

**SUFFIELD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**MONTHLY MEETING**  
**May 4, 2016**

The Suffield Parks & Recreation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 in the upper level conference room, Town Hall, 83 Mountain Rd., Suffield, CT.

ATTENDANCE: .....Lou Casinghino, Chairman  
.....Kerri Milne, Clerk  
.....Leeayn Burke  
.....Brian Casinghino  
.....Scott Tobey

ABSENT: .....Jay Bombard  
.....Amy Egan  
.....Cindy Nicholson, Vice Chairman  
.....David Rusnock

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: .....Wendy J. LaMontagne, Director  
.....Gerry Crane, CRC Representative  
.....Ross Davis, resident  
.....Jill Caron, resident  
.....Melissa Mack, 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman

Lou called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** Ross Davis, Suffield Resident, attending to ask questions about summer camp. Mr. Davis said that his son is in the ESY program (extended school year) and the school has informed him that his child will be attending Sunrise Day camp. Mr. Davis said he doesn't know how the camp works and how there will be socialization. He was also very concerned about the swimming portion of the camp. Wendy reported that Dr. Karen Berasi approached the Parks & Recreation department to partner with us because she knew we had worked with the school and the ESY program in the past and she wanted to integrate the school program with Parks & Recreation. Wendy said that she was told that there would be a 1 to 1 paraprofessional for each child attending along with the school nurse available for support. Wendy said that right now the number of children slated for our camps through ESY is around 5 or 6 going to Sunrise/Tween and 8 for Kids Korner. Wendy is working with Nancy Taylor and Dianna Kolodziej from the school and has outlined the details of the camps. The students will be bussed up to Sunrise Day Camp around 11:45 to join in on lunch, group activity and free swim. Wendy gave a very detailed overview of her past and present interaction with the school.

Mr. Davis discussed his son's issue with socialization and his concerns with the water. He asked about the training that the Parks and Rec staff would have in dealing with

special needs students. Wendy said that the school will provide training to summer staff from Creative Interventions and the paraprofessionals would be with the children during the camp. This company will come to the camp to give the training. Wendy has offered to the school that we could have an open house up at Sunrise Park to show the parents and children the camp location, terrain, facilities, where swimming is, etc.

Mr. Davis suggested that Wendy contact Nancy and let her know that he attended the commission meeting and what was discussed.

Jill Caron asked if Wendy was aware of a grant for special needs training. Ms. Caron said that this would be a good idea for coaches. Wendy said that she is aware and Creative Interventions would like to have this training for community members such as emergency responders. Wendy said that they will be providing training to summer staff and for the fall coaches.

Ms. Caron said that a big concern from parents is that many of the children are a flight risk. She said that there is only 5 weeks before this starts and it's not a lot of time to implement and plan for this. Safety is the big issue to the parents.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES:** Brian made a motion to accept the minutes. Scott seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Wendy said that the department will be moving to 97 Mountain Road on June 7. The move for the balance of the town hall staff has now been extended to August since the library is still not moved back to their building.

Lou said he received a letter from the selectman alerting him to the fact that a number of commission members will have their term expire June 30. The selectman would like to know if these members would like to continue on the commission.

Wendy said that she applied for a grant from the Friends of Suffield for picnic tables for Babb's. The grant was approved and Wendy will be attending the award ceremony next week to receive the check.

**PROGRAM REPORTS:** No comments

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Babb's update:** Wendy reported that if the budget passes next week the funding will be available to open the beach for swimming. There is a clean-up day set up by the Selectman for May 21. An email was sent out with information and Wendy passed around a sign-up sheet for commission members to volunteer. The beach is planning to open in August since the money will not be available until July 1 to purchase equipment. The Department is still recruiting lifeguards and what may happen is that when camp ends, Sunrise guards will move to work at Babb's. But many guards go back to school in

August so there may be times when Babb's has no guards. Recruiting guards continues to be a challenge.

Gerry said that he has gone into the water at Babb's beach and it is sandy for quite a distance and then becomes weedy but there isn't any muck. Gerry said he thinks with the motion of the water it has cleaned itself up. Wendy wants to get a diver to go into the water and see what is under the water. Gerry said the landscape company has done a deep rake of the beach and Gerry has made a list of items that should be done. The CRC has coordinated its clean-up day with the town clean-up day so a lot should get done.

Gerry said that the Zak Grant that was applied for was rejected. The reason it was rejected is because the Foundation would like to give a larger grant to see that the project goes forward and the Babb's property becomes operational. CRC is expected to do fundraising for a matching grant and the Foundation needs a business plan from the Town to ensure that the money is used to its best advantage. Gerry said that the plan will be presented to the Foundation in two phases. Gerry said that he will be contacting the town to see what is happening on the town's end.

**Bridge Street Community Center Update:** Wendy will show the PowerPoint presentation next month as there is no equipment in this conference room.

Wendy reported the department of Public Works will be requesting bids for the abatement of both Town Hall and Bridge Street School. This should be happening by the end of the month. The subcommittee is still meeting and one of the projects is developing the 501c3 status. The fact that the abatement money is not allocated in the bonding money. The commission discussed whether this money can come from the town or whether it will need to be taken out of the bonding money. Brian said that finance board members felt that if the abatement cost is under a certain amount the money could come from the town. If this money comes out of the bonding money it will affect the building portion of the project. Lou said that a fundraising committee needs to see how much money can be raised from the community. Leeyan said that she attended the selectman's meeting earlier for public comment. Her comments were that the Parks and Rec Commission supports keeping the money for the project separate from the abatement money and any other environment concerns.

**a) 501c3 update:** Brian said that Attys. Spellman and Alfano are going to help with the filing of paperwork. Brian read the certificate of incorporation that he wrote. Brian suggested that the name be Friends of the Suffield Community Center, Inc. Brian asked for comments. Brian suggested that there be between 9 and 15 directors and he read a list of names of people to ask. The commission discussed the names on Brian's list, other names and the mix of people for the group.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Summer Camps & Programs:** Wendy said that registration is ongoing for summer camps and programs and offers are being offered to candidates for summer positions.

We are still accepting lifeguard candidates. At present we have guards for Sunrise and with Babb's beach opening more lifeguards are needed.

Melissa Mack joined the meeting.

The commission discussed the special needs students that the school would like to send to our camps. Melissa said that she is concerned because of the needs of the students and the training of counselors. Melissa wants to be sure that the credibility of the Parks and Rec programs are maintained and she asked the school for more training for the counselors and expressed her concerns. Melissa wants to see that this works for everybody.

Leeayn said that she is an educator and 5 weeks to prepare, plan and train is unreasonable and made her very uncomfortable when she heard this. The commission discussed the comments from Ross Davis, Jill Caron and Melissa Mack and Wendy reviewed what the school has told her. The training that counselors will receive is one hour. Kerri said that she also works in the school and there is an entire team of professionals that is available if a child has an issue. Kerri is very concerned for the safety of the special needs children and the other children. The consensus of the discussion is that there is a very big concern regarding safety because of the environment, training of staff, the young staff, the short amount of time for planning and implementation and the fact that all want this to be a very successful time for all individuals.

**Elections:** Kerri asked about the elections since there are a lot of commission members who are up for renewal and some are absent from this meeting and would like to table the elections.

Brian made a motion to table elections to the June meeting. Leeayn seconded and the vote was unanimous.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Kerri made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brian seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Carol Scheitlin, recording secretary for  
Kerri Milne, Clerk