

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, September 28, 2023** – 4 pages

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Dave Bush, Chairman at Simsbury Town Hall. Other commission members who were present included Kelly Kearney, Lori Coppinger, Michelle Lipar, Christine Boswell, Danielle Celli, and Tim Walczak. The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski, Director of Parks and Recreation, John Thibeault, Recreation Supervisor, Caitrin Huysman, Program Coordinatorm, and Board of Selectman Liaison, Chris Petersen were also in attendance.

Public Session – Comments limited to 3 minutes per person. Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

No comments.

Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission Member Comments

No comments.

Minutes- June 22, 2023 Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Mr. Kearney commented that the date of the meeting should be changed on the minutes. Mr. Bush declared the July 27, 2023 minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

New Business

Summer Program and Events Summary- Ms. Huysman shared that this summer they had 795 registrants for sports camps, 87 for enrichment (art/film), and 82 in science camps. They continued their new learn to skateboard program and had about 15 kids each week. They had a new teacher from East Hartford who started doing the Makerspace program, it got great reviews from parents and the kids loved it. A new art teacher started as well from Granby, she taught summer art camps. This year they had a new golf/basketball combo camp for about 20 kids each week. About 319 kids/families attended the Last Day of School Funfest held at the Rink. The June Touch-A-Truck event had more than 1,000 people come through. There was a jazz and a ukelele concert at the Flower Bridge Park with about 175-225 in attendance each night there. There were also two concerts on the Tariffville Green, the second one had a balloon twister and bounce house and had attendance of close to 300 people.

Mr. Thibeault acknowledged his great staff. He shared that they had a very young staff so there was a big learning curve at the beginning of year. The pool was scheduled to be open for 81 days; however, they had to cancel or close the pool 20 times due to the unusually cool and wet weather in this area over the summer. This did result in a loss of revenue; daily admission down \$5k, pool pass sales were down \$10k, total pool revenue was down about \$50k as compared to 2022, total visits were down 2400 visits, snack bar sales were down \$5k. Swim lessons programs were up \$8400 over 2022. They did run some new programs at the pool such as mermaid swimming lessons, which were very popular. He also shared that he ran a pre-season lifeguard training class, however temperatures were cold and due to the smoke from wildfires, they had to cancel two classes. Poll deck special events this past summer included a Dive-In Movie, Foam Pool Parties, and Beach Blanket Bingo.

Fall and Winter Programming Updates- Ms. Huysman shared that they have added baton classes (ages 3-10) and dance for the fall. They also added some makerspace programming and are possibly adding a high school ski program. They are also adding some safe boating classes through DEEP, looking into a toddler Spanish music class, and possibly an elementary age dance program (finding indoor space is an issue, however).

Mr. Thibeault shared that the rink is scheduled to open in 5 weeks and they have already sold out all available public rental hours on Sundays. All of the season long groups are back, he is also pretty sure they will sell out the rest of public time, only time left is holidays/Saturdays.

Mr. Kearney asked if money was no object what would be at the top of the purchase list. Mr. Thibeault shared that he would build a 3/4 wall around the rink which would eliminate sun/fog or add showers for teams.

Mr. Bush asked if with the ISCC new owners trying new things, if it is helping or hurting the Simsbury Farms rink. Mr. Thibeault shared that they have a great working relationship with them so right now things are fine.

Mr. Kearney shared news regarding Simsbury Farms Buzz Day which was a day to bring visibility to the Simsbury Farms complex and also to drive registration for the golf tournament. He shared that they did seven interviews that day that included some Town employees. He stated it was a nice chance to share some of the great things going on at the Simsbury Farms Complex.

Simsbury Celebrates 2023 Planning Update- Mr. Tyburski shared that the event will be 11/25. He stated they had almost 20k people attend last year. The fireworks and parade are booked. They are bringing back the Yo-Yo Guy for Eno Hall, the event will have an ice carver, inflatables, and a ukulele group. He shared that the First Church is back this year and will have a potential live nativity and a cookie decorating program there. This year's event will also feature performances from local opera and theatre companies, Playstrong will perform, along with Jingles the Elf and Santa, nutcracker ballet, and a children's story teller in the library. He shared that they are looking for volunteers. Mr. Tyburski shared that Ms. Huysman has been doing a good job getting Facebook posts out about the event. UCONN Health is the event's Presenting Sponsor for the second straight year. They will have more sponsors to announce next month but fundraising is on the right path.

