

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2024
Elmwood Community Center, Room 24**

Meeting called to order by Anna Park, Chair at 5:38 PM.

1. Roll Call:

In Attendance: Shawn Daly, Nancy Gierlich, Lisa Karam, Anna Park.

Absent: Steve Garneau, Narayan Paudel.

Staff in Attendance: Helen Rubino-Turco.

There are three open board positions to fill.

2. Adoption of July 22, 2024 Minutes – passed (Shawn Daly abstained).

3. Old Business:

- Capital Improvements Update
 - Eisenhower Pool—An abatement issue has been identified in the seams and paint of the pool. It is anticipated that renovation of the pool will be delayed until Fall of 2025 with attendant increased cost. The pool house is completed.
 - Wolcott Park—The restroom project is well underway and should be completed by December.
 - Rockledge Driving Range—The project is delayed because the soil is fill and unstable. It is expected that the Town will have piers installed to stabilize the soil, and that portion of the project will be out to bid next week.
 - New Community Center— This project is in the schematic design phase. Working with the topography at the site, GWWO is proposing a walkout basement with a gym and two floors above.
- Fall/Winter Programs Update
 - Advisory board members were encouraged to join Constant Contact for updates on activities at Cornerstone, Veterans Rink, and the Senior Centers. The Fire Department is utilizing Elmwood for training, and a very successful Halloween party was held there.

4. New Business:

- Food Scrap Collection— Curbside or satellite programs are being considered for the Town, both of which would result in substantial cost savings for garbage disposal costs. Curbside is more expensive (estimate \$440,000/year); the satellite program would involve 12 dropoff sites in parks and other sites throughout town (estimated cost \$124,000 for first year and \$62,000 thereafter). John Phillips, the Director of Public Works, will be invited to update the board at a future meeting. A test program in the Morley neighborhood was successful.
- Tree Canopy Study—A meeting with PlanIt Geo is set for November 1. One goal is to compare the current tree canopy versus the 2010 canopy. Existing trees on the ground will be inventoried by type, age and condition. As trees reduce heat and help prevent soil erosion, it is critical that the right trees are growing in the right place. The Tree Action Group is participating in this project. Community participation is sought as well. Some trees along the Trout Brook Trail were removed by the Town as part of the storm water management obligation. At least sixty new trees have been planted in town in the last year.

- Proposed Fee Increase for Golf Clubs—It is anticipated the Town will increase fees slightly for the 2025 golfing season at both facilities. Competitor pricing and increased wage costs will be considered.
- Community Development Block Grant— Community input is sought for the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, which involves review of facility improvements in, or services for, low- and moderate-income (LMI) neighborhoods and for ADA improvements. This could include ramps, curb cuts, and accessible docks in the public parks and trails. Funds are not available for playgrounds, unless they are located in an LMI neighborhood.
- Park Rules—A draft ordinance was reviewed which would impact parks and trails. Friendlier signage with icons and words will be developed for the parks and trails. The board questioned if the Town would consider anti-smoking and vaping restrictions for the parks and trails. Guidance will be sought from the Town Manager.
- Upcoming/Underway Capital Improvement Projects—Post-tension concrete is being installed at the Eisenhower basketball courts. The Sedgwick baseball field is also being redone. New irrigation heads will be installed at the Beachland soccer field. A new sidewalk has been installed at Glover Field to improve access from parking lots to the main entrance. Parking has been a major safety issue when people park illegally in the drop off zone. Dugouts and fencing will be installed at softball fields at Norfeldt and Sterling fields.

5. Friends of West Hartford Parks Report

- Lisa Karam reported a very successful Walk in the Park along the Trout Brook Trail (Elmwood to Park) was held October 26. Michael Walsh from CT Insider wishes to do a story about the Trail. A movie night at Beachland was held on September 6 and drew over 100 attendees. Hopefully a sponsor can be identified to support a movie night next summer to offset the roughly \$1000 cost.

6. Public Comment—none.

Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 2, 2024; location ECC Room 24. This will be a Special Meeting in lieu of the November 18, 2024 meeting.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Gierlich.