



RYE TOWN PARK COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING HELD APRIL 19, 2016

A regular monthly meeting of the Rye Town Park Commission of the Town and the City of Rye, New York, was held on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 at 6:00P.M. at the Village of Port Chester Courtroom, 350 North Main Street, Port Chester, New York with Commission President Gary J. Zuckerman presiding.

PRESENT: In addition to Commissioner Zuckerman were Commissioners Julie Killian, Paul Rosenberg, Dennis Pilla, Joseph Sack, and Commission Secretary Debbie Reisner

ALSO

PRESENT: Town Attorney Paul Noto, Assistant Park Director – Finance Terry Fanelli, Assistant Park Director – Development William Lawyer, and Town Councilman William Villanova.

ABSENT: Benedict Salanitro

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Bill Lawyer, Assistant Park Director of Development led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. A video recorder and an audio recorder were in use during the proceedings.

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Supervisor Zuckerman called the meeting to order and asked Commission Secretary Debbie Reisner to call the roll. He then invited comments from the public.

Meighan Corbett of 600 Forest Avenue, Rye NY, who identified herself as a member of the Friends of Rye Town Park read a statement that was entered into the minutes as follows:

STATEMENT FROM THE FRIENDS OF RYE TOWN PARK

The Friends of Rye Town Park is a 501(c)3, not-for-profit volunteer citizens' group formed in 1991 by residents of Rye Town (City of Rye, Port Chester, Rye Brook, and Rye Neck.) We work cooperatively with but independently from the Rye Town Park Commission, the municipal body that governs, manages and operates the park and beach.

OUR MISSION is to restore the park's landscape and work to preserve its beauty and historic significance for the enjoyment and passive recreation of the community -- a renaissance that began in 1991 after decades of neglect and deferred maintenance.

Our three main functions are to serve as an advocate for the Park, as an ombudsman organization and to enhance the plantings and maintenance of this passive park. We do not set policy or pricing, we receive no monies from the Rye Town Park Commission or any of the municipalities involved in Rye Town Park (City of Rye, Town of Rye, Village of Rye Brook or Village of Port Chester). In fact, we fundraise privately from community members to fund our mission.

Past projects include: the refurbishment of the duck pond, additional maintenance projects not covered by the park's budget, the decorative fence surrounding the beach amongst many others. Currently, the Friends have continued planting and maintaining the gardens in and around the Park and continuing to support the maintenance of the trees we have planted. For Fall 2016, we will be sharing the cost of planting several new trees with the Commission.

The Friends have carefully reviewed the proposals for the operation of Rye Town Park for 2016, both individually and as a body, and fully endorse the proposal of the City of Rye to run the park. Since the park is located within the City of Rye boundaries, the City has a compelling reason to offer to administer the Park. This proposal has our full endorsement.

Jamie Jensen of 588 Forest Avenue, who identified herself as a frequent user of the park, presented a list of questions and concerns that were entered into the minutes as follows:

Good Evening, I am Jamie Jensen and I live at 588 Forest Avenue, directly across from the Rye Town Park in the City of Rye. I appreciate seeing familiar faces on the Commission and thank you for your continued commitment to our communities.

As a resident of the City of Rye, I use the park frequently, in all seasons. It is a beautiful treasure and one of the reasons my family moved to Rye.

I have a number of questions for the commission but before I share them, I want to thank Bill Lawyer publicly. He cares deeply for the park, works tremendously hard as the 'external relations' officer to the town, representing this tremendous natural asset and is really the "it guy." Anyone I talk to will say he is the person on staff that local residents have a connection to and trust. Anyone you even consider hiring as park director should be vetted by Bill because he understands that this park is more than a revenue generating asset.

Now for my questions – given that the governance process for managing Rye Town Park can seem confusing and at times rushed – I ask that you consider the following when discussing both the Park Director and RFQ Process.

What is the mission of the park and are you managing to that mission in our budgeting?

Who is this park intended to serve? And if it is the 45,000 people living in the Town of Rye, why are 92% of the beach users in the summer non-residents?

If we want to reduce the use of green space and minimize noise, traffic, and trash on and in residential neighborhoods surrounding the park, what strategies are being proposed by those interested in becoming park operators? And by those applying for the Park Director Job?

How will the Park Director you are currently advertising for responsible for the 'park operators' you seek through the RFQ process? Can you explain the relationship between the future Park Operators and Park Director?

How will you advertise the May 14th Public meeting at the park? And how will you insure that the public is kept informed and involved in the RFQ process moving forward?

Ted Stein of 335 Rye Beach Avenue, Rye NY, expressed concern about the shuttle operated by Seaside Johnnies to transport customers between the restaurant in Rye Town Park and the Tiki Bar at Playland. His concerns included: Seaside Johnnies

was operating a private enterprise in a public park for its own personal gain and that the shuttle was unsafe to both passengers and park goers.

Russel Gold of 7 Hayward Place, Rye NY, also expressed his belief that the shuttle is dangerous.

John Ambrose, Part owner of Seaside Johnnies and The Tiki Bar, got up to explain that the shuttle is an added amenity for his guests and there had never been an incident. Mr. Ambrose said the restaurant is a family place and will continue that way. He also states that he has never received permission to run this service from the commission or anyone else.

Phillip Horner of 129 Beach Avenue, Rye Neck NY, expressed that he would like to see the park with minimal commercial use.

David Rasmussen of Central Avenue, Port Chester NY, agreed that commercial activities should be kept to a minimum. He also said the park is meant to serve the residents of the Town of Rye primarily but should not exclude non-residents. He expressed the view that it would be a mistake to make the park a destination similar to Playland. The park is a pastoral green space to have a beautiful view of the Long Island Sound.

Deidra Curren of 71 Halstead Avenue, Harrison NY, identified herself as a former resident of the Town of Rye. She voiced her belief that the shuttle is a huge problem and should be seriously re-thought. They are not safe. She also agrees with the Friends of Rye Town Park in their support for the City of Rye taking over management of Rye Town Park. She also noted that she had observed that the Duck Pond was overflowing its banks.

Assistant Park Director for Development Bill Lawyer, spoke in reference to the Duck Pond noting that the pond was renovated to filter run off from the City of Rye through the pond before it goes to Long Island Sound. He thought that construction going on in the area and could potentially be affecting the pond.

John Ambrose, Part owner of Seaside Johnnies and Tiki Bar, spoke again; this time to state that the restaurant shuttle service will cease. He also asked that the commission track and keep notice of the affect the price increase will have on the number of guests.

Edward Cronan of 1 Landmark Square, Port Chester NY, spoke about the dual jurisdiction of the Rye Town Park Commission. He agreed that the City of Rye should take over management but worried about how financial arrangements could potentially affect the park.

Commissioner Zuckerman Closed Public Comment and called for a motion to adopt the minutes.

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ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Sack, said that before he could vote to approve the minutes of the March 30th Special Session, they would need to be revised to reflect more details regarding the discussion on the selection of an auditor. Approval of the March 30th Special Session minutes was tabled.

On a motion by Commissioner Rosenberg and seconded by Commissioner Sack the minutes from Rye Town Park Commission Meeting held on March 15, 2016 were approved.

VOICE VOTE
AYES: Commissioner Zuckerman, Commissioner Sack,
Commissioner Killian, Commissioner
Rosenberg.
NOES: None
ABSTENSIONS: Commissioner Pilla

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REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF VOLLYBALL PROGRAM

Presentation made by Joe Pecora, Vice President of Rye Town Youth Football and Cheerleading, in request for approval to continue with the Volleyball program. He explained that the program is run as a fundraiser for Port Chester Youth Football or Cheerleading.

On a motion to approve from Commissioner Sack and seconded by Commissioner Rosenberg, the program was approved.

VOICE VOTE
AYES: Commissioner Zuckerman, Commissioner Sack,
Commissioner Killian, Commissioner Pilla
Commissioner Rosenberg.
NOES: None
ABSTENSIONS:

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REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RYE LIBRARY PROGRAM

Chris Shoemaker, Director of The Rye Free Reading Room requested permission to sponsor a reading program for children in the park's Pavilion on seven Tuesday mornings at 9:30 AM, from July 5th through August 16th. He also asked that parking fees for those participating be reduced to \$2.00 per car.

VOICE VOTE

AYES: Commissioner Zuckerman, Commissioner Sack,
Commissioner Killian, Commissioner Pilla
Commissioner Rosenberg.
NOES: None
ABSTENSIONS:

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PARK MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Park Management Report was presented by Acting Park Director Terry Fanelli.

Rye Town Park - Management Report From March 10 to April 14 2016 -

Overview - Getting the park ready for the “beach season” is now the staff’s priority.

Maintenance - The large braches blown down by storms on Feb. 24 and March 28 have been removed.

We are moving forward with the Pond and Lake Connection Company to get the DEC treatment permit in place for end of April.

Bill Lawyer had several conversations with FRTP board member Charlie Northshield about the various aspects of maintenance of the park’s grounds and where the Friends will provide assistance.

Parking, Security and Safety - Bill Lawyer posted the smoke free zones signs in the park bulletin boards March 12. The Rye City Police reported a car parked in the RTP lot at 1:30 am. April 2nd.

Beach Operations - Nothing to report. We’ve had no significant sand erosion so far.

Finances - We are still waiting for a complete financial report for the park’s operations in 2015.

The cashier and permit computers and related items are being brought to the park for setup. Terry Fanelli is arranging to have new permit and daily visitor fees signs printed as we started charging pre-season fees for parking.

After the resident and non-resident fees were voted upon by the RTPC, park staff updated the new and renewal letters that go out to previous permit holders and residents of Town of Rye, City of Rye, Port Chester and Rye Brook.

Personnel - A number of staff from last summer will be working again this year. Terry Fanelli (Finance), Larry Miano (Security/Parking) and Sal Valenti,

(Maintenance) as well as some grounds workers started work on April 4. Other staff will be coming on in the coming weeks.

The park is introducing a new payroll system that will involve a digital “punch in-punch out system for recording work hours. The software includes useful management tools.

Debbie Reisner reports that the search for a new Park Director is on going. Applications have been received and screened, with the best candidates’ resumes being sent to the RTP Commissioner.

Until a new Director is hired and on board, Terry Fanelli is Acting Director.

Programs, Permits and Fees -

Bill Lawyer and Terry Fanelli updated last year’s resident permit letters to reflect the changed permit fees for non-residents, and Debbie Reisner arranged for them to be printed and mailed. They will be going out by mid-April.

Marie Considine, the NAMI walk coordinator requested they be allowed to mount supportive ribbons on some of the Park trees during the month of May. It was approved at the March 15 meeting.

Bill Lawyer reports that all 7 bands for the Twilight Tuesdays concert series are set, and we will be sending out contracts in late April.

Members of the New York State Young Birders Club came on a field trip to RTP March 12th. They also visited Edith Read Sanctuary and Playland.

The Rye High Performance track club has signed an agreement with the park to use the “overflow parking” area for track training on Mondays from 3:30 to 4:30 from April 11 through early June.

Debbie Reisner and Bill Lawyer attended the first Triathlon planning meeting, held at Playland on May 21. Prospective RTP director Peter Neglia also attended.

Park Development

Debbie reported that the park spent over \$2,000 on plastic water bottles last year.

Bill spoke with lifeguard captain Mark Cassata, who said that we would need to have stainless steel bottles from 16 to 20 ounces, with a screw on top and a bandolier handle. We would need to get a label maker to put employee names on.

Prices range from \$8 to \$15 per bottle for our needed number. SoulCycle uses the “camelback” style that is attached to the bike holders, which would not work for us.

At Debbie Reisner’s request, Bill Lawyer is looking for sponsors who would donate the cost of RTP converting from non-reusable plastic water bottles to reusable one -

- enough for everyone on the staff plus extras -- from 100 to 150. The total cost would be about \$2,000.

He has spoken to the PEAK radio station marketing person, and he has contacted David Kiser, the promotions person for Mrs. Green's. Flyers were sent out to members of the Port Chester-Rye Brook Chamber of Commerce.

So far we have received contributions totaling \$2,460 toward the outdoor movie ("Because of Wynn Dixie) the pre-movie Magic show, the concert series, and Shakespeare ("12th Night").

Bill Lawyer put in the order for 3 sugar maples (total of 6) for planting along the west side, and 3 American sycamores (total of 6) for the northeast section of the park. The cost to RTP will be \$550 for the 12 trees, thanks to the NYPA match. The trees will be delivered for planting in the fall. The fee for planting the 12 trees is \$1,300. FRTP will contribute half the cost for the trees and planting.

Bill Lawyer met with Rye resident and sculptor Bob Clyatt to discuss the possibility of mounting a large outdoor sculpture in the park in late summer into the fall. A brief description of the work and sculptor is attached. We still have to work out the logistics, safety and cost of the project -- and who would sponsor it.

The Westchester County Children's Museum is now open on a year round basis. We hope to partner with them in activities and funding for projects.

Bill Lawyer and Debbie Reisner met with park neighbor Jamie Jenson on March 11, to discuss areas where might be able volunteer to help promote and improve the park. A group of students at Rye HS have expressed interest in projects this fall.

Bill Lawyer prepared a draft press release about the Community Conversation event scheduled for RTP on Saturday, May 14, from 10-11:30 a.m. Once finally approved, these will be sent out to local media and flyers posted on the bulletin boards.

As was widely reported in the local media, 6 RFQ proposals were submitted, 5 to run the entire park, and 1 to run the restaurant. These will be discussed at the April RTPC meeting.

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On a motion by Commissioner Sack seconded by Commissioner Killian, the off season parking rate for residents was reduced from \$7.00 to \$5.00.

VOICE VOTE

AYES: Commissioner Zuckerman, Commissioner Sack,
Commissioner Killian, Commissioner Pilla
Commissioner Rosenberg.

NOES: None

ABSTENSIONS: None

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DISCUSSION OF SELECTION PROCESS FOR PARK DIRECTOR

Supervisor Zuckerman noted that a number of applicants had responded to the job posting for park director. He asked each commissioner to share his or her thoughts as to how to proceed in the selection process.

Commissioner Pilla suggested the commissioners narrow down the field to their top three applicants and interview those individuals. He also wanted everyone to consider whether or not it was necessary to have a change for this season, given that much of the staff was new.

Commissioner Rosenberg agreed the applicant pool should be narrowed to the top three. He noted that Terry Fanelli had been doing a great job and voiced his support that she be considered for the position permanently.

Commissioner Sack said he was focusing on the positive outcome of the March 30 Special Session and praised the group effort. He articulated the view that it made the most sense to continue with Fred Gioffre, the previous Park Director. He noted the commission could review the selection process for Park Director for the following season when there was more time.

Commissioner Killian said that she was not comfortable hurrying this decision especially with all the changes to staff. She proposed the commission interview five applicants.

Supervisor Zuckerman agreed with Commissioner Killian that the top five applicants should interviewed. He noted that Terry Fanelli had been doing a great job and voiced his support that she be considered for the position permanently as well.

In a motion by Commissioner Rosenberg, seconded by Commissioner Killian, the commissioners interrupted the public meeting to go into executive session to discuss specific personnel matters regarding the selection of a park director.

VOICE VOTE

AYES: Commissioner Zuckerman, Commissioner Sack, Commissioner Killian, Commissioner Pilla
Commissioner Rosenberg.

NOES: None

ABSTENSIONS: None

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Commission resumed public session.

Commissioner Zuckerman announced that the commission will hold a Special Session on Sunday May 1, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. This session will take place at Rye Brook

Village Hall and the commissioners will immediately go into executive session to conduct interviews and discussion regarding selection of a park director.

On a motion by Commissioner Rosenberg, seconded by Commissioner Pilla the Commission approved the scheduling of a Special Session as outlined above.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES:	Commissioner Zuckerman, Commissioner Sack, Commissioner Killian, Commissioner Pilla Commissioner Rosenberg.
NOES:	None
ABSTENSIONS:	None

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DISCUSSION OF THE RFQ PROCESS

Commissioner Zuckerman noted that there are several responses to the Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) that were sent out by the commission. He recommended the commission outline a process to choose one or none to go forward with. Discussion ensued amongst commission members.

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COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING THE RFQ PROCESS

Howard Viesz speaking on behalf of the 76 Homeowners at Waters Edge said he did not believe that the proposals were worthy of consideration. His view was that it would be nice to make the park self-sustaining but not through commercial means.

Lindsay Jackson, of 1308 Sherman Avenue, Mamaroneck, who is also a councilwoman for the Town of Rye spoke regarding her concerns about the RFQ submissions and in particular that of the City of Rye. She believed that the City of Rye was being given an unfair advantage because Commissioner Sack, who also is the active Mayor to the City is pushing for the City of Rye Proposal. She wanted all of the proposals to be handled in a way that is clear, concise and even handed.

Commissioner Sack agreed that everyone was working toward the same goal.

Commissioner Pilla requested the commission obtain an opinion from legal opinion as to whether the commission would have to adhere to the State Park Alienation process before moving forward with any proposals that would be put before it.

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NEW BUSINESS

REGARDING THE SALARY FOR THE ACTING PARK DIRECTOR AND TWO EMPLOYEES WHO'S RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE INCREASED.

On a motion by Commissioner Rosenberg, seconded by Commissioner Pilla the following amendment was adopted,

WHEREAS, the following changes to staffing would be made:

1. Teresa Fanelli will be compensated at the rate given to the prior Park Director until notice is give or until a new and permanent Park Director is chosen; and
2. That Katherine Aguilar and Luke Glockenberg will be compensated by an additional \$2.00 (two dollars) an hour above their current compensation in lieu of the 2% (two percent) increase, until further notice is given or until a new and permanent Park Director is chosen.

BE IT FURTHUR RESOLVED, that Teresa Fanelli, Katherine Aguilar and Luke Glockenberg will be compensated in the above mentioned manner.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES:	Commissioner Zuckerman, Commissioner Sack, Commissioner Killian, Commissioner Pilla Commissioner Rosenberg.
NOES:	None
ABSTENSIONS:	None

Dated April 19, 2016