BOS Draft Ordinance Prohibiting the Use Of Tobacco, Vaping and Cannabis Products On Public Property- Mr. Tyburski shared that there was discussion on this at the Board of Selectmen meeting and a workgroup was formed, They modeled the ordinance after what other towns were doing and now they are looking for feedback from C.P.R. He shared that allowing cannabis sales in Simsbury is on referendum here in November. Mr. Peterson shared that there is no expectation of any town employee other than a town police officer would be responsible for enforcement of any tobacco/cannabis use ordinance, however, it does not preclude town employees from reminding someone that an ordinance regarding the consumption of these products exists. He stated that they chose an ordinance that allows for evolution and easy retraction as well.

Mr. Tyburski shared that he hopes to get feedback from the commission regarding: (1) Should there be or not be a "carve out" in the ordinance for use tobacco products at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course; (2) Should there be or not be signage about this ordinance at all parks, trails and athletic areas?

Ms. Boswell commented that if they put it in writing that the exception is Simsbury Farms, it will have people up in arms.

Mr. Bush shared that the golf course is a revenue generating source, his concern is if you put up a no smoking sign at the golf course, they may lose revenue. If people can't smoke cigars on tournament days, they may say they aren't going to attend or book events at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course. He commented that being cognizant that now here comes cannabis, he is supportive of it allowed on golf course but not allowed in common areas where people are congregating.

Ms. Celli commented that if you say there is an exception, she thinks there will be more smoking there. C.P.R. is about health and wellness and she can see this being a bigger issue in the future.

Ms. Coppinger commented that she thinks the problem is vaping and its everywhere.

Mr. Walczak commented that the Town may have to spend \$5k putting up no smoking signs, he doesn't want to see town plastered with no smoking signs.

Ms. Lipar commented that she doesn't believe there should be a carve out for the golf course as it is part of Town land.

Ms. Coppinger commented that she agrees with Mr. Bush that the course will lose golfers.

Mr. Bush shared that he sees cigar smoking most often associated with tournaments. He reminded the Commission that an ordinance will be adopted regardless, their job is just for feedback.

Mr. Walczak commented that he thinks if there were a carveout that it should be only for playground areas, he doesn't think it is an issue at Little League fields/

Ms. Coppinger agreed that kids are a good carveout.

Mr. Tyburski commented that Little League puts its own signs up.

Mr. Bush commented that a Plan B would be to protect the common areas at Simsbury Farms. Ms. Celli shared that she could live with Plan B, she just doesn't want it near her kids.

Ms. Boswell made a motion that if an ordinance is going to be put in place that there be a carve out concerning an exception to Simsbury Farms for the consumption tobacco products on the golf course only and not in common areas (patio, driving range, practice green, around clubhouse). Mr. Kearney seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Bush, Ms. Celli, Ms. Boswell and Mr. Kearney in Favor. Mr. Walczak and Ms. Lipar voted against with Ms. Coppinger abstaining.

Mr. Walczak commented that they just admitted as a committee that tobacco is healthy.

Mr. Kearney commented that part of this is that they are forwarding our opinion as group but doesn't mean it is exclusive.

Ms. Coppinger asked if they are they allowed to change anything after this passes. Mr. Tyburski stated that they can approach the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Peterson shared that he will summarize what he heard and carry it back to the Board of Selectmen and this will be discussed at the 10/11 public hearing.

Friends of Simsbury Farms Golf Tournament Update- Mr. Bush shared that the golf tournament is tomorrow, the weather doesn't look good but the tournament is sold out. He thanked everyone who supported it and shared that it will fund great projects moving forward.

Old Business

Simsbury Farms Playground Update – Mr. Tyburski shared that over the last month and a half, the maintenance crew has re-worked the site, put new drainage in, which now moves the water underneath down the back hill. They are all prepped and the playground is scheduled to be delivered next Friday with the installation to start 10/19. It is a 2–3-week buildout, they are thinking by mid-to late October it could be done. They still have some concrete work that needs to be completed, the crew started power washing today, they are going to paint the arch entryway, the pavilion and picnic tables to match colors from the new playground. New lettering will also be put on the archway. Mr. Tyburski shared that they are going to expedite the ribbon cutting with the colder weather coming, hopefully before Halloween.

AEDs at Recreation Facilities Update – Mr. Tyburski shared that the first AED just came in. It will be installed right by the sidewalk at the tennis court at Simsbury Farms. It will be connected to power so it can be available all year long, it also has an LED yellow light so the case will glow at night. If it gets used, they will replace the pads and change the lock code the next day. Ms. Coppinger asked if there will be signs saying where the AED is located, Mr. Tyburski said yes. It will be in operation within a few weeks. The other ones for the parks will be seasonal. Rotary Parks will use Town funds and he did email local sports groups about contributing. They have roughly \$15-16k from the budget for purchasing AEDs. Simsbury Farms currently has one in the golf pro shop and one at the pool.

Adjourn

Mr. Kearney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Boswell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be October 26, 2023 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,
Commission Clerk