

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



MEETING MINUTES

October 24, 2018

Chairman Westerman opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

The members present were: Jim Boniello, Don Penzine, Michele Sanz, Kevin Westerman, and John Zattola.

Stephen Krug, John Papalia Michele Werney were absent.

Michael Papa has resigned from the Board.

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Steve Ralston and resident Pat DeSena were also present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Pat DeSena addressed the Board. He has been living in Somers for almost 50 years, served on the Town Board for 16 years, and has always be a fan of Reis Park. He has been jogging and walking the Reis Park Fitness Trail since it was constructed, and some concerns have arisen relating to his visit to all three trails two days prior to the Parks and Rec Board meeting. Pictures of the current conditions were shared that he has titled "the good, the bad and the ugly." Trails one and two appear to be in better condition than trail three. In his opinion, the trail beds need to be built up, roots and rocks removed, fallen trees in the woods around the trails should be cleared and the bench repaired. Mr. DeSena strongly encouraged the Board to visit the trails and to work on restoring this beautiful resource and asset that Somers has. He proposed that the Parks and Recreation Board request a budget item from the Town Board to restore the trails, and to use organizations in Town and Scouts as Eagle Scout Projects to get the project completed.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Penzine to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2018 meeting. Mrs. Sanz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MR. RALSTON'S REPORT

Chairman Westerman asked about the Men's Softball League. All went well and Mr. Ralston will meet soon with League Supervisor Jim Magrone to review the season and address any

suggested changes for next year. Mr. Zattola asked that the importance of the lightening policy be stressed.

NEW BUSINESS

Reis Park Fitness Trail and Stations – As a result of Mr. DeSena’s presentation, the Board discussed the best way to approach the condition of the Reis Park Fitness Trail. Mr. Penzine reminded his colleagues that when Mr. DeSena came to a meeting last year to speak about the same exact issue, the Park Foreman prepared a conditions analysis of the trails which he brought to the Lions Club President requesting their help. Since he never got a response, he is more than willing to provide the current President of the group an updated report with the same request. Mr. Westerman suggested that the Leos be asked for assistance as well. Mr. Boniello feels as though it is the Town’s responsibility to take care of fixing the trails. If it can’t be done in house, then outside contractor’s should be hired. Mr. Ralston indicated that going to bid for the job would be very costly, in part due to the requirement of having to pay prevailing wages. The Parks Department has access to millings to use for the trail base and his Parks’ staff can do the work, but since his manpower is currently limited, it would be very difficult presently to take on a project of this magnitude.

All were reminded that this trail doesn’t get as much use as it did when it was constructed 30 years ago and it was the only trail available in the Town of Somers at that time. The Board discussed whether funds should be dedicated to restore the trails, or whether the trails should be abandoned, since there are now multiple other options that were not available when the trails were originally built. Mr. Ralston suggested that since the back trail is in the worst shape and is the most difficult to access, then perhaps only the two front trails be restored. Chairman Westerman would like all Board members to walk the three trails (about a mile in total) between now and the next meeting on December 4th so a decision can be made then on how to proceed. Mr. Zattola asked that everyone keep in mind that it was intended to be a natural trail in the woods. In the meantime, Mr. Ralston will have the Parks staff begin to work on any surface tripping hazards, such as exposed roots in the pathways.

In keeping on topic, Mr. Ralston spoke about the stations that are located throughout the Fitness Trail. They are original to the 30-year old Reis Park Fitness Trail, are no longer able to be repaired and should be removed. All agreed that since the trail doesn’t get as much use as it did when it was constructed 30 years ago, it doesn’t make sense to purchase new stations.

Concession Stand Request for Proposal Review – All received copies of the request for proposal for the concession stand. A review and discussion ensued which resulted in a few modifications.

OLD BUSINESS

Parks Rules Update – In June 2018, the Parks and Recreation Board discussed a complaint received by the Parks and Recreation Department about people smoking in Reis Park. While the Code of the Town of Somers prohibits smoking in Town buildings, there are no official rules prohibiting smoking in the Town parks, except in the Dog Park. Accordingly, at the July meeting the Board members present unanimously agreed with a motion made by Mr. Penzine and seconded by Mrs. Werney to propose that this provision be amended to add the language “such as smoking and/or vaping”. This would serve to clarify and eliminate any confusion whether these activities are allowed. If such an amendment to the existing rule is not feasible,

then the Board would request that the Code be changed prohibiting smoking and/or vaping in all Town parks. A Public Hearing was held on September 6th at the Town Board meeting regarding this topic. In an effort to bring all of the rules and regulations in Chapter 128 of the Code of the Town of Somers up to date, Mr. Ralston recommended some additional changes. All members agreed with the suggestions.

This evening Mr. Ralston reported that the changes were filed in Albany and are now finalized. Signs have been posted in Reis Park at the front entrance, pavilion and both sides of the playground; in the Dog Park; at Angle Fly Preserve and Van Tassell Park.

2019 Budget Update – Mr. Ralston and Chairman Westerman attended the Budget Hearing with the Town Board last week. A couple of changes were made to the contractual section of the 2019 Parks and Recreation Department budget.

Parks Master Plan Review Update – At Van Tassell Park, a local Scout will clear the area behind the flagpole going toward the soccer field, as well as the stone wall as his Eagle Scout project. It will be used as a picnic area

Mr. Boniello, Mr. Ralston and Chairman Westerman met with Maryann Rivera of Landscape Concepts at Bailey Park to discuss concepts and options to improve the park and encourage more use by the residents. A professional services proposal was prepared and shared with the Board members. A motion was made by Mr. Zattola and seconded by Mr. Boniello to retain the services of Landscape Concepts at a total cost of \$1,250 plus meeting fees to create a landscape design for Bailey Park, to be paid for out of Recreation Fees. All were in favor. A memo forwarding this request will be sent to the Town Board.

Angle Fly Preserve Conservation Easement Modification Update – As per the Town Attorney on September 21st, the Town is waiting for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to act on the Conservation Easement Modification.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ralston had no comments this evening.

BOARD COMMENTS

The Board members had no comments this evening.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. and the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 4th at 6:30 p.m. in the Recreation Center in Van Tassell Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Parks & Recreation Board

cc: Parks & Recreation Board
Superintendent of Parks & Recreation
Town Board
Town Clerk