

**City of Middletown**  
Parks & Recreation Department  
100 Riverview Center  
Suite 140  
Middletown, Connecticut 06457

**Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes of April 5, 2012**  
**Held at the Recreation Department Office at 100 Riverview Center**

Present: Commissioners Gerry Winzer, Phil Pessina, Todd Berch, Tony Jaskot, Sheila Jones and Ricky Romano. Student Representative Malcolm Alleyne arrived at 7:05 p.m. Director Raymond Santostefano, and Superintendent John Milardo, representing the Parks and Recreation Department.

Animal Control Officer Gail Petras was in attendance.

Absent: Commissioner Tom D’Aquila and Student Representative Dhruvi Patel.

Call: Chairman Winzer called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, in the main room of the Recreation Office, at 100 Riverview Center, Suite 140.

Public Hearing: No members of the public present to speak.

Minutes: Chairman Winzer requested a motion be made accepting the Parks and Recreation Commission minutes of March 1, 2012. Commissioner Romano made the motion and Commissioner Berch seconded the motion.

Vote: The Parks & Recreation Commission minutes were unanimously approved. Commissioners Jones and Jaskot abstained.

Chairman Winzer asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Superintendent Raymond Jacobs.

Correspondence: Director Santostefano reported that there was correspondence for participation in the Brandon Reeves Golf Tournament.

Miscellaneous: None

Old Business: None

New Business: Chairman Winzer spoke about changing the name of the Detroit Hunter Easter Candy Hunt to the “Detroit Hunter-Ray Jacobs Easter Candy Hunt” explaining that we should not take Detroit Hunter off the naming, but add to it. He also praised the Easter Candy Hunt this year. Director Santostefano shared that this particular event was important to Ray Jacobs.

Motion: Commissioner Berch made the motion to rename the Easter candy hunt to the Detroit Hunter-Ray Jacobs Easter Candy Hunt, Commissioner Pessina seconded.

Vote: The motion was voted on with all in favor, none opposed. The motion passes.

Commissioner Berch gave an informative outline of his plan for the dog park. It was proposed at Tynan Park to improve the use of the park. This park is large enough that the dog park would use less than 1% of the property. This location was recommended by several residents to Commissioner Berch. He is committed to this park for the use because he feels it has the appropriate land, use and availability. He also believes that it would benefit from the improvements that would be made such as a parking lot. It would bring more residents to use this park and would not interfere with the current use of hiking, open space and walking paths. Commissioner Berch introduces Animal Control Officer Petras. He also stated the City of Middletown currently uses Portland's animal shelter which needs significant repairs. The animal shelter would not be at the same site as the dog park. Commissioner Berch clarified that he is in the process of working through appropriate Commissions for information and approval, he is not determined to use Tynan Park and would look at other options and is looking for community input, however, he is committed to this project. Commissioner Berch indicated research on state statutes show that liability for dog bites and other concerns are the responsibility of the owner and this wouldn't put the city at risk. In addition, all dogs using the parks must be registered with the Town Clerk and have appropriate shots. He outlined his ideas for fundraising and donations to cover costs including doggie waste bags, the parking lot, trees and other improvements. Director Santostefano indicated LOCIP money may be available for this project. Commissioner Berch went through the specifics of a well thought out plan including fencing, gates, urine issues, waste bags, dog park rules and more. Fundraising options including selling pavers, and benches. Commissioner Berch read the letter from the Conservation Committee who approved the project but preferred a different location. It was decided that recreation at this park and any other that housed a dog park would improve and not be diminished. The definition of a dog park is passive recreation. Chairman Winzer asked about how much land was needed and Commissioner Berch confirmed that less than an acre was required. Commissioner Jones was concerned about a cost to the taxpayers. Commissioner Berch confirmed that fundraising would occur and that the manpower at the Parks Department could handle additional mowing and garbage collection.

Motion: Commissioner Pessina made a motion to approve the new hiking trail and dog park at Tynan Park contingent upon a true vetted process and public hearing. Commissioner Jaskot seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was voted on with all in favor and Commissioner Berch abstaining. The motion passes.

Commissioner Berch reiterated the need for a dog shelter/animal shelter to be discussed at another meeting.

Department Reports: Director Santostefano discussed several issues with regard to the Parks Division including the skating rink is down, extra benches at Willie Pep Park, cleaning Spear Park, Parks opened on March 1<sup>st</sup>, all fields are open, new benches were made, landscapes were

repaired, new tennis nets were installed, batting cages are up and running, and trees are being trimmed.

Director Santostefano reported in the Recreation Division that teams from all over New England participated in the Prof Gallitto tournament; on April 22<sup>nd</sup> the Recreation Dream Team will play the Harlem Rockets; we have adult exercise, weight lifting, judo, karate, Community Based programs, Soul Friends for Inclusion program; Unified Theater, Saturday bowling, MARC, recreation swim; Hoops N More; a mass email for the Easter Candy Hunt went out and we had 265 children and 200 adults attend the event; we had an information booth at Bielefield, an April vacation camp for \$15 per day, Friday night movies, cooking class and a popular DEP boating class. We met with the people from Advanced Sports Plex who would like us to do field trips there. Right now they aren't offering anything that works for our programs. We suggested a rock climbing wall or something the department doesn't offer at this time.

Commissioner Pessina asked about the vandalism in the tunnel. Director Santostefano and Superintendent Milardo confirmed that there wasn't much and the cameras which were installed almost eliminated all vandalism.

New Business: \$85,000 LOCIP for Palmer Field Improvements was discussed. Superintendent Milardo described the work that needed to be done including new steel frames, steel doors, work on the landing, the press box, doors to the concession stand, the observation deck, add siding to replace rotting wood on the football field house, restroom doors, Commissioner Berch recommended a Council Workshop so the Common Council members could see exactly what needed to be repaired prior to using LOCIP money.

Motion Commissioner Berch makes a motion to approve the request for the \$85,000 LOCIP money and have a Council Workshop to review needs for repair. Commissioner Pessina seconded the motion.

Vote: All in favor, motion passes.

Information was given on the Harlem Rockets game, the emergency repair for McCutcheon Park which passed the Common Council for rebuilding the motors and pumps.

Chairman Winzer asked for a motion to name the lighted softball field at Smith Park the "Ray Jacobs Field".

Motion: Motion to name the lighted softball field at the Thomas Smith Park the "Ray Jacobs Field" by Commissioner Berch, second by Commissioner Pessina.

Vote: All in favor, motion passes.

Chairman Winzer asked for a motion to approve the new Edger for the Parks Division for \$1,575 which was approved by the Common Council.

Motion: Motion to approve the purchase of an Edger for \$1,575 by Commissioner Berch, seconded by Commissioner Pessina.

Vote: All in favor, motion passes.

Miscellaneous:

Director Santostefano reviewed the budget. The big contention on the parks side is that Ken Crescimano retired and that position is not going to be filled per the Mayor's budget. In the Senior Center an extra position was funded that is not needed. Ray brought this to the attention of the Mayor's office. In addition approximately \$80,000 was cut from the overtime line from what was actually spent in 2011. This will be a problem with Little League and other vendors that rely on having the fields properly maintained. Both Commissioners Berch and Pessina indicated that this is the Mayor's budget and it needs to come before the Council. Ray should make his position known during the budget hearings and everything will be considered by the Common Council. Superintendent Milardo reminded the Commission that in 1997 there were 18 Park Maintainers and now there are 14. With vacations and injuries these numbers will be smaller in the summer. There is more work to be done than in 1997 and 30% fewer staff.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Romano. It was a unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Christine Bourne

cc Mayor Daniel Drew