

**TOWN OF SALEM
RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

PRESENT

Mary Durkee, Chairperson
Debra Delorimiere, Vice Chairperson (8:12 p.m.)
Deirdre Ahern
Lisa MarcAurele
Agnes Valentini
Steven Wlodarczyk

ABSENT

Casey Crafton
Eric McGlone

1. Call to Order
Chairperson Durkee called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2023
M/S/C: Wlodarczyk/MarcAurele, to approve the October 16, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.
3. Alterations to the Agenda – *none*
4. Public Comment/Guests/Correspondence – *none*
5. Budget Report
The Commission reviewed the Budget Report, which appears to be on track. It was noted that the Weekend Custodian position continues to be open.
 - a. FY2024/25 Capital Plan
The FY2024/25 Capital Plan Working Group will meet next Wednesday, November 29, to finalize the Commission’s Capital Plan request, which will include the possibility of moving up the Pavilion Project at Bob Appleby Fields at Volunteer Park.
6. Recreation Program Coordinator’s Report
The Commissioners reviewed the Report. Last week’s Futsal clinic was canceled at the last minute by the School due to maintenance. Commissioners Durkee and Valentini are planning to attend next week’s clinic. The Seniors and Strollers Walking is on hold, pending an individual(s) to spearhead the program and ensure that walkers are signing in and out. The Chairperson and Coordinator were open to walking with the group. Commissioner Valentini, who will be meeting with some of the Salem Seniors, will

investigate their possible interest in spearheading the group. She will also speak with them regarding their possible interest in a weekly Chair Yoga session and the best times to hold the classes.

Appreciation was extended to the Commissioners for all of their hard work and for attending the Trick or Trunk event, which was very successful.

The Commissioners agreed to allocate funds for the Disc Golf Course plaque.

M/S/C: Durkee/Delorimiere, to allocate an amount not to exceed \$650.00 for the design, manufacturing, delivery, and installation of the Disc Golf Course Plaque. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

7. Salem Seniors Group Report

Commissioner Liaison Valentini reported that this Thursday's BINGO game is canceled due to the Thanksgiving holiday and will resume the following Thursday. The Salem Seniors met at Salem School this month for their regular meeting and were treated with a holiday luncheon and entertained with a short concert held by the preschoolers. They will be hosting a Holiday Luncheon, catered by Two Brothers Restaurant, on January 2, at the Salem Volunteer Fire Company. The Salem Seniors have agreed to name their hiking group, Salem Senior Striders, and have begun walking along the trails throughout the town. The membership fee for the Salem Seniors will be raised from \$5.00 to \$10.00. The Salem Seniors Group now boasts 150 members.

8. ARPA Projects

a. Round Hill Road Bathrooms

An estimate of the Engineering and Architect costs for two ADA-accessible bathrooms at Round Hill Road is pending. Estimates for the construction of the bathrooms will be sought after the plans are drawn up. Commissioner Valentini proposed the possibility of including a changing station inside the bathroom(s).

A request to gauge the condition of the bathrooms will be re-submitted to the Public Works Department, per Salem Little League's request to open the existing bathrooms. If opened, Salem Little League agreed to clean the bathrooms during the season.

b. Trails & Kiosk/Info Center – Emergency Trail Markers, Harris Brook Trail Signage
Chairperson Durkee reported that Fossil Industries, who will be generating the revised trail map to be posted at the Music Vale and School entrances of the trail, will be holding the deposits made to date as the Commission works on revising the map.

Commissioners Ahern and Durkee walked the Multi-Purpose Path/Harris Brook Trail with Kim Bradley and, by a chance encounter, Tony Griggs, and Frank Abetti – all of whom provided invaluable input. The purpose of the walk was to provide an overview of the trails and investigate the possibility of extending the existing trails. The project

will be divided into two phases. Phase I will include improving the markings on the existing trails and Phase II will involve extending the trail so that it connects to the Round Hill Road fields and, possibly, the neighboring Salem Land Trust property. Commissioner Ahern volunteered to flag the existing trails and suggested maintaining the flags for a period of time to allow the Commissioners and the public to provide any feedback they might have. After the existing trails are finalized, the location of the directional and emergency markings will be determined and placed. The Commission plans to submit a grant application offered by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) the following year to help fund the extension of the trails.

During the walk, attention was directed to a tree that had fallen in the waterway and should be removed due to the resulting flooding in the vicinity of one of the bridges. A Wetlands Application will be submitted to gain permission to remove the fallen tree. It was also suggested that the trails be maintained twice a year. The possibility of hosting a trail maintenance day as part of CT Trails Day was raised.

The Commissioners discussed whether to remove the Meadow Trail which is located south of the school and neighboring property. It was noted that, should the trail be removed, the route for future Fun Run events will need to be re-routed.

9. Unfinished Business

a. Holiday Activities & Tree Lighting event

The Commission will host Holiday Activities one hour before the Tree Lighting event at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 2. The activities will include the receipt of an Elf name, Letters to Santa station, the creation of Christmas ornaments which may be kept or placed on the town tree, and face painting. The volunteers will include four (4) eighth-grade students and two (2) high school students. The Girl Scout Troop will be providing the cookies. Water and juice boxes will also be available. Goody bags will also be distributed to the attendees. A request will be submitted to the Public Works Department to place the lights on the tree. \$100.00 will be provided to the eighth-grade class for the students' involvement and \$200.00 will be allocated for the entertainment. The Commissioners will meet from 1:30 to 2:00 p.m. to set up the decorations and prepare for the activities.

