

MINUTES

Cromwell Recreation Commission Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 7, 2023

Present: Commissioners Dan Brisson, John Schmaltz, Greg Valente and Jim Vinchetti, Recreation Director Scott Kieras and Town Council Liaison Jack Henehan

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. Approve Minutes:

a. March 2, 2023

Jim Vinchetti moved, seconded by Dan Brisson, to approve the minutes of March 2, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Program Report

a. Director

Recreation Director Scott Kieras reported on the fields that were refurbished over the summer. A new infield was installed at Cromwell High School (CHS) varsity baseball field. Scott briefly spoke on some of the issues they had with this. He noted that DuraEdge was used, and there is specific maintenance for this type of material which the Parks Department as well as all user groups have been made aware of.

There was some discussion between Scott and Commission members on the need to keep this field maintained properly. The Commission also discussed the need to update the dugouts at the CHS varsity baseball field. Scott suggested he could see if Building Maintenance could paint them.

John Schmaltz questioned if a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the BOE has ever been agreed on. Scott indicated that there is nothing in writing. He did point out that Mike Conant, Parks Maintenance Supervisor, now controls the irrigation at the BOE fields.

Councilor Jack Henehan felt that the BOE needs to take some responsibility for these fields.

Scott also reported that the CHS softball field was refurbished to have the depth of the infield updated as it was not correct.

US Pitchcare also fixed issues at both Bateau and McCrossen Field at Watrous Park as well as Franklin Field at Pierson Park. Scott noted that funds for all of the field work came from COVID funds, field maintenance funds and \$50,000 that has been previously earmarked for field upgrades.

5. Old Business

a. Pierson Park Update

Scott reported on Pierson Park which was overseeded prior to the start of the football season. He noted that the visitor team room will be the same as last year. The project to upgrade areas at Pierson Park will begin in January. It will include demolition of the youth football storage building, adding two team rooms to the mechanics garage as well as an official's room and a training room. He confirmed that youth football will still have an area for storage. The

DPW garage will be demolished and the gas tanks relocated to the back area. This will allow for additional parking in that area. Scott confirmed that the \$1.5 million grant funds will be used for this project. Upon questioning, he stated that these grant funds also include the extension of the sidewalks on West Street. This work is currently in the process of being done. An additional grant has been applied for in order to continue the work at Pierson Park which includes a new pavilion, sand volleyball courts and bocce courts. This grant has not yet been received.

John Schmaltz questioned the aeration of the fields at WIS and the Pierson Park football field. There was a brief discussion on this.

Scott reported that in November the Watrous Park pavilion will be torn down and replaced as the existing pavilion is deteriorating. ARPA funds will be used for this. The slab will remain but a new pavilion will be constructed by an outside company. The Commission also discussed the new pavilion and other upgrades proposed for Pierson Park. Commission members noted the need to update the basketball courts at both Pierson and Watrous Parks as well.

There was also some discussion on the lights at the Watrous Park Tennis Courts. Councilor Henehan spoke on the heavy use of these parks.

4. Farmers Market

Scott advised the Commission that they have added two additional weeks to this year's farmers market due to the inclement weather over the summer. There have been three cancelled Fridays. He noted that the market cannot go too late into September as it gets dark earlier and many of the vendors do not attend as they are committed to the fairs around the State.

Scott confirmed that there is a profit going into the off season. The Craft Fair will be held again in December which is good seed money to start up the market for the next season. He also noted that sponsorships were very good this year, and that the bands and other entertainment seemed to be well received by the public.

6. New Business

- a. Update on field renovations
Discussed under Director's Report.

7. Commissioners Comments

John Schmaltz stated that work should start now on trying to get a UCONN intern to assist with the Parks Department next summer. Scott confirmed that he has a contact at UCONN that he can reach out to. Scott stated that he will come up with a job description which will need to be approved by the Town Manager. There was some discussion on this position between Scott and Commission members.

Scott indicated that they had hired two interns in the office over the summer and that he will be trying to get more staff by way of using the revolving account which will have no burden on the Town budget. Scott noted that the Parks Department also needs more staff, and this will be discussed during the budget process.

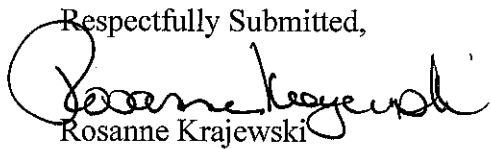
John Schmaltz spoke on the need to have the islands and cemeteries outsourced like they do in Rocky Hill. There is a state bid for this type of work.

There was a brief discussion on the issue of a community center. Councilor Henehan addressed this and noted that there is a lot on the docket currently.

8. Adjournment

Jim Vinchetti moved, seconded by John Schmaltz, to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m.
The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosanne Krajewski", written over the printed name.

Rosanne Krajewski