

Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
James Harmon Community Center - 44 Main Street
Thursday, June 21, 2018 8 PM
MINUTES

In Attendance:

Joanne Baecher-DiSalvo (Chair), Gene Calamari, Anjali Chen, John Dailey, David Downs, Mike Jacobs, Angela Reeve, Aaron Podhurst (Superintendent), Lisa O'Reilly (Rec Assistant).

A quorum is in order.

1. Call to Order

2. Public Comments

- Olga Otrokhova, Wagner Place, Hastings - expressed dismay over the noise, volume of cars, amount of activity from the increased usage of Zinsser Park. In particular, Ms. Otrokhova was concerned with the use of a batting cage near her property and indicated that the noise sometimes starts as early as 6am and goes into the evening hours. She asked the Commission to please take into consideration the neighbors and consider placement of the cage as the noise and balls over the fence into neighboring yards is affecting the residents.

Gene Calamari indicated that he met with some board members of Hastings Little League (HLL) earlier this evening regarding the placement of the batting cage. Gene had suggested extending the netting to prevent balls from entering neighboring properties. HLL indicated that they did have an unusually large number of games and usage at Zinsser Park this past season as Uniontown is currently under construction. The batting cage is a permanent feature, and the Commission discussed ways in which to immediately address the hours of usage through perhaps signage, or regulating usage through locking access.

Next steps: Gene will follow up with HLL and other users of the batting cage; Aaron will keep us posted on when Uniontown expects to be operational, topic added to the July P&R Commission agenda.

- Amy (resident and user of the Chemka Pool) - expressed concern that the sidewalk leading from Hillside Avenue up to the Chemka Pool "T's" into the last parking spot in the handicapped parking area, thereby requiring pedestrians (including young children) to step out into Chemka Road into oncoming car flow to walk around and behind parked vehicles to continue up the hill to access the path to the pool and/or to continue up the hill to pick up the sidewalk past the filter room driveway. Angela echoed this concern, and shared that she personally had experienced driving down the hill when a parent pushing a stroller and a couple of eager preschoolers had stepped out into the road to

get around the cars parked in the handicap spots. Aaron advised that the new construction to repair the drainage system, and subsequent repaving of those last couple handicap spots resulted in the new format. Aaron is working with DPW to see how safety in this area can be improved.

3. Old Business and Upcoming/New Programs:

- Approved and adopted minutes from April 2018 monthly meeting. Angela noted that a quorum was not in order for the May meeting, and therefore updates were given as to ongoing projects but no new business was discussed in the May meeting.
- Waterfront Rezoning Committee - Joanne attended the Committee's May meeting and introduced herself to the WRC Chair Kate Starr and shared that the group really is not ready to receive input yet from a Parks & Rec liaison. Joanne invited any P&R Commission members to attend the WRC meetings until the group reaches out to various community groups to involve them into their process.
- Upcoming/New Programs - Lisa O'Reilly (referencing program flyer handouts)

For young children / preschoolers:

Refer to Chemka brochure for variety of aquatic programming

For school aged children:

Hastings Swarm - Swim Team

For young adults / adults / seniors:

Lifeguard Training - June 24-29 @ Chemka

Water Safety Instructor training - June 25-29 @ Chemka

Seniors - end of year party, June 22 @ JHCC

Seniors - aquatic exercise programs @ Chemka

For Families and the Community:

2018 Summer Concert series presented by River Spirit Music and the Village of Hastings on Hudson will be held on select Tuesdays, 7-9pm @ MacEachron Park (or in the JHCC in the event of rain).

Reference www.RiverSpiritFestival.com

4. New Business

- **Uniontown Park** - update

Aaron reported that a public hearing session to discuss the playground at Uniontown was held at the JHCC on June 7th. Aaron, the Village Manager, and the landscape architect from Gisolfi were on hand as Aaron presented the initial renderings of playground apparatus to the public -- two small structures, made of recycled materials with a natural color scheme and manufactured in the USA. Residents who attended

expressed disappointment that there would not be room for swings, and some residents in attendance suggested rather than two small play structures (geared primarily toward younger children) that we consider one larger structure that might include more interesting features for older children (8-12 years old) as well as an area for the younger children. Aaron coordinated feedback to convey to the playground specialist, and another public session is set for June 28th at which the playground specialist will attend to present revised renderings and answer questions.

David asked if swings might be considered for the area back by the basketball courts, and Anjali suggested that Aaron pitch this question to the playground specialist. Angela reminded the Commission that the topic of swings came up at public hearings in spring 2017 and it was determined at that time (well before the final design of Uniontown was approved) that the new footprint for the playground would not include ample space for swing sets based on county health and industry safety standards.

Commission members planning on attending the June 28th public hearing on the Uniontown Playground include Gene for sure, and John and Angela if schedules allow.

- **Hillside Woods** - update

The Village sponsored a “Public Meeting on Hillside Woods - Tree Inventory and Management Plan” on June 7th at the Hastings Public Library. The purpose of the session, led by urban forestry experts from Land Beyond Sea (LBS) was to discuss the vision of the woods, which included discussion of forest regeneration, restoration of native ecology, public safety and enjoyment of the woods. LBS distributed an informational handout and invitation for residents to complete a survey (this info was also distributed to residents via email blast on and prior to June 7th).

David, Mike and Angela attended the public meeting and reported that the session was well-attended. Forestry expert (Miguel Berrios Land Beyond Sea) indicated that Hillside Woods is in ill health. LBS is tasked to “develop a long-term action plan that contains info and recommendations, and strategy to effectively and proactively manage Hillside Park/Woods.” Several topics came up that sparked resident input, one being the topic of managing the deer population. Several residents expressed support of culling the deer population, which Trustee Lemons responded that suggestion had been discussed in earnest in prior years, and it was decided that culling was not an option for our community. The topic of an enclosure fence surrounding Hillside Woods also sparked input from residents in attendance, who expressed concern that such an option would drive the deer into residents’ properties. There was reference to the Spring 2017 public sessions of Hillside Woods where forestry experts at that time suggested in lieu of culling, the only viable solution they could present at that time was to fence off Hillside Woods to allow regeneration. Overall, the June 7th public meeting was educational, and LBS indicated that they would take input from the evening’s session, in addition to survey input into consideration as they move forward with their work. LBS is hoping to have more info to report come Fall 2018.

- **Quarry Park**

Joanne shared that she received a request from Levi Matza who is working with the Village on obtaining NY State grant funding for the remediation of / creation of a park at the Quarry Park location. The request was for the P&R Commission to provide a letter of support (reference draft provided by Levi) to supply to the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Parks program by June 29th.

Commission members expressed that they are concerned about providing a letter of support unless we are sure that any shortfall in funding for the completion of Quarry Park does not come at the expense of other Parks & Recreation priorities that serve a broader population (citing the long standing concern of investing Village financial resource into a park that would have limited access to residents and at a site where there is no parking). There was also questions as to the total cost of the project, the amount the grant is seeking, and how addressing any shortfall in funding would be addressed. Joanne offered to seek further clarification on the above from Levi, and communicate that info to Commission members via email in the interest of time, noting that the June 29th deadline would be before our next Commission meeting.

5. Meeting adjourned

Next Meeting: August 16, 2018 - 8:00pm at the James Harmon Community Center

Minutes prepared by: A. Reeve

Minutes adopted on: July 19, 2018