptive to

suggestions for new activities. He also noted that it is the Commission's goal to expand its program beyond athletic programs.

There was a general discussion about the distinction between recreational programs and prevention programs. The Commissioners and Ms. McCabe also talked about the limited amount of gym time available. Mr. Parker expressed concern that an additional layer of activities requiring gym time could jeopardize some the existing Parks & Rec programs.

In response to a question raise by Mr. Gowac, Ms. McCabe advised that participants in the programs sponsored by Youth & Family Services are covered under that organizations liability insurance.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. McCabe for clarifying the types of programs Youth & Family Services is organizing and stated that they do not believe that there is any duplication with their programs. There was a general discussion about the Parks & Rec Commission having a presence at the LPC meetings. Ms. McCabe advised that those meetings occur on the 3rd Wednesday of each month between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. at the High School. Ms. Quinn stated that she receives the LPC meeting notices and agreed to forward them to the Commissioners.

Approval of Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes from the January 17th meeting.

MR. GOWAC MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. MICHAELSKI AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Director's Report

Ms. Quinn provided the following Director's Report:

- Basketball is moving along nicely with few problems. One child broke his arm during a game last weekend and she spoke with the parents who stated that he is feeling better. The girls 5/6 grade group had low registration numbers as compared to last year. The Commissioners may want to reconsider travel team requirements for the 5/6 grade girls' teams for next year.
- The Final Buzzer will be held Sat., March 1st at 7 pm in the High School auditorium/cafeteria. She solicited volunteers for the event and Mr. Parker advised he would help out.
- Planning for the Arts Festival is moving ahead. A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 27th at 6 pm in her office. Anyone interested in helping organize the event can attend. She has also been in contact with the EDC for their support.
- The current Middle School will be turned over to the Middle School Conversion Committee on July 1st and there was a recommendation not to allow Park and Rec to use the facility after that date. Since a Parks & Rec camp program is scheduled to begin there on June 30th, she spoke to Ms. Malavasi (Committee Chairperson) and Mr. Walters about the conflict. They do not believe that it will be an issue this summer, however, if construction is going on the following summer, they will have to find a new location for the camp.
- She received a request to organize a bike race in Town and spoke with the Resident State Trooper and Mr. Walter about it and both felt it would be a feasible event. She had expected that the gentleman who made the request to attend tonight's meeting to make a formal presentation to the Commissioners.

- She is collecting applications for day camp and will begin interviewing and scheduling staff and field trips in March.
- A Parks & Rec Open House has been scheduled for Saturday, April 26th at the Elementary School. The event will be a great opportunity for program leaders to demonstrate, answer questions and show off the programs that they offer. The Soccer Club will also be there to, hopefully, alleviate confusion between the two programs. She noted that the event is scheduled on opening day for Little League and she expects it will draw a large crowd.

There was a general discussion regarding the low turnout for the 5/6 grade girls basketball teams. Ms. Quinn advised that it may be a factor of not requiring members of the travel team to also participate on the Parks & Rec team or it might be a normal cycle of interest. She noted that, since there are not enough players for several teams, she has tried to schedule games with some of the surrounding towns' Park & Rec programs with little success. Consequently, the girls' have not had a lot of play time. The Commissioners discussed possible solutions and Mr. Parker stated that, in the past, they have combined some of the girls and boys teams when there weren't enough players on either side to make up a sufficient number of teams. The Commissioners agreed to consider that option if next year's turnout remains low.

Ms. Quinn also reported that she has been receiving CDs and inquiries from bands interested in playing at one of next summer's Music on the River events. Mr. Parker advised that she should forward the CDs and inquiries to Ms. Nero.

Old Business

A. Budget

Ms. Quinn stated that she, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Gowac met with First Selectman Walter, Selectman Lyman, Ms. Tatro, and Mr. Budzik last night to go over the Commission's budget proposal. She noted that the Mr. Walter raised a question concerning the status of the skateboard park but noted that he did not want to add it back into the budget as a Parks and Rec project.

B. Art Festival

This item was covered in Ms. Quinn's Director's report above.

New Business

A. Youth and Family Services

Ms. Quinn stated that she is willing to go to the LPC meetings, however, she stated that she would not be able to assume any tasks from that group. The Commissioners agreed that she should attend whatever meetings she could and her only role would be to represent the Parks and Rec Commission's position on planned activities.

B. Bike Race

The guest who was going to do a presentation on this proposal did not attend the meeting. In response to a question raised by Mr. Michalski, Ms. Quinn stated that the organizer would like Parks & Rec to sponsor the race. She also noted that the event was being organized as a fun race rather than to support a particular cause.

C. Other

Ms. Deming asked if there have been any comments regarding the increased fees. Ms. Quinn advised that there have not because they will not go into effect until the next fiscal year.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Michalski, Ms. Quinn advised that the fee of \$15 for adult soccer is meant to cover 6 months. She stated that the change was made only because it is easier to collect the fee on a bi-annual basis.

Adjournment

There being no additional business to discuss MR. GOWAC MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. PARKUS AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary