



# Gates Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting September 13, 2022



**Those in attendance:**

Commissioners:	Rhoda Ride	Eileen Andrews	Brom Bianchi	Steve Murphy
	John Unson	Greg Westbrook		
Director:	Dan Hoock			
Town Board Liaison:	Andrew Loughlin			

The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM by Rhoda Ride. The minutes of the June 14 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Eileen Andrews and seconded by Greg Westbrook that the June minutes be accepted as written. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as written.

**Financial Report:**

- \* Rhoda Ride commented the stipend pay budgeted in the past for an intern was removed from the current budget sheet. This will free up funding for other items since there has not been an intern working in the department for a number of years.
- \* Rhoda Ride noted the Play Camp and Sport Camp report indicated they had exceeded the monies budgeted for them. Rhoda shared she felt these programs were very important for the children involved, but that for planning for next year, more monies should be budgeted for them. A brief discussion followed on this idea. Dan Hoock explained there are revenues that come in for these camps that defer expenses, but that isn't indicated on this particular financial sheet. Greg Westbrook suggested an additional column be added to this report that would indicate the revenues when necessary, and then hidden when that information isn't necessary for the report. All thought this was a good idea. Dan will follow up on this.
- \* John Unson shared he was glad to see the LEGO Camp was successful. It's a very good program for children involved.

A motion was made by Steve Murphy and seconded by Brom Bianchi the financial report be accepted. The vote was unanimous to accept the financial report as written.

**Correspondence:**

Dan Hoock shared a copy of "HomeTown" magazine which highlighted the recent Eagle Scout project finished at Westgate Park. This project was the expansion of the butterfly garden, including the installation of a walk way and information about the life cycle of the butterfly. This project was done by a special needs Boy Scout, which made it even more special. Rhoda Ride inquired who would be maintaining the garden? Dan shared it would be cared for by the Town grounds crew.

**Program Reports:**

- \* Steve Murphy inquired if there was live music at the Family Campout event? Dan Hoock shared they had live music one night, and although it was enjoyable, there was a cost involved. Discussion followed as to what other options could be considered for entertainment. These options included having a talent show for participants and encouraging participants to bring instruments to make up a band. These suggestions will be considered for next years event.
- \* Greg Westbrook reviewed the camp survey and asked about the "lost glasses" mentioned in this report. Dan Hoock explained that a pair of glasses had been misplaced, but eventually was found and returned to the child who had misplaced them.

**Old Business:**

A discussion of the Summer Camp On-line survey took place. Highlights of that discussion included the following:

- \* John Unson inquired if a "sibling discount" was considered for families with multiple children? Dan Hoock shared that this year it hadn't been considered, but could be considered for next years program. Discussion followed on this idea with many ideas shared. Dan shared this idea could be implemented for next year, and would work on a policy to have that happen. Discussion related to a scholarship program was discussed also. Possibly getting "camper scholarships" through individual donations or corporate donations would be an option. This too will be considered for next year's camping program. If donations are made, thank you notes will be written to donors.
- \* John Unson mentioned the comment pertaining to the "facilities" needing improvement is not the Department's responsibility, it's the Town's to maintain, refurbish or replace the public facilities.
- \* Steve Murphy inquired if there were any injuries during camp? Dan Hoock shared there were some cuts, scapes and bee stings. All were treated with basic first aid. Steve also inquired about the food offerings at camp? Dan shared that the lunch bus came by every day with usually three selections for lunch. The workers on the bus were friendly and helpful and had a great rapport with the children.
- \* Dan Hoock shared there was one day where the GC School District went into lock down, so children at the camp program hosted at the Armstrong School were bussed back to the Department, and parents were notified about this change. Children were picked up from there.
- \* Rhoda Ride asked what outside programs/activities were brought in. Dan Hoock shared the Fire Dept. had come, they also brought the smoke house with them for demonstration. Therapy reading dogs were also brought in and were well received. There were no field trips done this year, partly as a cost savings and also because they were unable to find a driver. Discussion followed on this topic.

- \* Rhode Ride raised a concern about one comment which mentioned a “quiet” area for a child. Discussion followed about this option, which included possibly getting information from the parent (prior to the child attending camp,) if this would be a need. All agreed this would be a good idea since the camps are not necessarily equipped to deal with children with special needs.
- \* Brom Bianchi mentioned he stopped by Lions Park to see how the camp was going, and was very impressed with the security measures taken by the staff members related to his visit. They were very professional and inquired who he was, and Brom felt they were being very careful and protective of the children they were in charge of. Brom also inquired about the summer hockey league and the fact that most of the participants were non-residents. Dan Hooch explained it was a group he was involved with and they needed a place to play, so he offered our facilities.

A discussion of the Security presentation took place. Highlights of that discussion included the following:

- \* Andrew Loughlin inquired as to what date and time would work best for the Commission to have this presentation. Extensive discussion took place related to this topic, with many points discussed (e.g.- would dept. staff be invited? would an evening or afternoon program work best? etc.) A discussion of whether or not building doors should be locked after a certain time was raised. Police presence at a meeting was also mentioned as a possible consideration. Following this extensive discussion, it was decided this presentation will be made at our next scheduled Commission meeting on October 11, starting at 6:30PM. The staff will be invited to attend, and Rhoda Ride asked that the Town Supervisor, Cosmo Guinta also be invited. Andrew will check on the availability of Rob Long to give this presentation (or a substitute police person) along with the others mentioned. This presentation is now tentatively scheduled for the October Commission meeting.

