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TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD

TOWN HALL, 909 FOXON ROAD, NORTH BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT 06471
TOWN MANAGER (203) 484-6000 TOWN HALL FAX (203) 484-6025

SUMMARY

Parks and Recreation Commission
Stanley T. Williams Community Center
1332 Middletown Ave, Northford, CT 06472
Tuesday, June 24, 2025- 6:00 pm

Chairman Torino called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Salute to the Flag

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Chairman Steve Torino, Vice Chairman John Onofrio, Jennifer Ash, Gene Stabile, and Nick DeMatteo.

Also Present: Recreation Director Kerry Haynes, Assistant Director Sarah Brown, Poco Coordinator Elisa Pannone and Resident Donna Abbatiello.

2. Approval minutes of previous meetings

a. Tuesday, December 10, 2024, discussion and action

MOTION: Vice Chairman Onofrio made a motion to approve the December 10, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed. 2 abstentions – Commissioner Ash and DeMatteo.**

b. March 31, 2025, discussion and action

MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to approve the March 31, 2025 meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Onofrio seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed. 1 abstention – Commissioner DeMatteo.**

c. April 28, 2025, discussion and action

MOTION: Commissioner DeMatteo made a motion to approve the April 28, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

3. Public Comment

4. Director's Report

Activities and programs are ongoing. They recently held the senior picnic, which welcomed 150 seniors under the new pavilion and featured live entertainment. In addition, summer camp kicked off yesterday.

5. Unfinished business discussion and action

a. STW Improvements discussion and action

Vice Chairman Onofrio has attended the meetings where there has been discussion about the stairs leading to the courts. It was noted that they were not poured evenly. There is talk about possibly adding additional steps to correct the slope, and railings will also be installed.

b. Fiscal Year End review, transfers, discussion and action

MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to authorize line item transfers stipulated by the Recreation Director. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

Director Haynes outlined three key areas where concessions were made in response to budget cuts:

1. Reduction in Operating Hours

The most significant concession was a reduction in facility hours to align with budget requirements. Weekday hours were trimmed by an hour at the start of the day, and weekend hours were adjusted to 8:00 AM–12:00 PM instead of the previous 7:30 AM opening.

2. Portlet Reduction

The number of portable restrooms was reduced at select locations. In areas that previously had two units, only one remains.

3. Fitness Room Membership Fee Increase

The annual fee for a single fitness room membership increased from \$150 to \$180. This adjustment is projected to generate an additional \$10,000 in revenue.

MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to increase gym memberships effective July 1, 2025. Commissioner DeMatteo seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

c. Parks and Fields discussion and action

The pavilion will be added to the rental fee schedule and made available for reservation online. The current rate is \$20/hour for residents and \$25/hour for non-residents, with most rentals lasting around 3 hours. The Commission discussed a new fee structure of the following:

- Residents: \$100 for a 4-hour block
- Non-residents: \$200 for a 4-hour block
- Limit: One rental per day

They asked Director Haynes to come up with a worksheet of fees to be discussed at the next meeting.

In addition, North Farms Park recently acquired a new 6x4 gray gardening shed, enhancing storage capabilities.

The gym rental fee remains \$40/hour for residents and \$60/hour for non-residents.

MOTION: Commissioner Ash proposed a motion to add the pavilion at STW to the reservation list and to accept the shed at North Farms Park. Vice Chairman Onofrio seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

Also, the scoreboard at Mill Road Field was funded through ARPA grant money; however, despite the funding being awarded over a year ago, the vendor has yet to make any progress on the project.

In addition, the Knights of Columbus have expressed interest in holding another tag sale this fall on the POCO grounds, and Lorenzo's Christmas Wish plans to host a soccer tournament at Northford Park in August. The Commission has requested that representatives from both organizations attend the next meeting to seek formal approval

6. New Business

a. Commission meeting discussion and action

Commissioner Ash stated that she would like the meeting minutes to contain more than just the motions.

7. Blueprint Committee updates discussion and action

The last meeting was canceled.

8. Permanent Project Building Committee updates discussion and action

See line item 5(a) for discussion.

9. Potato Festival discussion and action

Last year we asked the Purchasing Department to explore the possibility of entering into a multi-year agreement with our current fireworks vendor. Only one vendor submitted a proposal. However, we received an email from Purchasing recommending against moving forward with a contract at this time and instead suggesting that the project go out to RFP again. It's important to note that an RFP was already issued in September 2024, and the contract was awarded at that time.

Three bands were unable to perform last year due to rain but were unfortunately paid in error. All had agreed to return this year to honor their commitments. However, one of the bands, *Anchors Away*, has declined to return, despite already receiving payment. Because the Purchasing Department did not include an 'Act of God' clause in the agreement, we are unable to hold the band accountable for the missed performance.

Other changes this year include a \$5 increase in parking fees and the introduction of a shuttle fee, which will not exceed \$10 per family. There is also a possibility that line dancing will be added to the Sunday schedule with Tracey Fair as one of the instructors.

10. Public Comment

Donna Abbatiello, a North Branford resident, expressed interest in serving as the line dancing instructor at this year's POCO event. She will coordinate the details directly with Mary.

11. Adjourn – the meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Dellacamera
Clerk