

Kent Park and Recreation  
Minutes Jan. 25, 2021 Meeting

Present: Blythe Everett, John Grant, Lynn Harrington, Diane Impastato, Julia Neff, Michael Perkins, Abigail Smith Hanby, Kate Symonds, director Lesly Ferris

Public & Invited Guests: None

Lynn Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Alternates: Mrs. Everett made a motion to elevate alternates Diane Impastato and Julia Neff. Mr. Grant seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Election of Chairman: Mrs. Ferris called for nominations for commission chairman. Mr. Grant made a motion to nominate Lynn Harrington as commission chairman for 2021. Mrs. Everett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Acceptance of Agenda: Ms. Ferris asked to add item 10b. Playing Field Subcommittee vacancy. Mr. Perkins made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Grant seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Acceptance of Minutes of Dec. 21, 2020 monthly meeting: Mr. Grant made a motion to approve the minutes of the Dec. 21, 2020 meeting. Mrs. Everett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence: None.

Public and Invited Guests: There were no public or invited guests present.

Director's Report: In addition to the written report sent to the commission prior to the meeting (attached), Ms. Ferris shared that Ms. Neff has asked if Park and Recreation would consider offering ski lesson packages at Mohawk Mountain next winter. Ms. Ferris said she has made a note on her calendar to put this topic on the August meeting agenda.

Old Business: After-School Program: age eligibility: Ms. Ferris shared the monthly attendance report and a report on revenue and expenditures through Dec. 31, 2020 (attached). Currently the program expenditures exceed the revenue by about \$2,800. Ms. Ferris added there have been other years where this happened. The most recent maximum gap was some \$7,000. Ms. Ferris also shared with the commission that she would be responsible for making the decision to close the program in the event of inclement weather following a full day of school. Ms. Ferris reported a parent of a child currently enrolled in the program verbally asked if the ASP would be available to a pre-K student. Commissioners discussed whether or not to open the After-School Program to pre-K and/or all KCS students. Some considerations would be staffing needs, activities, gauging interest, potential for additional revenue. Ms. Ferris will gather specific information about the Pre-K program and put this item on the February meeting agenda.

Parks: projects, seasonal worker: Mr. Grant reported the town highway department has lined the causeway into Kent Common Park in preparation for replacement of the culvert. Ms. Ferris said

she spoke with Connie Manes, Kent Land Trust, about sharing a seasonal worker. Ms. Ferris is working on the application to remove the beaver lodge. The application process is detailed.

Parks' Master Plan: Ms. Ferris said that she spoke with the town treasurer about establishing a "Friends" group account whereby the commission could accept funds for specific projects. Park and Rec could establish an activity account for this purpose as long as a specific project(s) is designated. Contributions would be tax-exempt and donor cards should be sent out as soon as funds are received. Ms. Ferris will ask the treasurer for specific language that should be used in a motion to create such an account. Mr. Grant will share information about STEAP grant.

Five-Year Capital Plan: Ms. Ferris said she has asked the treasurer to confirm if Park and Recreation has funds in the capital plan for the Emery Park pool floor and if these funds are specific in use. Ms. Ferris shared also the questions and responses from the 2006 survey about swimming in Kent. Ms. Smith Hanby suggested it would be good to resubmit the survey with more specific questions, including a demographic question. Mr. Grant reiterated that he feels the commission should look at a timber harvest at Emery Park which could make additional trail(s) that would be easier to climb. Mrs. Everett said Marvelwood School probably could help make signage for the park. Ms. Ferris suggested the commissioners continue to think about projects that could be put in the plan next budget season.

Sports Programs: Ms. Ferris said the regional rec directors plan to meet in mid-February to discuss what baseball season might look like. Ms. Ferris confirmed that typically Park and Recreation uses the KCS gym for basketball programs, but the school building isn't open for such use this year due to COVID.

2020-21 Budget Monthly Report: Mrs. Ferris said Park and Recreation did not receive a monthly budget report.

2021-22 Budget Proposal: Ms. Ferris provided the commission with a budget draft prior to the meeting (attached). She also explained in writing the two components of the budget (revenue and operating). The commission consensus is that there are a lot of unknowns about the coming year. Mrs. Harrington recommended keeping the budget flat except for wages. There was discussion about compensation for the director. Ms. Smith Hanby said from her perspective any increase in compensation is always a range and based on performance. Mrs. Harrington said in her experience on the commission it is an average that's given across the board except on special occasions. Ms. Ferris said the Town does not give performance-based increases. The commission discussed adding funding for a seasonal maintenance worker. The commission voiced consensus that volunteers used to do a lot more projects in the parks. Mr. Grant noted he solicited help from the private schools in 2016 which isn't available now. Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the 2021-22 budget numbers of the 2020-21 budget with an increase to the hourly employee line to include \$7,000 for a seasonal maintenance worker at \$19/hour and a 3% increase for the director salary. Mrs. Everett, Mr. Grant, Mrs. Harrington, Ms. Impastato, Ms. Neff, Mr. Perkins, Ms. Symonds voted yes; Ms. Smith Hanby voted no. The motion carried 7-1.

Easter Egg Hunt: Ms. Ferris noted last year's egg hunt was a drive-thru where families could pick-up bagged egg hunt goodies. She asked the commission how they envision this year's event.

Ms. Impastato suggested painting rocks to look like Easter Eggs and leave them around town and use as a scavenger hunt. Mrs. Harrington said the event could be two different things and could help the businesses in Town. Mrs. Everett said Park and Rec could have an event to paint the rocks, then hide them around Town businesses and have a scavenger hunt for people to find them. The commission consensus is to form a subcommittee. Ms. Smith Hanby said she would not be available to help as her baby is due the week after Easter. The commission expressed its congratulations. Mr. Grant made a motion to create a subcommittee comprised of Ms. Ferris, Mrs. Harrington, Ms. Impastato, Ms. Neff and Ms. Symonds to formulate and execute an Easter activity and bring back a report to the board next month. Ms. Symonds seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Ms. Ferris will send out an email to the subcommittee to schedule a meeting the first week in February.

2021 Concert Series: Ms. Ferris has emailed last year's bands who were excited to hear from Park and Recreation and would be interested in returning this year. The director said she also has spoken with Ms. Manes about working with the Kent Land Trust again this year on the concert series. Ms. Smith Hanby asked if the director could send the commission a list of questions that need to be considered before the next meeting.

New Business: Plan of Conservation and Development: Ms. Ferris shared with the commission prior to the meeting the email from the Land Use Officer about the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Ms. Ferris said she would email the commission the pages in the plan that relate specifically to Park and Recreation.

Playing Field Subcommittee Vacancy: Ms. Ferris reiterated that she emailed KCS families about the opening on the subcommittee. She hasn't had any replies from that email. She did receive an email from Miranda Lovato who expressed interest in serving on the subcommittee (attached). Mr. Grant made a motion to accept Ms. Lovato's application to serve on the playing field subcommittee. Ms. Symonds seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The next Kent Park and Recreation Commission meeting is Feb. 22, 2021 at 7 p.m. Mrs. Harrington made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 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.*

**Park and Recreation Director's Report**  
February 2021

*From the January 2021 meeting:*

- I sent Miranda Lovato a letter to inform her that the commission has appointed her to serve on the Playing Field Subcommittee.
- I made the revisions to the FY2021-22 budget draft and forwarded it to the town treasurer.
- I emailed the commission a list of questions that need to be considered about the summer concert series. This is on the agenda.
- I spoke with Kent Center School Principal Michelle Mott regarding allowing pre-K youngsters to attend the After-School Program. This program meets as a split session (morning class and afternoon class), There currently are five in one class and seven students in the other. Mrs. Mott has concerns about opening the program to pre-schoolers.

*From the director:*

**After-School Program:** I am attaching correspondence from Susan Vizzari, who has resigned her position at the program. Meanwhile, I have been working at the program with Lauren and Elle. The attendance numbers fluctuate between 4 and 7. We did, however, receive two new registrations (a brother and sister) who are registered to attend at least two days a week. The program youngsters made Valentines for Vets which I mailed to Newington VA Voluntary Services. We also celebrated the Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day with craft projects and treat bags to take home. The program this week meets only Thursday and Friday due to scheduled holiday and early dismissal for professional development day. I am attaching the monthly report.

**Budgets:** I do not have anything new to report.

**Five-Year Capital Plan:** Park and Recreation does have \$150,000 in Five-Year Capital Plan for repairs to the Emery Park pool floor plus the \$975.05 remaining in the tennis court project. This money could be reallocated for other capital projects and first would have to be approved by the Board of Finance and Town Meeting. Reminder please to let me know if you have suggestions for projects to include in the capital plan so we would be ready for the next budget season. Also, remember that projects take at least five years to be fully funded after the initial request.

**Parks:** I will draft a job description for the seasonal worker person that Park and Recreation requested in its budget draft. Some things to keep in mind: who is overseeing this worker; how are we prioritizing the work; the person cannot work more than 25/hours in a week; otherwise, the position would be considered full-time and would require health benefits. I did not specify in the budget draft the number of hours; just the hourly rate and \$7,000 total request. Also, where are we getting equipment from?

**Playing Field Subcommittee:** I emailed the subcommittee with the proposed rates for 2021-22 from New England Turf Management and Premier Turf. Both rates are the same as the current budget (minus the clay for the infields). I submitted a budget request of \$8,750 with a consensus from the subcommittee. The commission should vote on this for the record.

**Fee Programs:** We still are in a holding pattern until an indoor space opens or spring weather arrives.

**Easter Event:** the subcommittee has met three times to discuss ideas, narrow the list down to one idea and, at the same time, work out what the logistics would look like. The subcommittee will have a report at the meeting. I am attaching an overview of the subcommittee's work. Most importantly, the event needs a name so please be thinking about this.

**Regional Recreation Directors:** We continue to stay in contact through Zoom meetings, email and phone calls. We have a second meeting scheduled this week to discuss the regional Major League Baseball team that we first fielded last year. We did not make any decision about rec baseball programs yet.

**Summer Camps:** I do not have anything new to report. I continue to read the latest COVID-19 updates and the information that CRPA distributes.

I would like to include Johnny "the Mayor" Lindsay, 2-16-56 – 2-9-21, in my report. He was an advocate for the parks and a consistent source of help, especially when the seasons changed and equipment needed to be moved. I shall miss working with him and thank him for his support and care.

**Looking ahead ...**

- April 2<sup>nd</sup> is a holiday and Town Hall offices will be closed.

## **Park and Recreation Easter Subcommittee**

**Synopsis of the subcommittee's special meetings:**

**Idea: decorate a rock to look like an Easter Egg or spring scene, using any medium (paint, markers, stickers)**

**Age categories: 5 and under; 6 to 10; 11-15; 16 and up**

**Contest announced and submissions accepted on March 1**

**Submissions due by March 20**

**Voting open March 22-27 and closes March 27 at 7 p.m.**

**Submission would be emailed to a new email address created for this event**

**Voting also would take place via this email.**

**Winners announced March 29**

**The top vote getter in each age category would receive a prize basket that would include a gift certificate to a local merchant.**

**Each participant would receive a good bag (incentive to enter)**

**The event still needs a name!**

Susan Vizzari  
P. O. Box 643 / Kent, CT 06757  
(860) 488-0912

Kent Park & Rec Commission  
c/o Lesly Ferris

Feb. 02, 2021

To the Board,

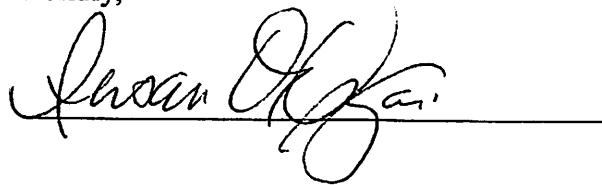
It is with Heartfelt emotion that I feel I need to resign my position as Co-Director of the After School Program.

This Covid-19 virus has increasingly made me worried about contracting it at school and bringing it home to my Mother, who now lives with us.

I have loved working with Lesly and the rest of the staff over the last several years. The children have always brought me great joy!

Please accept my resignation. Thank you for your understanding.

Fondly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan Vizzari", is written over a horizontal line.

# Kent Park and Recreation

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Lesly Ferris, Director  
P.O. Box 678  
41 Kent Green Boulevard  
Kent, CT 06757-0678

Telephone 860-927-1003  
Fax 860-927-1313  
parkandrec@townofkentct.org  
www.kentctparkandrecreation.com

To: Playing Field Subcommittee

From: Lesly Ferris

Date: Feb. 3, 2021

Re: FY2021-22 budget line

Hi John, Marty and Miranda. Park and Recreation Commission is pleased to share with you the appointment of Miranda Lovato to the playing field subcommittee. Miranda is a landscape architect who brings a lot of experience with the maintenance, development and design of all things Park and Rec, including ballfields.

Regarding the proposed budget for FY2021-22, Premier Turf has submitted a cost of \$350/twice a month for seven months (May through November) for maintenance of the infields of the three ballfields. This is the same cost as is in the present budget.

New England Turf Management has submitted its proposal for \$3,850 (see attached). Again, this is the same cost that is in the current year's budget.

This would be a total proposed budget line of \$8,750.00.

Please let me know if the subcommittee would like to meet or if you are okay with these figures.

We should plan to meet in the spring to touch base.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need more information. Thank you for your time.