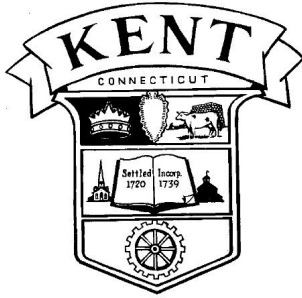


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By Darlene Brady at 8:13 am, Jan 05, 2024



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KENT PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting via zoom

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Present: Commission members - Michael Perkins, Naomi Joseph, John Grant, Lynn Worthington. Abigail Smith Hanby and Kate Symonds joined later, as did alternate Rufus de Rham. Director Jared Kuczenski also attending. Members of the public: Lynn Flynn

1. Call to Order

Chairman Michael Perkins called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Elevation of Alternates

No alternates present.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Perkins asked to amend the agenda to include 10b After School Program, 10c Youth Basketball, 10d Open Skate and Learn to Skate, and number 13 Fiscal Year 25 Budget Worksheet, and Ms. Worthington asked to add number 14 the Capital Plan and number 15 election of Park and Rec members at Annual Town Meeting in January. Ms. Worthington moved to amend the agenda as stated. Ms. Joseph seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Nov. 15, 2023 Special Meeting

Nov. 17, 2023 Special Meeting

Nov. 20, 2023 Regular Meeting

Dec. 4, 2023 Special Meeting

Chairman Perkins said that he recommended waiting until a later meeting to approve because he had just completed and distributed the draft minutes that same afternoon. He asked Jared Kuczenski if he could finish up the Nov. 8, 2023 minutes and Mr. Kuczenski said he'd get the minutes to him later that same night.

5. Finance Report(s)

Chairman Perkins uploaded the Year to Date financial reports into the folder on Friday and asked if anyone had questions. Ms. Worthington asked if Park & Rec Enrichment was the After School Program and was told it was. Mr. Grant asked what the final cost was for the playground. Mr. Kuczenski said it was \$100,000. He also explained the final piece had arrived, which is a picnic table that was backordered.

6. Correspondence

Chairman Perkins received some emails about basketball and P&R Operations and that would be covered later in the meeting. There was an application submitted to the Park and Rec email for the director position but it was determined to be a duplicate and already received.

7. Public Comment

None

8. Alternate Candidate Karen Iannucci

There is an open alternate position and Karen Iannucci sent an email to apply for it. Chairman Perkins asked if anyone knew her and Ms. Worthington said she did and that Ms. Iannucci was someone who likes to get involved. Chairman Perkins made a motion to accept Karen Iannucci for the open alternate position that expires January 2024. It was seconded by Ms. Worthington and approved unanimously.

9. Day-to-Day P&R Operations Management

First Selectman Marty Lindenmayer reached out to Chairman Perkins to see how Mr. Kuczenski would be handling his part-time work in this next month and to see how the commission plans to man the office. He explained that what Park and Rec has gotten from Mr. Kuczenski has been a bonus because he could have just taken his vacation days, but he's been working part-time and taking some vacation days. That's been a big help. He's been doing a lot but hasn't been physically at Town Hall. There was a concern raised that packages had piled up.

A discussion ensued about what the duties would be and how they could be covered. Ms. Smith Hanby asked what was the value of having someone in the office and what would be achieved because that was not done in the past when there was a gap without a director.

Chairman Perkins said that Mr. Lindenmayer is investigating other storage spaces for Park and Rec. He noted in the past when Park and Rec had to move its storage space from the closet in the Community House all of it was moved to the Town Hall office. He further explained that the specific ask was to have someone to collect mail, tidy packages and check in weekly.

Commission members also discussed having an interim director or hire a program aide to give some help. Mr. Kuczenski said it is possible in evenings and helping out with the programs would be easier to employ an aide, because half of the students are high schoolers and the others live far away and it might not be worth their while.

The discussion continued about how the phone calls could be addressed, as well as emails. Ms. Smith Hanby asked if there was a document put together with the programs and contacts but Mr. Kuczenski said that has not been done. She suggested going through the calendar for the next six months and go through all the details on each program and note who are the contacts on each. Ms. Symonds agreed that a document was needed with that information. Mr. Kuczenski said he has the info but it needs to be aggregated.

There was also a discussion of volunteers and Lynn Flynn offered to help with Bingo. The commission also discussed what programs commissioners needed to be present for. Ms. Smith Hanby said that for youth basketball previously when we were in between directors Principal Michelle Mott preferred that a commissioner be present to monitor the door on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday evenings. Mr. Perkins is not available to assist, nor is Naomi Joseph and Ms. Smith is not available on Mondays, but would be on Tuesdays and Thursdays when her children are participating. Mr. de Rham is also available. Ms. Smith Hanby agreed to ask Mrs. Mott if a volunteer could be enlisted instead of a commissioner and will tell her these types of volunteers would go through a background check by the town.

Mr. Kuczenski clarified that he could work a few hours, 5-10 hours, remotely each week after his official last day. He said he doesn't want to see things fall apart.

Ms. Smith Hanby made a motion to hire the current director, Jared Kuczenski, at a prorated hourly rate of his salary for an estimate of 8 hours per week for ongoing coordination and running of the Park and Rec department remotely until we have a new director. Seconded by Ms. Worthington. Discussion ensued. Motion passed unanimously. Chairman Perkins thanked Mr. Kuczenski saying that it puts commission members at ease and expressed appreciation to him. He also said he'd communicate the motion to Mr. Lindenmayer and ask for it to be placed on the Dec. 27 agenda.

There was discussion of the logistics of ordering supplies for the different programs. Mr. de Rham suggested that a lot of bingo prizes could be donated, because this is what is done in New Milford. It seems to work well.

10. Programs & Events

a. Movement Class

Lara Barrett suggested offering an introduction beginner movement class in connection with Kent School's dance studio that is off Main Street. She indicated teachers at Kent School might be interested in conducting the class for young children. There was discussion about how to not compete with Starr's Studio of Dance. Commission members had a positive reaction, a few questions about the cost of using Kent School's facility, however there was agreement not to start a new program until the new director is hired.

b. After School Program

Rebecca Thompson has been working at the After School Program and Jared has recommended that she be hired as the official director. Chairman Perkins and Mr. Kuczenski met with her. She works at Kent Center School for Region 1, she does Pre-K and Special Ed. She's implemented a newsletter for the parents and she's put together a calendar. She's been doing new activities based on feedback from the children. Mr. Kuczenski complimented Ms. Thompson for her work, calling her capable and qualified, and raising the level of the ASP program. He also said she's expressed a mild interest in perhaps running Camp Kent for the summer. Mr. Perkins made a motion to promote Rebecca Thompson to After School Program Director at a rate of \$21 per hour. Seconded by Ms. Joseph and unanimously approved. He said he would email that to the Board of Selectmen.

c. Youth Basketball

There was a discussion about the potential coaches for the Youth Basketball program. Chairman Perkins asked a few questions. There are four different age groups (Pre-K clinic, K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, and 4th-6th grade clinic). No one has stepped up to lead the older grades, and the numbers are low, so Mr. Kuczenski indicated that one might not be able to run this year. No coach for Pre-K clinic

either. Ms. Smith Hanby said that in the past the registrations and coaches come together at the same time. Time slots: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30 and 6:30 pm but it depends on the number of registrations received.

d. Open Skate and Learn to Skate

There was a discussion of restarting the program to include both open skating and sticks and pucks.. Ms. Worthington said that she'd reach out to South Kent School's rink manager to see if the school would be interested in continuing the long tradition of giving ice time to the community on Sunday afternoons. It could be a \$5 donation requested. There would need to be a recreation aide present to represent Park and Rec. Ms. Smith Hanby offered to write to the Head of School as well.

11. Parks & Facilities

Mr. Grant said that he took Mr. de Rham on a tour of the parks and he'd like to add Mr. de Rham to the Playing Fields Subcommittee to represent the Park and Rec Commission. Ms. Worthington made a motion to add Mr. de Rham to the Playing Fields Subcommittee, seconded by Ms. Joseph, unanimously approved. Mr. de Rham and Mr. Grant plan to come up with a plan to upgrade the fields that would also include figure out the backstop replacement and the scoreboard.

Mr. Grant said there was a lady at Kent Commons with her dogs on the tennis courts, which is not allowed and he asked the commission if it could be locked up for the winter. Ms. Smith Hanby and Ms. Joseph did not agree with locking the courts because it is a space that can be used. There was a suggestion of putting up a sign that dogs are not allowed. It is not good for the tennis courts' surface.

There was also discussion of the water runoff from Route 341 going into Emery Park.

12. Hiring Subcommittee Update

Mr Perkins said the committee held its first meeting Dec. 13 and the committee is composed of Lynn Worthington, who is the chair, himself, Rufus de Rham, Miranda Lovato and Bethany Keck. Resumes are coming in and the job description is posted in several places.

13. Fiscal Year 25 Budget Worksheet

Barbara is asking for our budgets in early January so Mr. Perkins asked members to look at the shared folder.

14. Capital Plan

The selectmen moved a bunch of things out of the fifth year, FY 2029. Moved to the FY 2030 was \$60,000 for Emery Park; \$100,000 for the basketball court; and \$35,000 for the vehicle. She noted there was not a vote taken. If there is objection to this withdrawal of the funds, the commission should feel free to come to the Dec. 27 selectmen's meeting and talk about it. There is also an opportunity to talk at the January 18 Annual Town Meeting.

15. Election of Park and Rec members at Annual Town Meeting in January

To be elected at the Annual Town Meeting are Abigail Smith Hanby, 3-year term ending 1/21/27; Naomi Joseph 3-year term ending 1/21/27 and Alternates Rufus de Rham and Karen Iannucci are one-year terms.

16. Adjournment

Mr. Perkins moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Worthington

Date: 01/04/2024

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