



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes  
February 7, 2022  
6:00 p.m.

**Via Remote Participation on Zoom**

Commissioners Present: Jane DeBarbieri, Kenneth Magarian, Douglas Morash, Vincent Olinski, Michael Tirrell, Sara Unger and Robert Veronesi

Commissioner absent: Scott LaBombard

Staff: Scott Hathaway, Deputy Supt.

City Council Liaison: Nicholas Morganelli

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm via remote participation with Michael Tirrell, Chairperson presiding asking commissioners for a voice roll call if present by speaking "Yes" and stated Scott LaBombard is not present tonight.

Jane DeBarbieri, yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi speaking through his proxy yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes, and Sara Unger, yes.

Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions regarding the January 10, 2022 meeting minutes and if anyone wanted to set motion. He called out each commissioner for a roll call vote.

Motion made by Vincent Olinski to accept the minutes of January 10, 2022 motion seconded by Robert Veronesi speaking through his proxy. A roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor. Motion passed.

Public Participation Via Zoom: Kathi Cotugno, Kevin and Cesar Adorno, Ryan Dunphy, Michael Martel, Heather Witalisz, David Flaherty, Bill Babinski, Tanley Santaniello and Dan Knapik.

Business or Items for Discussion:

1. Mike Tirrell welcomed Kathi Cotugno permit renewal for Park Square August 11 times 4:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. rain date September 1 for the Annual National Overdose Awareness Day Vigil and asked her to go over it and if it is the same as last year.
2. Kathi Cotugno responded they will set up at 4:00 p.m. event will start at 6:00 p.m. and go until 9:00 p.m. and explained that August 31 is National Overdose Awareness Day and that is why we have it listed on the permit and added a rain date of Sept. 1. They will have resources to provide to people and last year they had about one hundred in attendance and they expect about the same or more. She is requesting the electricity is checked to be on because they use a microphone and will have a band that they have provided in the past.

Michael Tirrell asked her to coordinate with the dept. on electricity and asked commissioners if anyone had any questions and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.

Motion made by Vincent Olinski to accept permit as presented motion seconded by Jane DeBarbieri roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, speaking on behalf of his proxy Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor. Motion passed.

3. Michael Tirrell welcomed Kevin and Cesar Adorno on behalf of backyard Worship Session- renewal permit request for Park Square and pavilion for June 11 times 12:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. on spreading the gospel with some live music and testimonies. He asked them to review the event.

4. Cesar Adorno showed a picture from last year's event and said it was great to see all types of faiths and faces of different nationalities and it was for a great cause. He went over his past struggles with drugs and he was an addict himself and faith and god has helped him and now he is "Free" and wanted to bring this information to the community and bring hope faith or god can help them as well if they are struggling with drugs or anything else and the reason why times are longer is to set up because last year it took a long time to set up with the band and everything. He wanted to add a rain date of June 18 if available.
5. Michael Tirrell responded to check with the office for June 18 rain date and asked if the commission had any questions for Kevin and Cesar Adorno and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.

Motion made by Douglas Morash to accept permit as presented motion seconded by Sara Unger roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, speaking on behalf of his proxy Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.

Motion passed.

6. Michael Tirrell welcomed Ryan Dunphy, School Athletic Director renewal permit request for Whitney playground March 21-June 20 times 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. for the WTA school softball and asked him to go over it.
7. Ryan Dunphy explained it is essentially the same as it has been for several years now they have practices and games at Whitney field for the girls' softball program and they will start when the fields are playable and the season starts March 20 and June is the post season.
8. Michael Tirrell asked if the commission had any questions for Ryan Dunphy and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.

Motion made by Jane DeBarbieri to accept permit as presented motion seconded by speaking through his proxy Robert Veronesi roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, speaking on behalf of his proxy Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.

Motion passed.

9. Michael Tirrell welcomed Michael Martel on behalf of the Mass Wolverines softball permit for Whitney playground for a tournament Saturday, April 9 times 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. rain date May 7. He asked him to go over it.
10. Michael Martel said the softball tournament is for family and friends and children and we want to bring the community together for some family fun and have four to five teams playing along with some soccer games with the children. He can provide insurance if needed. He said they will have a pot luck for food and beverages and will pick up the trash.
11. Michael Tirrell explained the alcohol guidelines and asked if he is charging money for teams or just donating to play and are you charging for food.
12. Mike Martel responded they are not charging anyone for food or to play and the team is a travel league of friends and family from all over Western MA.
13. Michael Tirrell asked if the commission had any questions for Michael Martel and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.

Motion made by Robert Veronesi speaking through his proxy to accept permit as presented motion seconded by Jane DeBarbieri roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, speaking on behalf of his proxy Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.

Motion passed.

14. Michael Tirrell welcomed Heather Witalisz for a permit at Park Square and pavilion for National Women's History month and requesting to display and place white ribbons around the poles or other

areas as testimony of the influence of Westfield Women and dates are March 8 through March 12 times 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and asked her to go over it.

15. Heather Witalisz runs a small business with her mom in Westfield who owns a real estate company and for the past year they have been doing a little bit of research about women's history in Westfield and they found it to be fascinating and if you don't already know March is Women's History Month and it signifies International Women's Day. She explained Westfield is insanely rich in women's history and they wanted to put up white ribbons around the poles at Park Square that she held up for view in camera for all to see. She wanted to put up on Tuesday depending on what the commission decides and they would like to keep them up for a couple of days as a visual representation for the city to have to honor some of the women they recognize are obviously notables like Alice Bure, Catherine O'Brien of Stanley Park, Casey Bellamy and Cele Hahn who is was not only a radio personality host but was also the first female of Westfield Chamber of Commerce President so that is what they want to honor these women. She is asking the St. Mary's High school students to help put up the ribbons around "The Green" and it will also give them community service hours.
16. Michael Tirrell asked commissioners if anyone had any questions for Heather.
17. Sara Unger asked how the people will know what the white ribbons symbolize.
18. Heather Witalisz said that is a really good question they have it on their facebook page, and every Wednesday they will highlight a Westfield Women every week. In addition to ribbons they were thinking about doing a small sign just in case due to nice weather people walk around at night. The sign would be a small yard sign. They would use social media as a form of communication.
19. Michael Tirrell explained that we are unable to place a sign based on the sign ordinance and asked Nicholas Morganelli for his assistance.
20. Nicholas Morganelli said there is a temporary sign ordinance that would have her covered and obviously, size and how long it stays up but that is not the issue this commission can allow signage to be put up on park/city property. He explained generally people put those types of signs on tree belts or private property and he thinks it can be allowed.
21. Michael Tirrell said this has been brought up with other groups before and to be fair across all groups we allow signage the day of the event and then take down and asked commissioners if anyone else had any other questions.
22. Douglas Morash asked if there will be any other kinds of events or are you just displaying the ribbons and a potential sign.
23. Heather Witalisz said this is the first year and don't know if any other town or city is doing anything for National Women's Day and may consider doing this as an annual event and this event will educate the St. Mary's students and be a teachable moment as they do community service hours. She said next year if the community embraces it the goal is basically to start off small and do something that is a visual representation and they will certainly abide by the sign rules and use social media to tell the story to get it out there.
24. Douglas Morash went over the sign that it can be put up during the event to let people know what is going on to Michael Tirrell's point we don't typically want a unattended sign over a span of a couple of days.
25. Heather Witalisz said that is not a problem.
26. Michael Tirrell asked if the commission had any questions for Heather Witalisz keeping ribbons up March 8 through March 12.
27. Heather Witalisz says she can put them up Sunday morning with the students if the commission says no for the longer stretch of days.
28. Michael Tirrell said five days is fair enough if it went up Tuesday and came down Saturday it would end its course obviously and it up to the commission to asked for further discussion or concerns.

29. Sara Unger asked how the ribbons are attached and if they are just tied on. She said her concern was if it would be more difficult to take down or leave as being tied that's different.
30. Heather Witalisz said yes they are tied on like a wedding bow where the string attached to it will loop over it to be secure. (She showed the ribbon and the ribbon on camera view) She explained her office is right across the Street from The Tavern so she will monitor them on a daily basis and respects the park and will make sure they look the way they should look.
31. Michael Tirrell and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.

Motion made by Jane DeBarbieri to accept ribbons at Park Square as presented motion seconded by Douglas Morash roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.  
Motion passed.

32. Michael Tirrell welcomed Bill Babinski Westfield Horseshoe President permit for Municipal playground horse shoe pits April 18 – Sept. 19 times 5:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. on Mondays and asked him if this is a renewal and to go over it.
33. Bill Babinski explained that the teams are dwindling down in participants we now have about 10-20 people and have four teams and individual competition. They finished their 100 th year of competition in the city last year actually it took two years to do so because of the COVID-19 environment and hopes to continue the start of their second hundred years.
34. Michael Tirrell and if anyone had any questions and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.

Motion made by Vincent Olinski to accept permit as presented motion seconded by speaking through his proxy by Robert Veronesi roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.  
Motion passed.

35. Michael Tirrell welcome David Flaherty, Westfield Pickleball representative for three permits for Municipal Playground February 15- November 30 and asked him if these are renewals from last year.
36. David Flaherty went over each permit and details and said these are the same as last year. He went over open play and the paddle up instructions.
37. Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions for David Flaherty and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call.
38. Jane DeBarbieri said it is a great program for newbies who want to play mornings and would encourage for only two hrs.
39. David Flaherty said yes there is a need for it and if the other courts were fixed it would be better. He had someone in mind that offered to pay for the courts to be fixed but that did not work out. They are working on getting a grant from the state since no commitment from the city due to other projects. They are happy with what they have and will pursue fundraising efforts and grants to try to help out by getting those courts fixed so we have extra courts to play. He explained the group is non-profit has a membership where they pay to play and be a member and one of the commissioners is a board member who is the president who is really good. We are moving along and pickle ball in Westfield so far is really good.

Motion made by Jane DeBarbieri to accept permit as presented motion seconded by Douglas Morash roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.  
Motion passed.

40. Michael Tirrell welcomed Tanley Santaniello renewal permit for Woronocco Soccer fields March 20 – November 30 times 8:00 a.m.-Dusk and asked her to go over it.

41. Tanley Santaniello said they have over 400 playing soccer the numbers are more enrolled in the fall than in the spring/summer months. The numbers have been increasing.
42. Michael Tirrell asked if they offer the travel and non-travel league that used to be called Westfield Youth Soccer and Westfield United Soccer and Tanley Santaniello responded yes.
43. Michael Tirrell and if anyone had any questions and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.

Motion made by Douglas Morash to accept permit as presented motion seconded by Sara Unger roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.  
Motion passed.

44. Michael Tirrell welcomed Dan Knapik who is here tonight with a pilot program put forth by Mayor McCabe to identify and address the needs of athletic fields. A sub-committee will be formed to work and solicit feedback from the groups in the community that use these facilities and develop a prioritized list of items to be addressed in year one of the program. He went over how Dan Knapik wanted to bring this up a while back and he reached out to him and he explained that Dan Knapik is working with the Mayor on putting together a plan to maintain our fields and facilities on a sustainable basis over the course of many years. This initiative represents the pilot, the initial go around of this process and what we are trying to do to get started so we can round out a good time for a budget numbers going into the next fiscal yr. coming out in May or June. We want to put together a group of sub-committee members based on Parks and Recreation commission to work with and solicit feedback from various organizations that use our facilities to try to come up with a list of manageable items to basically work off as a backlog. The sub-committee will put together costs and a budgeting number and work with the Mayor to work with those numbers in the budget. He said we have a current maintenance budget that is for fertilizer and the standard things that get done on a year to year basis, however we don't have a good plan to keep these facilities up to par with various improvements so the commission is looking for sub-committee members and he introduced Dan Knapik to go over it.
45. Dan Knapik thanked the commission for entertaining this conversation tonight and over the years Nicholas Morganelli who is on the call tonight has brought up the the same kind of pains where the city invests money into these parks and playgrounds and over the years they get neglected for a variety of different reason and they fall into a certain disrepair and a good example is in 2012 the city appropriated funds into the hundred thousands of dollars to improve the fields at North Middle School which is now called Westfield Intermediate School. He says nothing has been put into the maintenance of those fields and they are overgrown and they don't look as good. He also explained that people that use our facilities ask why the city can't maintain and pay for the upkeep of these areas. He went over Babe Ruth and Little League that invest a lot of their money into the fields and facilities and we are grateful for that and they ask why the city can't pay for it. It all comes down to the dept. decision makers that have the strings to control and no plans for parks, playgrounds and cemeteries. And listening to David Flaherty on the need to repair the back pickle ball courts tonight. He also spoke with Peter Miller on the same situation at Half Mile falls water fountain issue related to the maintenance. The goal is to set up a committee and bring forward the users of the facilities and gather information of what their thoughts are for improvements to the areas they use and get into a position where we can recommend to the Parks and Recreation Commission in April a listing if you like of those items and rally focus on improvements to those facilities and fields. If we are successful this year we can build up more next year. He went over his work history in Yarmouth and the facilities there are well maintained and second to none. He said if we get this going it will help avoid double spending money over time and by letting facilities decay and working with Babe Ruth and Westfield Little League they have appropriated over thirty thousand dollars into these fields and facilities like Bullens and Jachym field for the benefit of their teams and players. H said he currently sits on the Babe Ruth board and in the next two years they plan up to \$ 80,000 to improve those facilities and he spent time with Westfield Little League they put funds into Sadie Knox, Papermill and Cross Street fields. He said the goals are: A) identify users of our facilities and get their input on how to make facilities better. B) Try to leverage funds that these organizations already are putting into our facilities and try to make the dollar stretch out and go a little further and talking to Michael Tirrell's point is trying to build a list of backlog if you will and not scramble every year after the appropriation goes by people come to us with ideas and improvements, if we saw this coming we could have had it

