

Chester Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes

March 18th, 2024

6:06p - 8:21p

Location: Chester Town Hall	Attendees: Aaron Page, Kristen Dean, John Saunders, Dawn Saunders, Paul McAndrews, Linda Carlson, Keith Lundgren ABSENT: Tom Enright
Type of Meeting: General Commission Meeting	Recorder: Mikaela Carlin <i>Senior at Valley Regional High School</i>
TOPIC	DISCUSSION / ACTION STEPS
Bus Trip to New Britain Museum	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information on the trip will be published in the Valley Courier, in the “Events” section2. The trip currently has 12 people signed up, with a sign-up deadline of March 27th3. The cost is \$40, with financial aid available.4. Aaron raised concerns about the cost of bus trips, expressing that with smaller numbers, he might have to begin charging more per person5. Linda explained the Ferriday House, a mansion and state park that she feels would spark interest because of a book series “The Violet Girls”6. Deep River Park and Rec is offering a trip to New York City, and the Essex Meadows is also going to the New Britain Museum- discuss combining town membership7. Aaron mentioned potential senior programming grant for cultural arts, bus transportation will be covered and attendees will only have to pay ticket fee. This grant would be used for local events (Goodspeed Opera House, Roseland Cottage, etc.)8. Upcoming budget meeting - Tuesday9. TO-DO: increase social media promotion of adult programs- Dawn and Kristen will repost flyer on Facebook10. TO-DO: potentially discuss the price point of tickets if not enough sign-ups
Boardwalk	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To get the DEEP grant to pay for 80% of the boardwalk, it was necessary to show that the town leaders were supportive of the boardwalk. Aaron asked to put it on the agenda. Expected that the motion would be voted on. Aaron explained the project, people made public comments, and it was voted no.2. Dawn and John seeking better communication with selectman meeting results?3. Jacobsen continuing to run cost estimates, Aaron will update the committee
Snack Shack Tenant	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tenant found: Charlie Homicki and his daughter Juliette, a local Chester family with restaurant experience2. The decision was between Charlie/Juliette and Chambos, the Selectmen voted for Homickis.3. The Homickis looking to add credit card payments, breakfast sandwiches, and coffee. It will have more hours, will open in May, and stay open later, potentially weekends in September.4. The Shack itself is being gutted and renovated, with new counters, appliances, etc.5. Building and snack area is being brought up to code6. Vendors will no longer be able to access the loft for storage

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Town of Chester, specifically the DPW, is cleaning and renovating, including all new commercial grade appliances. 8. The lease will be signed by March 27th, and the renovation will be finished, hopefully, by May 1st 9. Lease is \$3,000 for the season 10. TO-DO: discuss the installation of cameras at Cedar Lake. Privacy concerns were raised by Aaron. Discuss using smaller, battery-operated cameras, vendors may put in their wifi and cameras
Capital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. Aaron drove 3 members of the Board of Finance to around town for a field trip to town parks and facilities. 3. Aaron and Kristen discussed River Valley Transit ineffectiveness, not enough people use it and to add stops requires demonstrated interest 4. Dawn raised community concerns about the North Quarter Park picnic benches, as they are splintered and unsightly 5. Budget has allotted \$1,000 for park maintenance supplies. 6. John noted that signage will increase engagement in the area 7. Explore promoting people walking around the Brooks and Bates ball fields during school hours as many community members are unaware it is allowed 8. Cedar Lake seawall in need of repair- likely not in the budget for this year, but re-appeal next year, railroad ties are hazardous 9. RecDesk is now its own line item, Refuse Disposal is no longer a line item 10. TO-DO: Aaron to field additional quotes for capital improvement projects: NQP field, concrete slab, CES ballfields 11. TO-DO: further discuss Ball Field Project at elementary school, which is unsafe because of field undulations. The idea is to fix Brooks first and Bates the year following.
Programming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summer camp 85% full already 2. Camp open to everyone 3. CIT program now offered to kids 8th-10th instead of the previous 9th-10th 4. Staffing is in good shape with many returning counselors/CIT's and 2 new staff members 5. Aaron willing to consider charging CITs half price of camp to get training next year 6. Linda proposed idea of Valley Courier interviews of camp counselors to increase publicity 7. Woman and her son asked Aaron about fixing basketball backboards at North Quarter then offered to pay, stickers have arrived and will be applied soon 8. Linda proposed a park and rec "wishlist" that people could donate to. Aaron mentioned pre-existing RecDesk program called "donation to summer camp scholarships" 9. Linda made the point that when people know where the money will go to, they're more likely to donate 10. TO-DO: create or further explore the idea of a "summer camp wishlist" add-on fee to support the camp, with a variety of price points for wishlist items (flowers for North Quarter Park, etc) 11. TO-DO: Contact Rita at the Valley Courier for Tyler Person of the Week and staff interviews
Trees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 trees behind lifeguard check-in table are being cut down at Cedar Lake

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Linda concerned about the deforestation, Aaron suggests bringing in an expert to state what tree species would survive at the lake 3. TO-DO: discuss Aarons proposal to cut the 4 Cedar Lake trees at 6 feet and turn them into “cubbies” for sand toys, patron belongings, etc. 4. TO-DO: Discuss bringing in an expert to evaluate possible tree species for the beach 5. TO-DO: Discuss shade for lifeguards as a wishlist item, talk trees and canopies at next meeting
Financial Aid Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procedure has been written and posted on Park and Rec mission website 2. Aaron doesn’t interview for financial aid, instead requests go to Human Services, then the person files an application.
Programs for Chester Adults	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reserved basketball courts at North Quarter starting in April for 6th through 8th graders, Wednesdays from 2:30 to 4:30p 2. If reserved courts goes well, explore reserving Thursdays for high school children during the fall 3. Adult soccer at Chester Elementary School using the Bates outfield, spray and line it for soccer, no permanent goals 4. Adult Basketball on Thursdays 5. Tuesdays and Thursdays Walking Groups 6. T-shirts delivered, from Clinton Sports Shop 7. Shirts were passed out to all committee members to promote Walking Groups and programming in general 8. Staff shirts and whistles are covered by budgets, \$200 9. Morning run club before school continuing 10. TO-DO: Explore ordering safety-colored t-shirts for the walking club 1. TO-DO: create a sign at North Quarter basketball court that says 6th to 8th grade only on Wednesdays
CPR/ First Aid Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Danielle Gonzalez is getting her teaching certifications, will begin offering CPR/First Aid training for residents on a regular, seasonal basis 2. Danielle may be eventually eligible for another person of the week (John) 3. AED available for P&R programming; additional AED will be outside at snack shack 24/7 all year in a box, will alarm hose company when removed/used. 4. The staff gets re-certified, Dawn brings up a commission for CPR by staff, the possibility of a discount?
Concerts at Cedar Lake	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kristin is willing to volunteer to organize/sign up parking volunteers 2. 9 weeks of Sundays concerts lined up 3. TO-DO: Kristen will create sign-up sheet for volunteering on the 9 sundays 4. TO-DO: promote concerts AND programming through family and friends
Other Notes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Linda mentioned warriors in the community- volunteer opportunity cutting down invasive vines at North Quarter Park, Friday, May 24th