



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Parks & Recreation Commission

*Susan Esty, Chairman
Jim Henderson, Vice Chair
Star A. Rueckert, Secretary*

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*Nancy Gatta
Jane Wisialowski
Robert LeMire
Beth Soden*

**OLD SAYBROOK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

Wednesday, February 14, 2024; 6:30 PM

This was a hybrid meeting

MINUTES

1. **Call Meeting to Order** – Chairwoman Susan Esty called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Present: Director Ray Allen; Chairwoman Susan Esty; Secretary Star A. Rueckert; Jane Wisialowski; Beth Soden; Jim Henderson; Robert LeMire and Asst. Director Jona Paradis.

Absent: Nancy Gatta

2. **Approval of January 2023 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the OSPR Meeting Minutes for January 10th, 2024 was made by Jane Wisialowski and seconded by Robert LeMire. Discussion: None. Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Recognition of Guests** – None

4. **Correspondence** - None

5. **Review of Bills** – The commission reviewed the OSPR Monthly bills as presented by Director Ray Allen for January 2024 (\$24, 369.26).

6. **Public Comment** – None

7. **New Business**

A. Main Street Phase 2 Update

Director Ray Allen presented the updated plans for Main Street Connections Park Phase 2 and confirmed the bid had been awarded and would begin on April 1, 2024. Allen reminded the commission that 500k had been received from a State funded grant to finance the majority of the project. The possibility of re-naming of the park brought up by Robert LeMire. Chairwoman Susan Esty stressed the importance of keeping the public informed of the timeline of Phase 2 and suggested a grand opening planned by the Parks & Recreation Department upon completion.

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B. Any other Business regarding Programs, Facilities or Personnel

Assistant Director Jona Paradis noted the Annual Snowman Building Contest set for February 24th, that the basketball programming coming to conclusion with a successful season and all after school programs running smoothly. Paradis stated that the new Assistant Program and Facilities Manager, Mira Siewart continues to be a successful addition to the staff. The after school and Friday Teen Night at the Rec back on the calendar with good participation. The Assistant Director Paradis added that he was working on the Spring and Summer Program booklet with a prediction of high participation and a shift in participation rules for pickle ball. The Assistant Director Paradis noted that the adult kickball league had begun and was running smoothly.

8. Old Business

A. All Parks Review Director Allen reported there was no change, outdoor parks are tidied for the winter and indoor facilities are all normal. Allen confirmed all parks to be ready for outdoor use by March 1st. Chairwoman Susan Etsy commented on Clark Community Park and the recent clearing and water levels referencing the resident beaver and questioned the removal of discs from the water. Rob Lemire confirmed he assisted with removal of over 100 discs with minimal disruption to the environment. Lemire commented on the need to keep the bridge area free from over growth with regular maintenance and that a map kiosk/bulletin board was in place. Jane Wisialowski brought up the removal of concrete tubes to make way for future projects. Rob Lemire suggested a Gaga Pit be installed. Director Allen stated he would look into costs.

B. Strategic Plan of Parks Discussion

Director Allen reported that he was awaiting designs from Geoff Jacobsen to begin the review cycle. Chairwoman Susan Etsy mentioned that the First Selectman, Carl Fortuna, was advocating for 100k of the town's surplus to be annually deposited into the Parks and Recreation Department's sinking fund. Director Allen confirmed the conversation and noted the significance of the additional funding for future projects, specifically the strategic plan.

C. The Preserve Update

Director Allen reported the discussion on the Hunting and Trapping rules for The Preserve continue. Chairwoman Etsy commented on the importance of gaining a clear understanding of how many people use the Preserve and the potential for the Parks and Recreation Commission to oversee more of the governing rules of use. Director Allen reported Eversource is exercising their right to clear around the power lines up to 150 feet, within the Preserve. Etsy mentioned she walked part of the area to be cleared with 7 employees from Eversource and they discussed the impact of the predicted clearing to the Preserve. Eversource confirming work to begin ASAP.

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D. Any other Business regarding Programs, Facilities or Personnel

At 7:40pm Chairwoman Susan Etsy made a motion for an Executive Session, motion seconded by Jane Wisialowski, motion passed unanimously.

At 8:02pm a motion to end the Executive Session made by Jane Wisialowski, seconded by Jim Henderson, motion passed unanimously.

9. Reports

A. Chairman's Report

Chairman Susan Esty reported that the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance meeting in January was a success and thanked Director Ray Allen for his comprehensive and detailed presentation.

B. Director's Report

Director Allen thanked commissioners for attending the January Board of Selectman and Board of Finance meeting and for supporting the P&R budget. Allen reported the ARPA project RFP not yet completed, waiting on information from Jacobson.

C. Liaison Reports

NONE

MOTION to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. made by Jane Wisialowski, seconded by Jim Henderson , unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Star A. Rueckert, Secretary

*** NEXT MEETING: March 13th , 2024 ***