M/S/C: Ahern/Valentini, to allocate an amount not to exceed \$600.00 for the Holiday Activities and Tree Lighting event. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

b. Field Use Policy

The Field Use Policy continues to be in progress. The Policy will be divided into the use of the pavilion, disc golf course, baseball/softball fields, and soccer fields. It was

agreed not to rent the pavilion, which is open to all of the town's residents on a first-come, first-served basis, or soccer fields, due to the resulting wear and tear of the fields. A brief discussion was held regarding the usage of the baseball/softball fields. If rented, it was agreed that the fields would only be available for use during the fall and the consensus was to limit the rentals to practices only. Other items for consideration included renting the fields on a first-come, first-served basis or limiting it to teams with Salem residents only, collecting a refundable deposit, limiting the days/times the field would be open for rent, and creating a rental policy. The possibility of renting out the Disc Golf Course was also raised. It was confirmed that Salem Recreation-sponsored leagues and/or events would have priority in all cases. The goal is to finalize the Policy by the spring of 2024.

c. Public Safety Day Event

The event will be held in partnership with Salem School and discussions will begin in January. The event is currently planned to take place in April and will expand upon the School's current Public Safety Day. Some ideas for Recreation-hosted tables included Bike and Sports Safety, Solar Eclipse Viewing Safety, and Trail Safety. The Sports Safety table may include information regarding the importance of warming up and cooling down, keeping hydrated, and resting. Possible giveaway items include water, water bottles, reflectors, and bags/backpacks. Physiocare will be contacted regarding the possibility of providing a presentation. Depending on the date of the event, a Solar Eclipse table, promoting the April 8 Solar Eclipse, that includes information regarding viewing safety and may include the distribution of safety glasses provided by CT NASA (Connecticut National Aeronautics and Space Administration) through the Library. Chairperson Durkee has also spoken with the Library which is organizing a Solar Eclipse program. The Trail Safety table may include information promoting respect for the trails.

d. Plan of Conservation & Development Action Steps (Five-Year Plan)

Part of the Five-Year Plan includes developing the Bob Appleby Fields at Volunteer Park, beginning with the Pavilion and the ADA-accessible playground. The Working Group will be meeting at 8:00 a.m. at the Round Hill Road playground, followed by a meeting with the Representative from Burke Playgrounds at 9:00 a.m. at Appleby Fields at Volunteer Park this Wednesday, November 22. Commissioner Valentini is awaiting the receipt of pricing for an ADA-accessible Expression Swing and musical/sensory items from Creative Playgrounds. The Representative also plans to view both locations. Once the Commission determines the elements to include in the playground and their estimated cost, they will begin discussing the funding, including the possibility of obtaining a grant. Also discussed was the addition of a walking trail around the perimeter of Volunteer Park, the possibility of adding additional pickleball courts at one of the town's facilities, and adding power to the proposed Pavilion.

Commissioner Delorimiere entered the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

e. Drop-in Friday Nights for Middle Schoolers

Chairperson Durkee reported that the idea to host a Drop-in Friday Night event(s) for sixth to eighth-grade students was well-received by three (3) of the Salem PTO members and some of the parents who attended the futsal clinic. She hopes to receive input from the Salem PTO regarding the types of activities the students might enjoy and begin planning the event(s).

f. Newsletter

The revised newsletter/brochure was reviewed by the Commissioners. The goal is to mail the newsletter to each household in March, promoting the Town's facilities, activities, and summer camps and clinics. It may also include information regarding Field Use. Commissioner Valentini questioned the possibility of hosting additional concerts featuring lower-priced bands. It was noted that an additional summer concert in July will be added next year. The conflict between the school's Back to School event in August with the August concert was briefly discussed.

g. Working Group

The Working Group will be meeting this Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. at the Round Hill Road Playground, followed by a 9:00 a.m. meeting with the Burke Playgrounds Representative at Volunteer Park. On Wednesday, November 29, the Working Group will be meeting to discuss the Capital Plan request, and Wednesday, December 6 to discuss the Field Usage Policy. The latter two meetings will be held at Town Hall.

10. New Business

a. Approve the 2024 Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Dates

M/S/C: Durkee/Wlodarczyk, to approve the 2024 Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Dates as follows: January 22, February 26, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, October 21, November 18, and December 16. The meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Monday of every month, with the exception of the January and February meetings which will be held on the fourth Monday of the month due to the holidays. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

b. Election of Officers

M/S/C: Valentini/Ahern, to nominate and re-elect Chairperson Durkee as the Chairperson of the Recreation Commission. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Valentini/Wlodarczyk, to nominate and re-elect Vice Chairperson Delorimiere as the Vice Chairperson of the Recreation Commission. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

c. Allocation of Annual Funds to Salem Youth Little League

M/S/C: Valentini/Wlodarczyk, to allocate \$2,000.00 to Salem Youth Little League. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

d. Request for Addition of Baseball/Softball Field

The Commissioners agreed to table the discussion, pending additional information regarding the funding and the construction of the field.

11. Adjournment

M/S/C: Valentini/MarcAurele, to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem