

**TOWN OF SALEM  
RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.  
SALEM TOWN HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

**The minutes submitted below have been filed in accordance with  
Section 1-225 of the CT General Statutes. They are subject to final approval with or without  
amendments by a vote of the Economic Development Commission.  
Approval and any such amendments will be detailed in subsequent minutes.**

**PRESENT**

Mary Durkee, Chairperson  
Deirdre Ahern  
Eric McGlone  
Jeff Pugatch  
Agnes Valentini  
Steven Wlodarczyk

**ABSENT**

Debra Delorimiere, Vice Chairperson  
Casey Crafton

**1. Call to Order**

Chairperson Durkee called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

- a. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2024

**M/S/C: McGlone/Pugatch, approve the January 22, 2024 Recreation Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

**3. Alterations to the Agenda**

The following items were moved to follow Item 4, Public Comment/Guests/Correspondence:

- 9(a) Salem Little League Request for Additional Baseball/Softball Field
- 10(a) Salem Little League Requests
  - 1) Additional Flagpole
  - 2) Lighting for Current Flagpole
  - 3) No Alcohol/Smoking Signage

The following item was added to the Agenda, to follow the above item:

- 6. Disc Golf Clinic(s)

**4. Public Comment/Guests/Correspondence – none**

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*Debra Delorimiere*

**5. Salem Little League Requests**

**a. Additional Baseball/Softball Field**

Chairperson Durkee stated that, while the Commission voted to support Little League's request for an additional baseball/softball field during their January Regular Meeting, some of the Commissioners, upon further consideration, voiced additional concerns and wished to revisit the request. Commissioner Ahern stated that she submitted an e-mail expressing her concerns and requested additional information regarding how the drainage issue(s) would be resolved and the usage of the proposed skinned field. Chairperson Durkee added that she has been researching the request, including making inquiries with high school coaches, who questioned the usage of the field.

Salem Little League Board of Directors Member and Coach Jessica Fletcher stated that the issue involves the number of players and the lack of fields to accommodate all of the teams. The current fields accommodate the Minor and Major League teams for baseball and softball. This season, Salem will also host a 50/70 Team. She clarified that the League is not requesting that the Commission fund the entire project. Rather, their primary purpose was to request permission to construct the field.

|                        |                        |   |
|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <u>Player Numbers:</u> | Girls' Softball Teams: | two (2) Coach-Pitch<br>one (1) Player-Pitch<br>one (1) Major                        |
|                        | Boys' Baseball Teams:  | two (2) Coach-Pitch<br>two (2) Player-Pitch<br>one (1) Major<br>one (1) 50/70 teams |
|                        | Tee Ball Teams:        | five (5)  |

Most of the teams play two (2) games per week, one home and one away, Monday through Thursday, and, because there are no lights at the fields, only one (1) game is played each day. Most Player-Pitch and Majors teams request no weekend games to accommodate those players who play on travel teams or engage in other activities. Practices are held on the soccer field. The scheduling is arranged by the District. The goal is to have the proposed field available for use by both baseball and softball for practices and games. The existing Babe Ruth field cannot accommodate the teams due to its configuration. The previous years' numbers were provided as follows:

- 2021, 143 players
- 2022, 153 players
- 2023, 137 players
- 2024, 143 players, approximately 50 of which are tee ball players

A breakdown of the teams and their respective players will be provided.

Accommodation for Middle School League (Commissioner McGlone) – It is possible to design the field to accommodate a Middle School League. The School currently does not offer a softball/baseball program and, while it has been discussed, it was determined that doing so would result in the loss of players as they would need to decide whether to play in a recreation, school, and/or travel league.

Soccer Field Drainage Issues (Commissioners Ahern and Durkee) – The need to hire an engineer to resolve the drainage issues on the field was recognized. It was noted that the School Soccer Coach prefers playing at the Bob Appleby Fields on Forsyth Road.

Other Uses (Commissioners Durkee and Valentini) – The back portion of the field would remain open for free play. The entire complex, including the soccer field, is currently used by the School for Field Day for the 7th and 8th graders.

Final Project Cost (Chairperson Durkee) – The \$35,000.00 estimate includes the fencing and the clay. The volunteers would provide the labor.

Usage of Bingham Field, a.k.a., School Field (Chairperson Durkee) – Because Track & Field, which is comprised of approximately 100 children, utilize the area at the same time, it is not possible to use the School Field.

