



TOWN OF LEDYARD

12 Van Tassel Drive
Gales Ferry, Connecticut 06339

Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission Meeting Minutes - Draft

Chairman
Kenneth J. DiRico

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

7:00 PM

Parks & Recreation/Senior Citizens
Center

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman DiRico called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Ledyard Senior Center.

II. ROLL CALL

Present Commissioner Jessica Cobb
Chairman Kenneth J. DiRico
Commissioner Charles Gallagher
Commissioner Norma Sokolski
Commissioner Margaret Anne Harding
Commissioner Paula Crocker

Excused Commissioner Loretta Kent
Commissioner Lucrezia Finegan

Absent Commissioner Majorie Winslow

In addition, the following were present:

Scott Johnson, Director
Naomi Rodriguez Town Council Liaison
Nate Weiss, Ledyard Resident
Jim Warren, Ledyard Resident
Jessica Buhle, Ledyard Resident
Xavier DeBrod, Ledyard Resident

Seating of alternate member
Chairman DiRico seated Mr. Gallagher in place of Ms. Finegan

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

Director Johnson noted the following correspondence:

To the Commission,
I would like the Commission to consider installing permanent Pickleball courts/nets at both ends of town. It will be greatly appreciated if such actions can be taken to provide permanent nets on

courts sooner than later.
Thank you in advance,

Mike Washington
112 Spicer Hill Road
Ledyard, CT

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None

V. MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Harding stated that there is not enough room with the new restroom switch to hold onto the hand railing properly. Mr. Johnson stated that he will have public works look at it. Mrs. Harding also inquired about the possibility of getting a second hairdresser. Mr. Johnson stated that the hairdresser, Amy was back and he didn't know if there would be enough work for 2 hairdressers.

VI. REPORTS

Director's Report - September 19, 2023

Director Johnson presented the following to the Commission:

*PARKS RECREATION AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMISSION
Director's Report September 2023*

Please note this update for your review.

1. Commission Meeting:

The regular meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, September 19th, 2023, at 7:00 PM, in the Ledyard Senior Center. Please contact the office immediately if you will not be able to attend.

2. Youth Leagues:

Little League, Soccer and Football/ Cheerleading have started their fall seasons.

3. Summer Camp:

We had a very successful summer camp season with record participation. We saw about a 30% increase at all camps.

4. Middle School Field Lights:

The middle school field light project has been completed.

5. Judge Crandall Upgrades:

Prep work was planed for last week but was delayed due to rain. The speaker is scheduled to be taken down by the electrician and Public Works agreed to install the necessary window jams to save money. The roof bid is almost ready to be publicized.

6. Judge Crandall Scoreboard:

Ledyard Youth Football has completed the installation of a new scoreboard. Scoreboard is now fully operational.

7. Pfizer Field Scoreboard:

Ledyard Little League has brought in electric at Pfizer and installed a scoreboard. Everything is fully operational, and the electrical service is in Little Leagues name.

8. Colonel Ledyard Park Trail:

The Scouts did a service project and cleared the trail of debris and fallen limbs.

9. Ericson Park Walking Path:

The path at Ericson has been sprayed and we are hoping to have fresh stone dust delivered by the end of the week.

10. Highlands Lake Aeration System:

We received the new aeration system for Highlands Lake. I went with an all-diffuser system without any fountains. The air diffusers will do a much better job than the fountains at adding oxygen to the water. In addition, the new system will be much easier to maintain as all electrical components are located on shore.

11. Food Pantry Deliveries:

The Social Services Coordinator and I have developed a plan to deliver food from the food pantry to home bound seniors in town. We proposed the idea to the mayor, and it was approved. In October we will be working with the food pantry to start delivering meals. We will be utilizing volunteers from the Rotary Club to assist with the deliveries.

12. Senior Center Car:

The senior Centers car broke down on the way to pick someone up from a medical appointment. Unfortunately, the vehicle would need a new transmission and would cost significantly more than the car is worth. The car is now determined to be totaled.

13. Pickleball:

Pickleball has taken off and in just a few months the court reservation app has 144 members. To meet the demand, we have ordered 2 additional nets, and 100 balls. A storage box has been brought from another location

to store the nets in. The box just needs some TLC before it can be used but Russell is working on fixing a broken hinge and is going to paint box.

14. Staff:

The Assistant Director is out for the next 8 weeks. We have brought in a summer camp staff to help the next 8 weeks.

15. Tri Town Trail:

Eversource has started installing the 2 parking lots that are the Towns match for the DEEP grant. Grant is moving along, and the next step is to approach property owners along the proposed routes.

16. Rain Gardens:

We planned to start installing the rain gardens this week but had to delay a week due to the heavy rain on Monday. The Ledyard Transition Academy is going to help us prep the gardens for planting by excavating the sites to 9 inches.

RESULT: RECEIVED AND FILED

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Cobb, seconded by Commissioner Harding, that this be Approved and so declared. The motion carried by the following vote:

MOTION to approve the following:

- Park & Recreation Commission Minutes of May 16, 2023
- Senior Citizen Commission Minutes of June 28, 2023
- Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission Organizational Minutes of August 15, 2023

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Cobb

SECONDER: Margaret Anne Harding

AYE 6 Cobb DiRico Gallagher Sokolski Harding Crocker

EXCUSED 2 Kent Finegan

ABSENT 1 Winslow

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Boy Scout Skate Park Project Proposal

Xavier DeBrodt presented his Eagle Scout Project stating that he is facing money obstacles as well as time challenges. The project needs be completed by his 18th birthday, which is in about

2 years. He stated he will have fundraisers to help with the cost of completing the project. Scott Johnson stated that the biggest challenge would be the town's liability coverage and he would speak with a representative from the Town Hall about the added expense of a skate park on the Town's insurance policy.

RESULT: CONTINUE

2. Discussion regarding recreation space within subdivisions

RESULT: NO ACTION

3. Discussion and possible motion to schedule a park tour

RESULT: NO ACTION

4. Review Outstanding Items of Business from the former Parks & Recreation Commission and former Senior Citizens Commission.

RESULT: NO ACTION

5. Discuss and develop a plan for ARPA funding for Senior Centers

RESULT: NO ACTION

6. Any Old Business proper to come before the Committee

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to request the Town Council appropriate up-to \$16,082.00 from CNR Account #20360101(Parks and Recreation Capital Non-Recurring Fund) for the Pfizer Field Improvement Project.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Cobb

SECONDER: Charles Gallagher

AYE 6 Cobb DiRico Gallagher Sokolski Harding Crocker

EXCUSED 2 Kent Finegan

ABSENT 1 Winslow

2. Discuss Working Groups

RESULT: NO ACTION

3. Discuss the need for Pickleball infrastructure and how to meet the demand

Scott Johnson stated that pickleball has grown tremendously in the past few months. He stated

that there are 2 tennis courts at Blonders Park and there is a possibility that one of the tennis courts could be designated for pickleball and one could be maintained as a tennis court. A 4 court system would cost about \$275,000. There is no charge to play on outdoor courts, but should we be able to make an indoor court, there would be a charge to play.

Mr. Warren stated that they play pickleball 7 days a week for a 2 hour time block from 9 a.m to 11 a.m. He stated that Sundays are for intermediate plus players and nights were for beginners and open play. He stated the hardest issue is when people can make it. Mornings are mostly retirees but younger people have expressed interest. Mr. Warren stated they opened up Team Reach App to join and sign up to use the court for play.

Mr. Weiss stated Scott has been great getting the pickleballers the nets and balls. The national Average is 4 courts per 1,000 people. Mr. Weiss stated that what the pickleball community would like is to grow at one site and possibly add courts. He is concerned about tennis not willing to give up the courts during pickleball.

Scott Johnson stated he was trying to reach some of the tennis players but does not know who they are and will place a sign at the courts.

Mr. Weiss stated that the fencing needs repair at the pickleball site, however, that does not affect the play of pickleball. Mr. Weiss also stated that the game of pickleball is wind sensitive and would like a wind blocking cloth. Mr. Weiss stated that the storage box is in place and needs cleaning, paint and lock codes to be handed out to coordinators of play.

Mr. Warren stated that he would like dedicated courts with fixed nets.

Mr. Weiss stated they would like an indoor venue through the winter.

Scott Johnson stated we could look into making a court at the Senior Center, when the lights were put in they were made to go up high on the ceiling.

Mr. Weiss asked who has priority pickleball players vs tennis players?

Mr. Weiss stated they would like key locks only, no code lock. Basketball courts can be lined to tennis courts.

Mrs. Buhl asked if anyone can just go to the courts and play pickleball or did they always have to reserve via the app?

Mr. Weiss replied that as long as no one was playing you can just walk on.

RESULT: CONTINUE

4. Any New Business proper to come before the Committee

X. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cobb moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. Gallagher

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

VOTE: 6-0 Approved and so declared

This was Approved and so declared.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Cobb

SECONDER: Charles Gallagher

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.