

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, December 7, 2023** – 3 pages

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by David Bush, Chairman at Simsbury Town Hall. Other commission members who were present included Lori Coppinger, Danielle Celli, Liz Keppel, Christine Boswell, Michelle Lipar, Kelly Kearney, Tim Walczak, and Erik Petersen. The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski and Board of Selectmen Liaison, Diana Yeisley were also in attendance.

Public Session – Comments limited to 3 minutes per person. Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

No comments.

Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission Member Comments

No comments.

Minutes- October 26, 2023 Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Mr. Bush declared the October 26, 2023 minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

New Business

Mr. Tyburski introduced Diana Yeisley, recently elected to the Board of Selectmen. She will be the new liaison to C.P.R.

Simsbury Farms Golf Course End of Season Report – Brian Johnson, Golf Course Superintendent, shared that they started out with a very warm winter last year and started putting up new driving range nets in March (as the ground never froze). They also had a huge project with the irrigation pond dam, which was mandated by DEEP. That project took them to about mid-April. After that, they had the irrigation system replacement project, which began the last week of August and was completed the day after Thanksgiving. Mr. Johnson shared that there were about 20 days where they had to rake out the bunkers due to complete washouts from the weather. He also stated that they skipped mowing as much as possible after large rain events, which he feels helped the condition of the course. They also had their 10-year OSHA inspection, they did pretty well with only a couple of minor violations. For future projects, they will begin working on the extension of cart paths and possibly some tee leveling.

Mr. Bush asked what the Commission can do for Mr. Johnson to assist him in doing his job. Mr. Johnson shared that he feels they are in good shape at this time. They are working with an architect on the drainage/cart paths. Mr. Tyburski shared that as they close out the dam and irrigation project, they were able to get the BOS to open the cap on the revenue fund balance at the golf course so going forward all the capital projects at the golf course are being proposed to funded with excess revenues in the Parks and Recreation Fund. Mr. Kearney asked if money were no object, what would Mr. Johnson do? Mr. Johnson shared that the drainage/cart paths project is huge and he would rebuild bunkers.

Mr. Verrengia, Golf Professional, shared the 2022 gross amount for the golf course was \$1,260,718. Year 2023 was \$1,307,371. For carts they were down \$8,232 and the range was down \$3,710 (both due to rain). Greens fees were up \$5,122, season passes were up \$35,684, and the maintenance surcharge was up \$21,957 for a total of \$50,821. In 2022, the number of rounds played round was 42,300, this past year it was 42,600. There were 216 season passes sold in 2022 and this past year there were 248 passes sold.

The ladies' club had a cap of 72 players, the senior men were also capped at 60. There are night leagues Monday through Thursday with 2-4 leagues per night. There were 17-20 outings that were 80 players or above. The parent-child tournament is a very popular event for them, this year they had 32 teams. The Friday night couples league was cancelled three times due to rain. They estimated 14-15 foursomes (the max is 72). U.S. Kids is usually held in April and they get 100-125 kids (aged 5-16), majority are outside of the state. Mr. Verrengia also shared that they have about 7k emails for their email blasts. He also shared that in May 2024, they are hosting the CCC Girls Golf Tournament, which is about 14 teams from the Central Connecticut area. They are also putting in a new ladies' tee on number 7. They also plan to put a new combo course in.

Mr. Kearney asked if money was no object for Mr. Verrengia, what would he do? Mr. Verrengia also shared cart path expansion.

Ms. Yeisley shared that she wanted to recognize the course for hosting Special Olympics golf, stating it is a gift for the community.

2024 Simsbury Farms Golf Course Proposed Fees – Mr. Tyburski shared they started to address areas they left behind in previous increases, i.e. weekday specials, carts, and some season passes. Based on the past few years of play, the proposed changes would generate \$55k in additional income which goes to cover the contractual staff increases and agricultural price increases. Mr. Bush commented that essentially raising the active military rate \$10 over two years is a 40% increase, which seems a little aggressive. However, he stated what makes him comfortable about the rates is the market analysis and they are right in line with other courses.

Mr. Tyburski shared that the Commission can vote to endorse the rates as amended leaving the active military rates the same, the proposed fees would then be added to an upcoming BOS agenda for final approval. Mr. Kearney made a motion to approve the golf course proposed fees as presented with the amendment of leaving the active military rate the same. Ms. Keppel seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

2024 Summer Aquatics and Day Camp Proposed Fees – Mr. Tyburski shared that he uses a four-year rolling average (outside of 2020) for the revenue projections. He stated that they are at the point right now where season passes are starting to become unaffordable. They are going to take the chance in keeping the season passes and daily admissions the same. He shared that the Simsbury Farms pool is, at best, a break-even number. The 2024 pre-season sale will go until May 31st. In the future, instead of a family pass, they may look into selling a 1-person pass, 2-person, etc. They are increasing the cost of swim lessons due to the cost of staff.

Mr. Tyburski shared that day camp costs have increased as well (i.e. increasing staff to take in more kids, minimum wage and the cost of bringing in entertainers, etc.). Adventure Camp has not been done since 2019 (due to the elimination of the Rec. Supervisor position). Ms. Huysman will supervise Adventure Camp this summer with Mr. Tyburski overseeing Camp Stuff -Ta-Doo. The goal is to start camp registration in mid to late January.

Ms. Keppel made a motion to approve the fees as proposed. Ms. Celli seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

2024 Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission Proposed Meeting Dates- Mr. Tyburski shared the proposed dates mirror the current schedule. The one exception is the March meeting would be the third Thursday instead of the 4th Thursday due to the flashlight egg hunt. Ms. Keppel asked if one of the summer meetings could be held at Simsbury Farms. After discussion, the June meeting will be held at Simsbury Farms. Mr. Kearney made a motion to approve the proposed meeting dates amending the June meeting location to Simsbury Farms. Ms. Copping seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Old Business

Simsbury Celebrates 2023 Recap – Mr. Tyburski shared that this event has been in Town for 32 years. This year roughly 20k people attended. He shared it was a great event and everyone had a great time.

Simsbury Farms Playground Update – Mr. Tyburski shared that the ribbon cutting was yesterday. There were roughly 250 kids/adults there. He is thrilled how the playground turned out. Ms. Yeisley commented that she is so proud about how accessible it is. Mr. Tyburski commented that they have already had three meetings regarding the renovations at Rotary Park coming in the next four years.

Adjourn

Ms. Lipar made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Walczak seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be January 25, 2024 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,
Commission Clerk