Little League Practices (Commissioner Valentini) – Practices usually begin at 5:30 p.m. to accommodate those children who are involved in other activities.

Temporary/Interim Solution (Commissioner McGlone) – The installation of additional batting cages may be helpful in the interim.

Tarps – Salem Little League will be purchasing and placing tarps to cover the pitching mounds and home plate on the baseball and softball fields to protect them from being graded when the field is dragged.

Commissioner McGlone recalled that their decision to support the additional field was based on the fact that baseball and softball are the single sustainable recreation program in the town and establishing an additional field would provide the players with the opportunity to engage in additional practice time. Chairperson Durkee reiterated that they are not opposed to an additional field, but felt that it was important for them to take the time to fully discuss and review the request.

Chairperson Durkee thanked Salem Little League Board of Directors Member and Coach Fletcher for attending their meeting, providing the information, and responding to their questions.

**M/S/C: Durkee/Valentini, to reconsider their previous vote during the January 22, 2024, Recreation Commission Regular Meeting, to support the addition of a skinned baseball/softball field on the existing soccer field at Lou Ulffer's Sports Complex by Salem Little League. Discussion: Commissioner**

**McGlone expressed his concerns that the item would be forgotten after being tabled. Voice vote, 5-0-1. Voting in Favor: Commissioners Ahern, McGlone, Valentini, Wlodarczyk, and Durkee. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Commissioner Pugatch.**

**b. Additional Flagpole**

A brief discussion ensued regarding the request to repair the current flagpole. An e-mail was received from the Public Works Foreman stating that the flagpole was previously repaired and appears to be in working condition. A question will be posed to the Town Hall and Public Works staff regarding their possible knowledge of the flag that was placed at the field by the League.

The Commissioners briefly discussed Salem Little League's request for permission to install an additional flagpole that would be visible from all of the fields at all times. It was felt that the existing flag was visible from all of the fields and it was not necessary to install an additional flagpole at this time.

**M/S/C: Durkee/Wlodarczyk, to deny Salem Little League's request for an additional flagpole between the two fields at this time. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

**c. Lighting for current Flagpole**

The status of the lighting will be investigated.

**d. No Alcohol/Smoking Signage**

A request will be made to purchase and install signage at the Town's properties.

**6. Disc Golf Clinic(s)**

Chairperson Durkee introduced Former Commissioner and Disc Golf Enthusiast Crispin Fresco-Hawes, who was approached regarding the possibility of hosting a Disc Golf Clinic(s) to introduce the sport to the residents. Disc Golf Enthusiast and Elementary School Physical Education Teacher Fresco-Hawes currently hosts a summer enrichment program for children in Canterbury. He proposed hosting a one-time one-hour family clinic one weekend morning. Practice baskets will be made available for use. Sign-ups will be requested and free discs will be provided to the participants. The Clinic will be hosted on Saturday, May 4, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and will be offered at no charge to all ages; children 12 and under must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Shorter Range Tee Pads – To make the course more beginner-friendly, shorter-range tee pads will be installed. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$5,000.00.

**M/S/C: Ahern/Wlodarczyk, to allocate an amount not to exceed \$250.00 for the purchase of discs for the Disc Golf Clinic(s). Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

**7. Budget Report**

**a. FY2024/25 Capital Plan & Operating Budget Update**

The Commissioners reviewed the Budget. The status of the expenditure for the annual allotment to Salem Little League will be investigated.

**6. Recreation Program Coordinator's Report**

The Commissioners reviewed the Recreation Program Coordinator's Report. Chairperson Durkee will be speaking with the School Volleyball Coach regarding the possibility of hosting a summer volleyball clinic for Recreation.

Commissioner McGlone agreed to investigate the possibility of locating an individual to host a basketball clinic.

Approximately 30 registrations have been received for the Spring SoccerShots camp. The camp will be held on Sunday mornings from April 7 to May 26 at Bob Appleby Fields on Forsyth Road. Based on the popularity of the program, a fall session will also be planned.

A BINGO Scavenger Hunt is planned as an Earth Day activity. Participants will be tasked with locating invasive and/or native plants. A short walk along the Harris Brook Trail was taken with UConn Master Gardner Veronika Burlingham to locate plants along the trail. The details will need to be determined. The task will also include fun facts. The cards will be available at Town Hall on or after April 20. The deadline will be approximately one month later, providing the participants with time to hunt for the plants. BINGO winners will receive a small planting.

The Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt will be held this Saturday, March 23, at 1:00 p.m., Salem School, and Salem Little League Opening Day will be held on Saturday, April 20, at 10:00 a.m., Lou Ulffer's Sports Complex.

**7. Salem Seniors Group Report**

The Salem Seniors continue to host BINGO on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. at the Salem Volunteer Fire Company. A Salem Seniors Bus Trip to Newport, RI, is planned for April 15. Information regarding the status of Chair Yoga is forthcoming. A newsletter highlighting their activities may be viewed on the Salem Senior Citizens webpage.

**8. ARPA Projects**

**a. Round Hill Road Bathrooms**

The cleaning company that was recently hired by the Town to clean the Town buildings will be contacted for a price estimate to clean the proposed bathrooms to complete the form and gain the necessary approvals for the project.

**b. Trails & Kiosk/Info Center – *Emergency Trail Markers, Harris Brook Trail Signage***

The preliminary locations of the trail markers have been placed. In reviewing and discussing those areas in need of repair/maintenance along the cross-country course with CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Trails and Greenways Program Coordinator Kimberly Bradley and Salem Land Trust President Linda Schroeder, it was decided that it would be best to re-route the course due to the location of the path (in low-lying areas) where the need to repair and maintain those areas would be constant.

The Trail Blazing Working Group will be meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, March 19, with Salem Land President Schroeder to review and discuss the possibility of joining the trail with the Salem Land Trust's Smuggler's Rock Preserve Trail.

The Town's Emergency Management/Emergency Services Team will be requested to review the trail for any feedback they might have. The trail will be revisited when the foliage is at its peak. The Commissioners were also encouraged to walk the trail and provide feedback.

The possibility of hosting a Trail Clean-up Day on CT Trails Day to clean and maintain the existing trails and to blaze an additional trail(s) was raised. A request has been submitted and approved to cut down a few of the dead trees located along the trail(s).

**9. Unfinished Business**

**a. Salem Little League Request for Addition of Baseball/Softball Field – *see Item 5(a)***

**b. Field Use Policy – *no discussion; in process***

**c. Public Safety Day Event**

The event will be held in May. The Recreation booth will revolve around the theme of sports safety and include an interactive stretching area and an obstacle course comprised of such activities as a hula hoop, jump rope, cones, and a balance beam, with a before and after blood pressure station. Possible giveaways include sunglasses, reflective armbands, or whistles. The possibility of including before and after pulse rates and oxygen levels was also raised.

**d. Plan of Conservation & Development Action Steps (Five-Year Plan) – *no update***

**e. Drop-in Friday Nights**

Due to the timeframe, it was agreed to begin making plans for the events to take place during the next school year.

**f. Newsletter**

The Newsletter is in the process of being finalized for printing and distribution.

**g. Memorial Day Parade**

An After-Event Search & Hike event with patriotic/holiday-related and general items hidden in various locations along the Multi-Purpose Path was discussed. The hike would begin and end on the Town Green. Participants who find a minimum number of items will receive either a Hoodsie Cup or popsicle. The event is held on Memorial Day (Monday, May 27).

Commissioner Valentini proposed the possibility of decorating a float for the Memorial Day Parade. The possibility of decorating the float to not only promote Recreation, but also advertise the After-Event Search & Hike was raised.

**10. New Business**

**a. Community Tag Sale**

The event will be held on Saturday, April 27, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Salem Community Park Pavilion.

**b. Fun Run Series**

The Fun Run Series will be held on Tuesdays, July 9 to August 13 (six weeks), 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. Because the School will be closed, a request to open the Old Library for bathroom use will be submitted. Salem Valley Farms Ice Cream will be approached regarding their continued interest in helping sponsor the event by providing coupons for free ice cream to those who participate in a minimum number of Runs.

**c. Summer Concerts**

An e-mail with a link to the possible bands for this year's Summer Concerts will be sent to the Commissioners for consideration. Other possible band suggestions included the American Honey Band and Hit Play and food trucks included Nando's and Nourish.

**d. Salem Little League Requests – see Items 5(b-d)**

- 1) Additional Flagpole**
- 2) Lighting for current Flagpole**
- 3) No Alcohol/Smoking Signage**

**11. Adjournment**

**M/S/C: Valentini/Durkee, to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting Adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

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

