

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Parks & Recreation Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting January 20, 2009

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Mary Lou Stamp at 6:55 p.m.

I. Attendance:

*Commissioners Present:* Frank Montagna, Joe Capucci, Mary Lou Stamp, Susan Puzycki,  
Suzanne Lewis

*Commissioners Absent:* Al Centone, Richard Wilson

*Staff Present :* Eileen Pettit, Assistant Director of Recreation and Carla Pelliccio, Secretary

*Staff Absent:* Gerardo Sorkin, Director of Community Services and Recreation  
Victor Palma, Superintendent of Public Works & Field Operations

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Frank Montagna made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Joe Capucci.

III. Correspondence:

An invitation was received by Mary Lou Stamp by the Sons and Daughters of Italy. This year the organization is honoring Fire Chief Landisio and Police Chief DiCarlo as Distinguished Citizens.

A copy of a letter sent to Police Chief DiCarlo was received by Mary Lou Stamp in December, written by Michael and Ann Miller, regarding unregistered motor vehicle activity at Sinoway's Pond. The letter recommended that the Commission should consider enacting a regulation or a law for people to make restitution for property damage, as well as suggested that the town put up more signs prohibiting motorized vehicles on the fields. Ms. Stamp placed a call to Chief DiCarlo this morning and is awaiting a return call to discuss what actions the Police are taking to handle this complaint. She would like to have this conversation with the Chief first and then report back to the Commission at the next meeting. In the meantime, Ms. Stamp will send a letter to the Millers confirming receipt of the letter and stating the intent of speaking with the Chief and addressing follow up at the next Commission meeting.

IV. Director's Report:

Eileen Pettit, Assistant Director of Recreation

*Recreation:*

Annual Tree Lighting was held on Sunday, December 7, 2008. Hundreds of children and their parents enjoyed the festivities, which included face painting, cookie decorating, refreshments, pictures with Santa and caroling. Mark and Mary Minotti and students from Minotti Music entertained the crowd with a variety of Christmas carols. The day culminated with the lighting of the tree on the Town Green.

A special that to Co-sponsor, McDonalds for providing juice, Mark and Mary Minotti for coordinating the entertainment, the North Haven Knights of Columbus for providing hot chocolate and coffee, the North Haven High School Chorus for the caroling on the Green, and staff from Coldwell Banker Real Estate for volunteering their time. Ms. Pettit complimented the wonderful job that her staff did in carrying out such a successful event, specifically Assistant Pool Director Andy Delvecchio.

Winter recreation and pool programs have begun. Carla distributed brochures to all Commissioners.

The new North Haven Youth Basketball Program (6-8 yr. olds) is up and running and receiving positive feedback from participants and parents. Ms. Pettit complimented the fantastic job that Dave Mikos did in his coordination and organization of the program. Coach Art Leary has been well-received by the participants and their parents. The numbers have increased this year. Have the maximum number of participants (35) on Wednesday evenings and 31 participants on Saturday mornings.

The 2009 Summer Concert Series planning has begun. Ms. Pettit plans to have all acts locked in by mid-February. Summer Concerts will begin on June 30<sup>th</sup> and will end on August 11<sup>th</sup> (7 weeks on Tuesdays at 7pm). Recreation has also begun their Summer Employment Program, which employs North Haven high school and college students for 5 weeks in the summer to oversee the playground sites and all the camps. They have started planning summer activities, for the playground, day camp and all of their sport camps. Summer programs will begin on June 29<sup>th</sup> and will run 5 weeks ending July 31<sup>st</sup> (may change with additional snow days).

#### V. Old Business:

Many of the open items under Old Business will need to be addressed by Mr. Palma during the next Commission Meeting.

#### VI. New Business:

Chris Heyle, President of the North Haven Soccer Club and Mike Hanlon, former President of the North Haven Soccer Club attended to reacquaint themselves with the Commission, re-establish a dialogue with the Commission and the explain the goals that they are looking to accomplish. Their membership consists of 500-600 players each season (fall and spring seasons) will over 1000 players for the year. They accept children who are younger than any other soccer program in town and retain these children for a longer span of time than any other soccer program in town. An issue that they found is an overuse of fields, and therefore their goal is to develop further playing fields. As a Club that allows their children to practice twice a week, they are at an competitive disadvantage.

Mr. Heyle went on to provide a bit of history of their previous interaction with the Commission dating back to 2006. The North Haven Soccer Club made a presentation to the Commission in 2006 (a copy was provided to Ms. Stamp for reference). The result of that presentation was a letter written by Mike Pomichter, former Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Copies of this letter were provided to all Commissioners. The letter's response not only indicated support of the proposal, but also a concept plan for a soccer complex on the south 40 of the Anthem property. At that time, the soccer club had looked at all the publicly owned town property in north Haven and looked at a feasibility study in trying to develop some soccer fields. Subsequent to the proposal and the response letter written by the Commission in 2006, certain developments had derailed their efforts in moving forward including the purchase of the Anthem property by Quinnipiac University. At that time, they had conversation with

Director of Public Works Richard Branigan and First Selectman Kevin Kopetz and were led to believe that the town was working on a deal with Quinnipiac to lease the property to the town.

A Change of administration had then taken place and then progress on the process had stopped. Bill Gambardella then later helped re-establish the conversation with First Selectman Janet McCarty, who at that time was scheduled to meet with representatives from Quinnipiac. During Selectman McCarty's meeting, she brought up question as to the status of the soccer field project, to which the representatives had no response, as they had not been aware of the project. Therefore, he feels that the North Haven Soccer Club is back at square one in this process. They reiterated how anxious they are in getting this project off the ground and achieving their goal of obtaining more fields.

Again, the goal was to recognize the Club's needs, to start the dialogue again, and to seek the Commission's guidance as to where the Club can go from here in creating a better environment for the kids to play soccer in town, including improving the currently existing fields. Mr. Hanlon went on to echo Mr. Heyle's points as well as further explain the deficiency in fields. The organization wants to be equally as successful as Max Sinoway's accomplishment. They are a 501-C3 and have a significant amount of money available to defray costs and are ready and willing to fund raise. They made the point that it is difficult to fund raise when they do not know what they are fun raising for.

Ms. Stamp commented that she recognizes that the conversation will have to be reopened with Quinnipiac. She feels that Victor Palma and the new Director of Public Works will need to get involved in this process and mentioned that they communicate these points to them as well.

## VII. Public Participation:

Mike Pepe, Vice President and John McDonald, President of Max Sinoway Little League attended meeting to provide updates on current happenings with the League. They reiterated their role as "town liaisons" as providing information to the various departments in town including Parks and Recreation, Board of Education and Public Works. Max Sinoway is the largest youth baseball program in town servicing over 700 kids. With the increase in kids, comes the increase in games, which in turn requires an need for more fields.

Mr. Pepe used this time to request the necessary paperwork in order to file for their annual monetary stipend for 2009, to which Ms. Pettit had provided to Mr. Mikos during the meeting.

Mr. Pepe reported that he recently met with Mr. Peckham at the Board of Education recently. Currently play their Scooter games at Brook Field (behind the new high school). Their intention is to move some of these games to the elementary school fields. Some of these fields are not in the best of shape, so the conversation with Mr. Peckham was to request to get these fields playable. Discussed getting one field at Montowese, one field at Clintonville and two fields at Green Acres playable this season in order to play the Scooter games, and Mr. Peckham felt this would be a strong possibility. By making them "playable," they are looking to cut out baselines into the field. Mr. Pepe will be making a formal presentation to Mr. Palma within the next week to request reconstruction of the mounds, work on the facilities at Montowese baseball park. (Public Works takes care of Montowese park and the Board of Education takes care of the elementary school fields). Mr. Palma stated that they would allow some of the coaches to do minor raking in the batters boxes and the mounds after games in order to keep the fields in good shape. Mr. Pepe asked the Commission for their continued support as Mr. Palma makes these determinations.

Mr. McDonald went on to report on updates. They have a new board of Directors this year. They Had first general membership meeting in December 2008 with a great turnout. During the meeting, a series of

sign up sheets had been passed around during this meeting seeking volunteers to assist in getting ready for opening day, getting ready for registration, securing sponsorship fund raising, to which they successfully obtained over 70 volunteers. In light of the energy that these volunteers had going out to secure sponsorships and fund raise, they feel that they had made a good decision in not raising their registration rates (currently \$105). One fund raising idea that arose from the December meeting was obtaining sponsorships for a "Game of the Week." Currently have secured sponsors that will assist in upgrading their current audio system and will try and partner with some high school kids to announce at the Junior Majors and Majors games on Friday night. Their hope is that it will bring a lot more excitement down the fields on a Friday night, just like being at a minor league game.

Mr. Pepe expressed his excitement surrounding the organization asked for the Commission's continued support for the ongoing success of their healthy strong program.

Ms. Stamp reiterated again to Mr. Pepe that they should get the new Director of Public Works involved when they present to Mr. Palma. She also wanted to pass along the great feedback on great turnout and organization of the registration that took place. Ms. Pettit also commended them on a great job.

Mr. Pepe posed a question to the Commission regarding if they wanted work done at Max Sinoway Park, and there was no money in the budget, would they be able to use town approved vendors to do the work? The Commissioners did not know the answer. Mr. Montagna felt that it would pose a union issue.

Opening day will take place on April 25, 2009.

Based upon the question raised by Mr. Pepe regarding offsetting costs, Ms. Lewis questioned how the Commissioners can understand better how that type of question is answered. Given the budget constraints that are going on among all towns, it would be a beneficial if the Commission had an understanding of the account lines.

#### VIII. Adjournment:

The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 16, 2009.

Ms. Stamp asked for a Motion to Adjourn. Motion made by Joe Capucci, seconded by Suzanne Lewis. The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.