

BETHEL PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING, AUGUST 26, 2009

the regular meeting of the commission was called to order at 7:33 PM by chairman, Meghan O'Connor. In attendance were Pat Morton, Gary Regan, Bill Pullan, Robin Renner, Steve Poole, Lou Valenti, Eileen Earle and Rachel McGrath. In addition the following interested persons were there: Mark Goodwin, Scott Murphy, Yvonne Grimes and Robert Fontaine.

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted on a motion by Pat Morton, seconded by Gary Regan unanimously approved by all members present.

Public Comments: Mr. Scott Murphy spoke concerning the possibility of using the seemingly abandoned skate board park for ROAR, an organization that races miniature power cars. Mr. Murphy as a racer, has visited the park, which would be handicapped accessible for their members, and would provide space for three tracks. They currently have 12 members in Bethel and promise 110% cooperation and all the work necessary to make the changes in the present location, (installing tracks). ROAR is a national organization with several publications nationally distributed (2 of which are published in Ridgefield). ROAR is a state and national organization which is available even to wheelchair bound people and has a real following. They provide all necessary work at the location; have full insurance for themselves and the town; would do all cleanup; provide porta-potty and abide by all regulations in place for the school complex. Races are usually Saturday and Sunday. The Commission requested that they study the proposal, check with the skate park individuals who have not been heard of since June, and get back to Mr. Murphy.

Mark Goodwin again brought up the problem of the fence at the soccer field for Varsity/JV soccer due to referee complains that the fence was too close. Ms. Earle has investigated changing the location, but the cost was prohibitive (\$20,000) since the change would involve changing the drainage at the location and also landscape work at the bottom of the change to absorb water runoff. There was no money to do that. Mr. Goodwin requests that a new request for bid be made in the business climate of today that perhaps would be more possible, with some of the landscape work done by interested parents, etc. Ms. Earle will check on this and report.

Since more discussion would result with Mr. Goodwin, and since Ms. Grimes had been waiting, on a motion by Gary Regan, Seconded by Robin Renner, unanimously approved, the agenda was moved Section VII to III.

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At the same time Mr. Goodwin checked on progress for additional fields including practice field. Ms. Earle has been working on this problem and circulated a plan that is being presented for an all sports field on the high school property at the end of the parking lot. The final presentation will be at the October P&Z meeting. Almost all of the work can be done by staff with some help from the Highway Dept. as soon as approval can be received. There's even a great pile of dirt that can be used that was left there from the high school construction job. More later.

Ms. Grimes, who is the boys and girls track coach at Bethel HS, there presented her very generous plan. The Grimes Family Foundation would like to gift to Bethel HS a new 8 lane track and all field facilities at the current location. The grant of \$500,000 would include an 8 lane track and allfield facilities except javelin which would be held across the road. the current track which is used by residents and the school is in very bad condition and is dangerous. Installing the 8 lanes will require changing entrances to the bleachers to the rear instead of the front and use of handicap access at the other end of the bleachers. Ms. Grimes circulated preliminary architect drawings indicating the various venue locations and showing the change in stair wells. Lights will have to be changed but the football field will remain as is. Mr. Fontaine when called upon for costs of making repairs and resurfacing the current track indicated that it would probably cost \$150,000. Ms. Grimes will proceed with presentation of the plan to Board of Education, Selectment and P&Z assisted by Ms. Earle if Commission approved. With sincere thanks for this generous and exciting gift, the Commission promised Ms. Grimes' early action.

On a motion by Pat Morton, Seconded by Robin Renner, unanimously approved the meeting returned to the agenda

Accounts Payable, Payroll and Income were studied and on a motion by Gary Regan, Seconded by Steve Poole, the reports were accepted.

One letter has been received requesting use of field for baseball 16,17.and 18 year olds on two dates 9/19 and 10/3. All agreed.

The following programs have been completed: Sports Camps (very well) Tennis lessons; baseball; softball; Lacrosse; Soccer; Road Race (wonderful); Swim team: and all summer camps went very well.

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When planning the winter programs, Ms. McGrath was called by Danbury Ice Arena concerning their learners program and the percs that would be offered to us. Ms. McGrath feels the program might be successful and is going to add it to our list of offerings. She has also been sought out by local stables regarding lessons, but will wait and see until spring.

The wonderful plan for the new tract was discussed and received the wholehearted support of the commission. On a motion by Robin Renner, seconded by Lou Valenti the work was approved and the ongoing support of the commission and the department was promised. The voting was unanimous.

Ms. Earle reported that the kitchen at the Bennett property was progressing and with new stainless appliances, it's also beautiful. When she checked in, she noted installation of heating and airconditioning, and she has notified Mr. Palmer and other interested parties that the facility is open from April 1 to October 30, and cannot be used during the winter months. Heat, plowing and other winter necessities preclude this.

Ms. Earle reported that a band competition is planned for 9/12 and there will be more wear and tear on the field. More bands this year. She'll Watch carefully.

The Skateboard people will be sought again, and Ms. Murphy will be notified accordingly. If they are not going to use the park, the plan outlined by Mr. Murphy would be good use for the location and provide for Bethel residents.

There being no further business, on a Motion by Gary Regan, seconded by Steve Poole, unanimously approved by all members present, the meeting adjourned, with a reminder for the next regularly scheduled meeting on 9/30/09 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

PegNewell
Recording Secretary