

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, March 18, 2024

1. Call to order

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met in person on March 18, 2024. The meeting was called to order by Brian Konz. Members present were: Julie Chapman, Ald. Jonathan Lampe, Brian Konz, Brad Clark, Kyle Krueger, Emily Lessner, and Jennifer Clayton. Also present were: Kristine Butteris, Jeff Doyle, Andrea Draeger, Ali Nicholson, Stephanie Juhl, Ian Pilak, and dozens of members of the public.

2. Review and approval of minutes:

Jennifer Clayton motioned to approve the February 19, 2024 Parks Recreation and Forestry minutes as written. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the March 11, 2024 Parks Recreation and Forestry minutes as written. Ald. Jonathan Lampe seconded. Motion carried.

Ald. Jonathan Lampe motioned to approve the February 20, 2024 Senior Center Advisory Board minutes as written. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

3. Review and approval of financial reports

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the final 2023 year-end financial reports, pending the finance audit. Brad Clark seconded. Motion carried.

4. Citizens to be heard

Betty Jimenez spoke on behalf of the TOPS organization summarizing the policy requirement to pay rental fees at the Senior & Community Center. They have met in the building for 12 years and have not paid rental fees, though have paid donations of what they can afford, usually amounting to \$50 twice per year. They do pay organizational fees and charge dues to members, which categorizes them as a class 4. They wish to be reclassified to a class 3 due to the health information provided and benefits to community citizens who participate.

5. Business

A. Review and potentially approve: fee reductions for TOPS room rental

Kristine summarized the current enforcement of the existing Senior & Community Center policies and fee structure. This requires the TOPS organization to pay a yearly \$200 security deposit and \$20/hr room rental fee. Becoming a class 3 instead of a class 4 would mean only paying a \$50 annual administrative fee. Discussion occurred regarding their fit to be a civic and public improvement group in order to be a class 3. Brad Clark motioned to reclassify TOPS as class 3 organization for 2024. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

B. Review and potentially approve: fee reductions for Thunder girls fastpitch field rentals

Steve Schroeder spoke on behalf of Thunder Girls Fastpitch and asked to waive the fees for their 2024 practices. They have never paid these rental fees before due to agreements with former directors due to Park & Rec teams being part of Windmill. Thunder will agree to pay for rental fees for games and tournaments, with a Condition of Facility Use Agreement, due to understanding the staff time, equipment, and materials needed to maintain the fields. Emily Lessner motioned to waive their practice rental fees for 2024. Ald. Jonathan Lampe seconded. Motion carried.



C. Review and potentially approve: fee reductions for Thursday night market farmers

Stephanie Juhl spoke on behalf of potential farmers who may participate in the 2024 Thursday night market series at the Town Square. It was proposed to reduce the Concession in Parks \$25/market fee to \$0 to encourage qualified farmers to participate and who may not be able to afford the regular fee. This would also help to grow the program and eventually generate revenue with requiring the fees in the future once the market is established. Ald. Jonathan Lampe motioned to approve waiving the Concession in Parks permit fees for qualified farmers for the 2024 Thursday night market series. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

D. Review and approve: draft park policies for tent and driving/parking permits

Kristine and Andrea reviewed and drafted policies, after conducting research, for tent and driving/parking rules to include information about when and why a permit is needed. They also updated the driving/parking permit to include information for large events. Brad Clark motioned to approve the tent and driving/parking policies and permits. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

E. Review and potentially approve: increasing the wage for Building Supervisor/Attendant

It was proposed to raise the wage for Building Supervisor/Attendant from \$12/hr to \$13/hr in order to encourage more applicants to apply. This position is increasingly needed as more evening and weekend programs and rentals are taking place along with increased security concerns. The remaining budget for this position can accommodate this increase this year. Julie Chapman motioned to approve increasing the wage for Building Supervisor/Attendant. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

F. Review and discuss: smoking in parks policy

Carol Quest was present to answer questions and continue the discussion regarding the proposed smoking in parks policy. Since the last meeting, the city attorney met with several alderpeople to review the ordinance. This is a difficult policy to enforce, though there are residents who are requesting designated smoking areas, particularly away from playgrounds. Alderperson Blanke was present to discuss issues he sees with the ordinance and express concern for the policy as it is currently written as it may be difficult to pass if it is unenforceable. Potential ideas to encircle playgrounds with no smoking signs, etc. were discussed as alternatives to creating designated smoking areas. Direction was given to staff to review playground and bleacher/field areas and draw no-smoking areas to bring to the April meeting.

G. Review and approve: park memorial bench for Bill Buchholtz and Colin Strebe

Kristine proposed a memorial bench on the dog walking path at Brandt Quirk park for Bill Buchholtz and Colin Strebe from the June 2023 plane crash. This bench will be different than our standard as a family member wishes to build it themselves out of wood. The department will not be liable for the bench or any maintenance. Julie Chapman motioned to approve the memorial bench. Ald. Jonathan Lampe seconded. Motion carried.

H. Review and potentially approve: bollards for Bentzin Family Town Square

Stephanie presented quotes for 10-12 bollards to be installed at the Town Square in order to safely close the road for events. The quotes do not include installation, which will significantly add to the cost. This item will also go before the Public Safety and Welfare Committee and then will be decided from where funds will be taken. Ald. Jonathan Lampe motioned to approve the concept of installing bollards at the Town Square and proceed to next steps. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.



6. Director's Report:

A. Project updates:

- i. **Parks Updates – Riverside Restrooms**
There will be a pre-construction meeting the first week in April and will break ground immediately after.
- ii. **Parks Updates – Aquatic Filtration System**
A quote was awarded last week with this committee's approval and work will begin this spring to install.
- iii. **Senior & Community Center Updates – Retaining Wall, Security, Old Entrance**
We are working with all evening and weekend groups for building security. Inside work is taking place with the old entrance renovation to create a small employee break area. The retaining wall is in severe disrepair though a bid has been returned and is within our budget; work will begin soon.

B. Update on programming:

- i. **Recreation programming**
The Recreation Programmer position has been posted and will end tomorrow. There are roughly 12 potential candidates to review. The Arborist position is also being interviewed this week. Youth soccer will begin in April. Summer recreation registration opened today, including day camp, kickball, adult softball, etc.
- ii. **Town Square Programming**
The summer concert series is set with a poster, and other events are being scheduled.
- iii. **Senior and enrichment programming**
The 2nd annual Senior Care Fair is happening on May 1. The senior center volunteer recognition program is happening May 21 with a new caterer. The ADRC is working with us for additional programming. We are working through our building updates and changes along with updating the policy document. Spring break activities will be happening next week.
- iv. **Aquatics programming**
Summer swim lesson options are viewable and will open for registration on April 8. A lifeguarding and water safety instructor class is happening over spring break. The indoor pool will be shut down for the month of April for annual maintenance; no programming will be available.

7. Adjournment – Next meeting date April 15, 2024

Brad Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.