

**Town of Chester**  
203 Middlesex Avenue  
Chester Connecticut 06412



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Minutes of the Chester Park and Recreation Commission  
Monday, September 18, 2023 6:30 pm  
Chester Town Hall

Call to order

Chairwoman Dawn Saunders called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

In Attendance:

Paul McAndrew; Linda Carlson, Dawn Saunders, Tom Enright, John Saunders, Kristin Dean on Zoom, Keith Lundgren on Zoom

Also in Attendance:

Aaron Page, John Williams, John Ivimey

Minutes of the Meeting of May 22, 2023

Linda Carlson made a motion to accept the July 2023 minutes. Paul McAndrew seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by all.

Director's Report:

John Williams & John Ivimey gave an explanation of boardwalk project. Inland/Wetlands were very receptive to boardwalk/pathway. We have 65 days to make a final decision from 8/7/23. There is no town cost. We would fundraise for it. Brought up neighbors privacy & ways to accommodate them. No final cost of money has been decided at this time. It was agreed to make it stroller accessible. Sequence of events would be to consult with someone who has engineering experience for inland/wetlands; bid for project; get state approval. Linda Carlson made a motion to vote for this Boardwalk initiative to move forward. It was seconded by Tom Enright. All were in favor of this North Quarter boardwalk path concept initiative to go forward.

9/18/23 Park and Recreation Directors Report:

1. Summer Program/Cedar Lake Recap
  - a. Staffing
    1. Tyler Saunders led as on-site Camp Director. Tyler was responsible for overseeing the camp on a day-to-day basis for the 5 one week sessions of Chester Parks and Recreation Summer Camp.



2. Many returning staff members included: Abby, Kyra, Jackson, Reece, Jack, Chloe, Will, Cooper, Erin. New staff include Lilly, Owen, and Kenny.

b. Campers

1. A total of 79 unique campers throughout the summer; 48-52 campers per one week session. 74 out of the 79 campers were from Chester. Cost \$125 per week. Total of \$30,500 in total tuition. Total spent on temporary part-time staff was \$3,000 less than summer 2022.

c. Program

1. Pelletier Park Mon, Wed, Fri; CES Tues, Thurs. Inclement weather dictates daily location. Families commented on professionalism of staff, loved that they aren't on phones, loved the opportunities for their children to "just play" and not nearly as many transitions between activities as other day camps.

2. Grant of \$1,000 from M. Jones Fund at CFMC provided Honeycone ice cream, Moravelas Pizza, and Bouncy Castle with \$448.50 remaining for next summer.

3. Feedback from staff/public for next year:

1. Add field trips

2. Add Assistant Director and Program Director positions, with more camp preparation responsibilities (ordering crafts, planning field trips)

3. Love the 8 hour lifeguard days

4. Add more sand to beach

5. More Theme days, more guest activities (magician, science)

6. Add Camper of the week

7. Add more staff

8. Love the no phone policy

d. Lifeguards:

1. Lifeguards were on duty from 10am-5pm from June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

2. Feedback from staff/public:

1. Add a "day pass" option starting August 1<sup>st</sup>.

2. Make season from Memorial Day to Labor Day for lifeguards

3. Clearer Signage for patrons

4. More training mid-summer and drills

2. Parks

a. CES ballfields:



1. PTO Shed installed in August.
2. Green giants/arborvitae planted by south edge of baseball field to help privacy for landowner. Handicapped portable restroom replacement.
3. Holden field grass project complete, now in maintenance rotation for mowing. CES students using field daily for sport.
  - b. Lakeview Park: cleared overgrown area with Steve Merola for more patron seating area. More sand needed in upcoming years.
  - c. Pelletier Park: More sand needed as well. Fixed stones on western bulkhead.
  - d. North Quarter Park: broken platform on large new playscape (installed 2019). Sign and plywood posted on Aug 9<sup>th</sup> in order to keep children off broken area. In contact with John LaRue in order to replace under warranty. Installation error was cause of break.
1. Playscape surface in need of 4-6" of woodchips. Approx 100 cubic yards at \$25 per yard delivered is top quote. Would appreciate volunteer hours from commission to help spread wood chips this fall or early spring, once funds are acquired.
  - e. Parker's Point: Neighbor John Adams (to the south) cleaned up his property line along PP parking lot area. Over 200 liquor bottles were removed. Neighbor also replacing the Chester Rotary split rail fence for free.
3. Current Fall/Winter Programming and Ideas
  - a. Recdesk implementation- over 100 registrations for the portal so far (in three weeks); no credit card paying option just yet; pay by check or through existing credit card link on p&r website.
  - b. Field Hockey Clinic for girls grades 2-6 for 3 Sundays at VRHS, taught by Julie Labbadia, head field hockey coach, and VRHS players. 19 participants each paying \$50; includes stick, ball, and mouthguard. Idea and planning from local Chester residents Brittney Silvestrini and Caitlin Calder.
  - c. Yoga at Chester Meeting House Monday nights
  - d. Partner Acrobatics at Meeting House Tuesday nights
  - e. Child and Caregiver Yoga and Stories at Meeting House Monday Mornings
  - f. Wednesday Cribbage
  - g. Friday Walkers
  - h. Wednesday and Saturday pickup basketball



- i. Potential for Tuesday 9:30a-2:00p pickleball- TBA. 25 residents showed up for September 5<sup>th</sup> 10am Pickleball clinic/get together. Many are now on Recdesk and awaiting word for when next opportunity to play might be..
  - j. Morning runclub administered by Paul McAndrew Thursdays 7:30a-8a
  - k. Trip to Yale Art Gallery 10/12 Thursday. Trips to Mohegan Sun for arts and crafts festival; Foxwoods for Pequot Museum still in the planning stages.
  - l. Youth Basketball offerings available, trying to work together with Essex and Deep River to offer league using DR, ESX, and CH elem basketball courts.
4. Volunteers:
- a. Starting to gather up a network of volunteers to help/assist with Park and Recreation initiatives/activities
  1. Anousheh, Gary, Drew (pickleball), Erica R at Transition Academy, Bekah Wright, Roger from Board of Finance
- Grant Proposals:
- Story Walk for North Quarter Park; a joint project between Chester Library and Chester Parks and Recreation. 20 water/weather proof stations with 18"x24" story displays that house pages of a picture book. Would begin at the playscape area, then every 20-30 feet or so until the Anna Sweeney Trail, where it would continue. Opportunities for programming, nature-based books with guides and naturalist talks, etc.. seeking out funds and materials from Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Shagbark lumber (posts), and Haynes Materials (process/stone dust for setting the posts), as well as Chester volunteers to install.
  - Water fountain/Pavilion for North Quarter Park.
  - Pickleball courts- received one quote for North Quarter Park area along the bushes by Main Street. Two courts going east/west direction with fence between two and around both courts. Potential to seek out more quotes with Commission permission.
  - Storage Shed at CES: Fire Marshall informed Park and Recreation Director that the gym closet we are currently using for summer camp materials is no longer available. Therefore a storage shed outdoors close to the Lunchroom is option moving forward.

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**Chairman's Report:**

Discussion of Pickle-ball; all agreed to hold it on Tuesday & Thursday from 9am-2:30pm only when school is in session. Next meeting Chairman will suggest dates to meet for 2024.

**Next meeting:**

Next meeting will be October 16, 2023 6:30pm

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Saunders, Chester Parks & Recreation Commission Chairwoman