

Kent Park and Recreation Commission
Minutes, Monthly Meeting
May 18, 2015

Present: Dave Dunleavy, Mike Green, Lynn Harrington, Glen Nielsen, Lesly Ferris, director

Public and Invited Guests: James Gillespie

Chairman Dave Dunleavy called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Elevation of Alternates: No alternates were present.

Agenda: Mrs. Harrington made a motion to accept the agenda. Mr. Nielsen seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Acceptance of Minutes: Mr. Nielsen made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2015 monthly meeting and the May 7, 2015 special meeting. Mrs. Harrington seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Public and Invited Guests: Forrester Jim Gillespie provided the commission a written report on the Emery Park trail (attached) and some recommendations for trail maintenance, a possible timber harvest and signage. Mr. Gillespie discussed the pros and cons of application of round-up to address the invasive species along the trail. The commission asked Mr. Gillespie to provide prices on the various options. Mrs. Ferris will check with the land use officer about needing a permit to do maintenance work on the vista at the top of the trail, which Mr. Gillespie notes is located within the new "Horizon Line Protection Zone." Mr. Dunleavy suggested commission members walk the trail to see what Mr. Gillespie is discussing.

Director's Report: In addition to the written report sent to the commission prior to the meeting (attached), Mrs. Ferris noted Camp Kent registration opens May 20, 7-8 p.m. in the office. Mrs. Ferris has scheduled free Tai Chi and Pilobolus programs for Kent seniors. The seniors last week attended a Senior Supper at New Milford Hospital after a break during the winter.

Old Business: After-School Program: Mrs. Ferris said the program will conclude June 18 for the current school year. She has posted the director job opening on the Town and Park and Recreation websites. The program is doing well.

Parks: Mrs. Ferris reported the tennis courts are open, and nets are up. She has received several reports of people letting their dogs run inside the courts. She reported on some vandalism at Emery Park, which resulted in some repair work on the door locks to the building. Mr. Green made a motion to approve an invoice in the amount of \$241 to Wenzel Contracting and Building for repairs to the Emery Park building and new split rail fencing. Mr. Nielsen seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Mrs. Ferris also noted the pool cleaning work at Emery Park has begun.

2014-15 Budget: There was no report.

2015-16 Budget: Mrs. Ferris noted the proposed spending plan was approved May 15, 2015. She confirmed Park and Recreation voluntarily reduced its budget by \$1,000.

Five-Year Capital Plan: There was no report.


Summer Employees: Mrs. Ferris reported the head lifeguard, camp director and she participated May 7, 2015 in interviews of applicants for one camp counselor position and a part-time lifeguard position. They interviewed six candidates. Mrs. Ferris shared their recommendations for hire. Mr. Green made a motion to approve the hiring of Laura Craft as Emery Park lifeguard, 28-30 hours week and/or as mutually scheduled with the Park and Recreation director, contingent upon successful completion of lifeguard certification course, effective June 24, 2015 at an hourly salary of \$10.75; and Madeleine Sheldon as camp counselor, effective June 29-Aug. 21, 2015, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at an hourly salary of \$10.25 and increase Megan Leach's hourly salary as camp counselor to \$10.75. Mrs. Harrington seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Summer Concerts: Mrs. Ferris reported she attended the May 5, 2015 Board of Selectmen's meeting and presented the proposal to use the Town Hall front lawn for three summer concerts. The dates proposed conflict with meetings in the building. The commission agreed to work to confirm July 23, 30 and Aug. 6 for these concerts. Mr. Dunleavy said he has a 10x10 tent that could be used. Mrs. Ferris would order a port-o-let. Mr. Dunleavy and/or Mr. Nielsen will confirm funding with the Kent Chamber of Commerce (up to \$500 per band). Mr. Dunleavy noted the commission should come up with a name for the concert series.

Fishing Derby: Mrs. Harrington looked into partnering with a Kent Center School PTO function but recommended the commission hold its own activity. Mrs. Ferris will contact David Schreiber at Club Getaway to find out if dates still are available to host a derby. The commission consensus is either a weekend or weeknight event, and food might be a possibility.

New Business: Director PTO: Mrs. Ferris requested four PTO days in June. A motion by Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve PTO days on June 23-26, 2015 for the Park and Recreation director. Mr. Green seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The next Park and Recreation Commission meeting is June 15, 2015 at 7 p.m. Mrs. Harrington made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m.


Lesly Ferris
Director

Minutes are not considered final until approved. Refer to the minutes from ensuing meeting for any changes and/or corrections.

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
KENT TOWN CLERK

2015 MAY 22 A 11:01

BY  TOWN CLERK

Lesly Ferris, Director
Kent Park and Recreation

*Director's Report
May 2015*

From the April monthly meeting:

- I sent a letter to Dawn Moore to let her know the Commission had received her resignation letter and had voted to accept it.
- The Emery Park pool is drained and Harwinton Swim Pool Company will be at the park this month to clean the pool. The electrical service also has been turned on.
- I have mailed contracts for After-School Program employment to Kiera Bisenius, who started her director duties May 1, and Brittany Pinette.
- I have placed the information regarding the regional Paintball summer league on the Park and Recreation website.

