

**TOWN OF SALEM
RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

PRESENT

Mary Durkee, Chairperson
Debra Delorimiere, Vice Chairperson (8:00 p.m.)
Deirdre Ahern
Casey Crafton
Lisa MarcAurele
Eric McGlone
Agnes Valentini (7:06 p.m.)
Steven Wlodarczyk

ABSENT

none

1. Call to Order
Chairperson Durkee called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2023
M/S/C: MarcAurele/Ahern, to approve the September 18, 2023 Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.
2. Alterations to the Agenda
Item 9(h), Old Business, Disc Golf League, was moved to precede Item 4.

Commissioner Valentini entered the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

3. Disc Golf League
Salem Woods Random Doubles event – Commissioner Wlodarczyk stated that concerns were raised regarding a recent posting for a Salem Woods Random Doubles event in which funds were to be exchanged.

Disc Golf Consultant Rob LeMire explained that every Disc Golf Course establishes a League with a trusted Ambassador who develops a close relationship with the town and organizes events and activities. The Random Doubles event, which was organized by the League, is held every other week and the fees that are collected are given to the winner. The purpose of the event is to encourage members of the community to become involved in the sport. Approximately 14 to 15 individuals take part in the event and occupy two to three

holes at a time. Residents, who may not wish to partake in the event, are welcome to play the Course while the event is taking place.

First Selectman Chmielewski stated that there is currently no mechanism in the Town for paid activities. The definition of gambling and the difference between gambling on a game of chance vs. a game of skill was raised. He also suggested the Commissioners develop a maintenance plan for the Course and its funding. Disc Golf Consultant LeMire stated that the establishment of the League would help develop a community of individuals who would help maintain the Course. First Selectman Chmielewski expressed his support for the Course, adding that he recently nominated the Disc Golf Course Project for the CIRMA Excellence in Risk Management Awards Program, based on its community effort.

Signage stating that No Alcohol, Smoking, and Gambling will be posted in the kiosk.

Disc Golf Course Fund – Disc Golf Consultant LeMire stated that some towns establish a Disc Golf Course Fund into which \$1.00 of the individual fees that are collected is deposited in the fund to help maintain the Course. It was his understanding that former Recreation Commission Chairperson Teri Natoli was investigating the possibility of establishing such a fund.

Disc Golf Course Clinics – Disc Golf Consultant LeMire suggested contacting Resident and Former Recreation Commissioner Crispin Fresco-Hawes regarding the possibility of hosting a clinic(s).

High School Tournaments – Disc Golf Consultant LeMire informed the Commission that two (2) high school students from Old Saybrook are in the process of organizing tournaments for amateur disc golfers at other high schools.

Replacement of Old Turf – Disc Golf Consultant LeMire also requested the possibility of replacing the turf on the older tee pads with new turf that would be safer and provide more friction. Each tee pad measures approximately 5' x 10'. It was estimated that the turf would need to be replaced every ten (10) years. The turf may be removed and refreshed and revitalized like a rug; sand may be also sprinkled on the turf, which also helps keep the dirt from hardening the turf.

Beginner Tee Pads – He also introduced the possibility of installing beginner tee pads that would be located closer to 11 (eleven) of the 18 (eighteen) holes. The beginner tee pads would invite a wider group of players to practice their throwing skills. The pads would be placed on gravel; the old turf may be used.

M/S/C: Valentini/Crafton, to allocate an amount not to exceed \$2,300.00 to purchase turf for 11 (eleven) tee pads and gravel for the new beginner tee pads from Line Item 5-645-645, Maintenance. Discussion: The old tee pads will be used for the beginner tee pads. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor.

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

6. Budget Report

The Commissioners reviewed the Budget Report, to date. Not included in the budget are the following items:

5-645-927, Recreation Programs	Volleyball Lines	\$ 39.99
5-645-645, Maintenance	Tee Pads	\$ 2,300.00

7. Recreation Program Coordinator's Report

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed the submitted report. The Commissioners were encouraged to refer any interested individuals for the School Weekend Custodian position to the School website.

Commissioner Delorimiere entered the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

8. Salem Seniors Group Report

Commissioner Valentini reported that the Salem Seniors' recent meeting primarily involved introductions of the Candidates for the upcoming election.

The Seniors who attend Recreation's Senior Activities at the Library requested notebooks and large print cards. The items will be delivered to tomorrow.

9. ARPA Projects

a. Volleyball Court

The volleyball court is completed, with the exception of the installation of the volleyball lines/boundaries. Discussion ensued regarding the posting of signage to keep dogs off of the volleyball court, among other signs. A visit to the area will be arranged to determine the ideal location for the signs.

b. Round Hill Road Bathrooms

Two ADA-accessible bathrooms to be connected to the Public Works building, utilizing the existing piping, are being proposed. A Contractor offered to hire an Engineer and Architect to draw up the plans upon which the Commission could request estimates for the project. Should the Contractor not be hired for the project, the costs would be reimbursed. An estimate of the cost for the Engineer and Architect has been requested before proceeding.

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

An ideal date/time is in the process of being scheduled to take a walk of the trail and discuss possible options to connect the trail to the Round Hill Road fields and best locations to place the trail and emergency trail markers.

The Public Works Department and Town Engineer have met to discuss and repair the area on which the repainted bridge is located along the Multi-Purpose/Harris Brook

Trail. Stronger piping will be placed and the area will be cleaned up. The bridge will be removed for future use.

10. Unfinished Business

a. Re-establishment of Salem Surge Soccer & Salem Basketball Rec Leagues

As a result of the low turnout at the second Reboot Session, Chairperson Durkee is looking into the possibility of seeking outside sources to run the program. She proposed subsidizing the program through the Recreation Budget for programs to help keep the registration costs low.

Similarly, Chairperson Durkee looked into the costs of running a summer volleyball clinic and is continuing to investigate the possibility of running a basketball clinic.

Discussions regarding the possibility of hiring a full-time Recreation Director continued. Commissioner Wlodarczyk reported that he introduced the idea to the First Selectman, who was receptive. Commissioner McGlone will provide the job description for the Recreation Director Position in Preston. The item will be discussed as part of the Five-Year Plan Working Group.

e. Community Tag Sale

A modestly successful Tag Sale was held. The plan is to hold the event at the end of April and September in preparation for Amnesty Day.

f. Trick or Trunk

The Monster Mash + Trick or Trunk event will be held on Sunday, October 29, from 2 to 5 p.m. at Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company. The Commission's trunk will be interactive with a wheel the children can spin for a trick, prize, or treat. A sign-up sheet was circulated for the Commissioners to sign up for available shifts.

g. Holiday Activities & Tree Lighting event

The holiday activities will begin at 3:30 p.m., immediately following the Salem Free Public Library's Anniversary event. The entertainment will begin at 4:00 p.m., and Santa Claus is scheduled to arrive at 4:45 p.m. The Congregational Church will be hosting a pizza & movie night following the event. The entertainment has been secured and a request for Santa Claus has been sent to the Fire Company. Additional decorations and details for the event will be discussed during the Working Group meeting.

h. Disc Golf League – *see item 3 above*

i. Field Use Policy

In researching other towns, Chairperson Durkee stated that most towns rent their fields to outside organizations, without concern regarding whether any of the players are Salem residents. A Field Use or Facilities Policy will be drafted for review. The Policy,

once approved by the Commission, will be sent to the Board of Selectmen for comments and approval. Commissioner McGlone felt that the fields, especially the Babe Ruth field, were underutilized and reiterated the need for a Director who could take the lead and handle the field reservations.

- j. Public Safety Day Event – *no discussion*
- k. Plan of Conservation & Development Action Steps – *no discussion*

11. New Business

a. Drop-in Friday Nights for Middle Schoolers

Chairperson Durkee proposed the possibility of hosting Drop-in Friday Nights for Middle Schoolers during the winter months. The event could be held in partnership with the Salem School PTO. The event could include different stations with different activities, including Battle Bot competitions, jump roping, volleyball or basketball games, and a pinewood derby competition. Each evening could also have a theme. Charging a nominal fee of \$5.00 to participate was also raised. The possibility of distributing a survey to gauge the parents and children's interests and the types of activities they would be interested in was discussed. Commissioner McGlone stated that he hosts an ultimate gym class activity in the towns of Preston, Waterford, and Griswold with a similar idea in mind.

b. Newsletter

During one of the Working Group meetings, the need to inform the residents of the Town's recreational facilities, activities, and events was raised. With that in mind, the possibility of creating a newsletter that is mailed to each household was introduced. A very rough draft of the proposed newsletter was distributed to the Commission for review. The call for suggestions and ideas will be bolded to attract attention. The Commissioners were requested to review the newsletter for further discussed at their next meeting.

c. Working Groups

1) Holiday Activities and Tree Lighting event – *see item 10(g)*

2) Five-Year Plan

The Five-Year Plan is related to one of the action steps for the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Some of the ideas for the future include pickleball-dedicated courts, a pavilion, an ADA playground, and expanding the parking area at Bob Appleby Fields. Chairperson Durkee also proposed including an expression swing. The initial site plan for Bob Appleby Fields was reviewed by the Commission.

3) Grants for Trails, Playground

Possible grant opportunities for recreation will be sought.

4) FY2024/25 Budget

One of the items for the Capital Plan includes the Pavilion for Bob Appleby Fields.
The pavilion size and pricing estimates will be sought.

The Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association (CRPA) is hosting its annual Conference and Tradeshow at the Mohegan Sun & Convention Center on November 20 and 21. Interested Commissioners may contact the Recreation Coordinator.

Commissioner McGlone questioned whether the town had a budget for professional development in which working groups could meet with similar-sized towns' recreation departments and network with each other.

This week's working group meeting will center around the holiday event and next week's working group will center around the FY2024/25 Proposed Budget.

Chairperson Durkee introduced Resident Jeff Pugatch who has attended the Youth Soccer and Basketball Reboot Meetings. He was invited to join the Commission should he be interested.

12. Adjournment

**M/S/C: Wlodarczyk/Durkee, to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 9-0, all in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

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