A discussion of the Summer Celebration took place. Highlights of that discussion included the following:

- \* Dan Hooch shared that overall this event went very well. The organization and area assignments worked out very well. The activities offered were well received, especially the race track option. Many enjoyed that offering. Dan mentioned the food trucks worked out well, and everyone seemed pleased with the food options offered. The first band was better received than the second one, and the fireworks were also good. There was an altercation between two groups of teenagers which was quickly addressed by the police and staff members. These groups were escorted off the site. Discussion then followed on options to consider for security next year. One thought was to have more police presence, another thought was to have a policy stating that an adult needs to accompany all children under the age of 16 in order to be admitted to this event. More discussion followed on these concerns. All options will be considered to be put in place for next year’s event.

**New Business:**

A discussion of the new event of “Kids Fest” being added to the calendar scheduled for June 3, 2023 took place. Highlights of this discussion included the following:

- \* Dan Hooch asked for input from the Commission of ideas of things that can be included in this day’s activities. Ideas included:
 

- Corn hole	- Some games options for disabled participants	- beverages/snacks
- Quiet games	- GaGa pit	- maybe a themed day (sports)
- Races	- Jar of jelly beans/candy to guess amount contained	- mini golf
- Hoops	- Have a “pop” with a “cop”	- tennis courts used
- \* This would be a day geared for children ages 3-13 years old, so a variety of activities need to be considered for all age groups
- \* Probably a pre-registration would be a good idea so planning programming would be easier. Also, a rain date should be considered. Continued discussion took place on these options. It will be discussed again at future meetings.

Dan Hooch shared a map of Westgate Park and explained his ideas of increasing the parking options as well as making more seating/picnic tables available for use. Extensive discussion took place on considering these changes. No final decision was made. This will be discussed again at future meetings.

Dan Hooch shared the following update on programs going on at the Department facilities. Highlights of that discussion include:

- \* GAP program is now being hosted at the Department facilities. Pick up and drop off is at the side door (on the east side of the building.) It starts at 7AM and approximately 40-45 children are participating daily. The buses pick the children up and drop them off in the loop, and so far it’s been running well.
- \* The “Kid’s Night Out” programs are all filled up at this time. More activities are being geared for the older children who are attending.
- \* The trips scheduled for the fall programs are filling up quickly.
- \* The 60+ Lunch program is going well with approximately 30-38 people attending weekly.
- \* The Halloween party is coming up on October 21 at 5:30PM at Memorial Park. The starting time is earlier than last year, because it gets dark sooner. Volunteers would be welcomed to help out with this event. The plan is to offer more options for getting treats distributed to the children in a more efficient way. If it should rain, this event will be moved to the Town Hall.

Dan Hooch shared an update on the Parks. Highlights of that discussion included the following:

- \* The temporary basket ball net has been placed at Wegman Rd. Park at the area where the old cement pad is. People who use that park have been asked if they feel this is an asset, and overall it has been well received. Possible consideration to make this a permanent option will be considered for that area.

- \* The dock at Lions Park has been removed completely. This was done for safety reasons. Consideration will be given to see if a floating dock might be an option to place there now. Discussion with the Town will be done related to this option.
- \* Input on changes at Westgate Park could include increasing the parking area, and add seating/picnic tables. Questions were raised about drainage and run off. Possibly adding a portable pickle ball option could be considered also.
- \* Budget discussion has taken place related to the bathrooms at the parks (especially Memorial) have been brought up again with the Town. Also, improvements made to the cabin were mentioned. Nothing more has happened about these concerns.
- \* Jim Campbell has retired from Building/Grounds department and some reassignments of responsibilities have been made with current workers. It's a department in transition right now, but work is being accomplished. Wood chips will be distributed at Westgate Park next week.
- \* Steve Murphy asked that Dan Hoock bring a map of the Dolomite site to the next meeting to discuss the options for that property.

Due to time constraints, Rhoda Ride asked that discussion of the Summer Celebration for 2023 be tabled until the next meeting. All agreed this would be a good idea. Dan Hoock mentioned that the Town Supervisor had suggested some changes to this event to make it a longer day event that also might include Arts & Craft vendors and other options. Consideration will be taken on these proposed changes.

**Good of the Order:**

Valerie Young: Gave a quick update on her family and thanked everyone for their support over the past year.

Dan Hoock: Tomorrow he will be celebrating his daughters 9th birthday! He will also be going on vacation in a couple of weeks.

Andrew Loughlin: Had a wonderful summer which included lots of family time camping. Hopefully everyone else has had a good summer too.

John Unson: Getting accustomed to retirement and being an "empty nester." All is well with his family too.

Eileen Andrews: Shared an update on her granddaughter and hoped everyone had a good summer.

Steve Murphy: Hoped everyone had a good summer too.

Greg Westbrook: Had a good summer with some time away and is looking forward to another upcoming trip.

Rhoda Ride: Had a good summer and was busy all the time.

Brom Bianchi: Had a very busy summer with real estate sales and also family obligations. It was great fun.

As a reminder, the new jackets purchased for the Commission are available to take home tonight. Make sure you take yours.

A motion was made by Eileen Andrews and seconded by John Unson to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous and the meeting was closed at 8:34PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2022 at 6:30PM at the Rec. Center at the Town offices.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Valerie Young - Secretary