From the director:

After-School Program: I have sent out the bills for April and have let families know the program will end Thursday, June 18 for this school year. Kent Center School graduation is June 19. Many of the youngsters and parents know Kiera and this has been helpful in the transition. You can see from the monthly attendance sheet that participation in the program is up slightly from last year for the third consecutive month.

Seniors: The May/June senior newsletter went out April 30. We have begun using email to circulate the newsletter to those who are willing to receive the document electronically. The monthly senior suppers at New Milford Hospital resume next week for Kent seniors. The senior outing this month is to IKEA in New Haven. I have been working with area visiting nurse organizations. There will be free Tai Chi and Pilobolus classes at the senior center, both of which start later this month.

Budget: There were few comments or questions at the May 1 budget hearing. The budget now goes to vote May 15 at 7 p.m.

Parks: The electrical service is on at Emery Park. The Emery Park swimming area is drained and I have notified Harwinton Swim Pool Company that we are ready for them to clean the pool interior. Someone broke two latches and a window latch at the building at Emery Park. I notified the resident state trooper. Nothing is missing from inside the building and I had the latches replaced and the window has been screwed shut. Sean McAvoy has been to both parks to cut back the tall grasses and weed the beds around the swimming area.

Fee Programs: A new 10-week session of Tang Soo Do classes begin May 18. Dog obedience class will run for eight weeks starting May 27.

Baseball: Programs are meeting weekly and the Minor Little League and Farm teams are playing games on Saturday mornings. The fields look very good.

Regional Recreation directors: The rec directors met May 5. We finalized details of the June 5 regional senior luncheon that will be held at The Grove in Salisbury. We met the new recreation director for Cornwall and welcomed her to our group. The directors of the region's summer camps are working on some joint programs for this summer, including a science program weekly in cooperation with the high school's science center. Transportation to and from the program are issues and there may be grant money to cover transportation back to Kent. Hopefully this is something we can continue to work on for future years so that our campers could participate if they are interested. The rec directors also discussed fall soccer and our meeting schedule for the summer.

Summer Employees: Camp director Kevin Kalach, head lifeguard Kiera Bisenius and I participated in interviews May 7 of applicants for the lifeguard and camp counselor position. I will have our collective recommendation for hires at the meeting.

Summer Programs: I have put registration flyers and forms on the Park and Recreation website for summer programs and have printed copies available outside the office. Camp Kent registration opens May 20, 7-8 p.m. in the office.

Summer Concert Series: I brought the commission's proposal to use the front lawn at Kent Town Hall on the proposed dates this summer to the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen endorsed the idea, however, two of the three dates proposed conflict with meetings in the building. I propose we change the dates to three consecutive Thursdays, July 23, 30 and Aug. 6. Jerry was able to confirm that Bruce Carlson's band is available one of those nights.

Looking ahead ...

- I will be requesting PTO days in June. This is on the meeting agenda.
- Town Hall offices will be closed May 25.

FORESTLAND CONSULTANTS, LLC
P.O. Box 791
SHARON, CT 06069
PHONE/FAX: (860) 364-5557

May 18, 2015

Lesly Ferris, Director
Parks and Recreation Department
Town of Kent

Dear Ms. Ferris,

I have looked at the forest and trails of Emery Park and have the following to report.

The summit trail is in fair shape. There has been some tree blowdowns over time that have been cleared. The three view areas at the summit have grown over the last 13 years or so with black birch saplings which have obscured the view for hikers. The beginning of the trail is indistinct and the kiosk is lacking information, brochures and a map.

The area of the forest that had the timber harvest in Winter 2001/2002 has grown up with saplings and pole size hardwood trees (4 – 11 inch diameter at 4.5 ft. from ground level). The large sawtimber trees that had been left are still in good health and are getting larger each year. Unfortunately, the soil and conditions that are so good for native trees are also good sites for non-native plants and trees. These invasives include barberry, multi flora rose, bittersweet, tree of heaven (ailanthus sp.), winged euonomous (flame bush) and glossy buckthorn. These species have colonized some areas along with the native younger trees.

The upper forest which is primarily hemlock with associated hardwoods is very mature and the hemlock has been breaking off and falling down in numerous areas. This area did not have a harvest because of the difficult access.

I recommend the trail be remarked and clearly indicated through sineage beginning at the parking lot. The kiosk should have an overall map of the park and trails and brochures available for hikers. The summit views should have the young growth cleared to allow the pastoral views for hikers. The vistas may be in the "Horizon Line Protection Zone" of the Town of Kent regulations so a permit would have to be applied for.

Next on the priority list should be control of invasive plants in the vicinity of the trail and forest areas most heavily infested, especially the bittersweet vines and tree of heaven. Control would be a combination of mechanical and chemical methods.

The lower and mid forest where the timber was harvested has magnificent examples of large trees and should be left as an example of old growth forest until such time the trees reach over maturity. The upper forest should be explored for a timber harvest by access through an neighboring property owner, provided this permission could be obtained.

Page 2
Kent Parks and Recreation

I can provide a monetary estimate of the above recommendations (both expense and income) depending in what direction the Parks and Recreation Commission want to go.

Sincerely,

James E. Gillespie
Certified Forester CT #93
james2495@sbcglobal.net