in the budget and see if we can come up with some wins this year and hope on behalf of all the stake holders in the city that use our properties start making those needed improvements.

46. Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any other questions
47. Kenneth Magarian said this is a great idea obviously at some point in time we had a 5-10 year plan in place because it was done at the meetings and possibly take a look at that and wrap it into the sub-committee and users of the facilities. He said he would be very disappointed if none of the 5 -10 year plan never happened. Second our professional staff should come up with a brief analysis of what we want done at facilities and what the conditions are current facilities are.
48. Michael Tirrell agreed with Kenneth Magarian and said he does not recall the 5-10 year plan but we can review and go down that road. But working with the folks that use our facilities will definitely help us out.
49. Dan Knapik said that we would begin this process this spring and to Ken Magarian's point wrap it in with all the other ideas that have come in. The maintenance effort on a regular basis goes a long way on the facilities and what they do now and possibly engage in a hiring a subcontractor to work on the fields because he hates the idea of the city spending another \$100,000 to bring the fields back when we could have just spent a few thousand. He said those fields should have been kept up and another question is to see what the School departments role is in the city in maintenance of school grounds. The fields certainly need to be in a level of play for the kids to play on. He said the whole goal is to avoid expensive rehabilitation project and to have a sustainable parks and facilities in maintenance in the future.
50. Nicholas Morganelli responded that he agrees with the City Councillor and former Mayor Knapik you really need to have the staff to do better or contract it out on behalf of the staff or DPW to take care of the facilities and obviously that has not been done. He also mentioned that the dept. over the past twenty years is been getting leaner and leaner and there is less staff now working and that is something that needs to be addressed. People in Westfield love the outdoors and love the parks it is such a great asset with all the green space on the South side and the North side does not have a lot of green space.
51. Michael Tirrell will forward documents to the commissioners that he created a basic form that will go out to all the users of the facilities and fields that basically explains to them what we are trying to do it will explain the use of the form, return it and participate in the feedback meetings that we will have with the sub-committee members and he is looking to put together two separate votes to keep them separate.
52. Michael Tirrell asked if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote. First Motion looking to approve the documents with potential in the event that there is a typo or something like that we approve and send out to the users of our facilities to explain to them what we are trying to do and ask them to give us feedback.

Motion made by Vincent Olinski to accept first motion as presented motion seconded by Sara Unger roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.  
Motion passed.

53. Michael Tirrell explained the second motion is to form a subcommittee of himself, and needs volunteers and has spoken to Scott LaBombard who is interested and asked if anyone else is interested. Kenneth Magarian and Douglas Morash said they would be interested as well as Sara Unger. Michael Tirrell will confirm how many we can have on a sub-committee and we will figure it out.

Motion made by Vincent Olinski to accept facilities sub-committee members, Michael Tirrell, Kenneth Magarian, Scott LaBombard and Douglas Morash and potential others if needed as presented motion seconded by Sara Unger roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor.  
Motion passed.

Michael Tirrell thanked Dan Knapik for attending tonight and will keep him informed and Dan Knapik thanked the commissioners for putting it together. Nicholas Morganelli said he would like to be kept in the loop as well.

54. Michael Tirrell read next line item on agenda sub-committee members himself, Scott LaBombard, Jane DeBarbieri and Douglas Morash and said that due to the schedule and cross reference of the minimum wage this year they had concerns over the amounts to each position. He spoke with Peg Goralczyk, Head Clerk from the office and she provided a breakdown of payroll expenses in June and summer months based and how many hours playground leaders, playground directors, day camp leaders and day camp directors work and apparently we were short of staff for Spray park hours. He read the 2021 salaries to each position and steps/levels. He went over the history of the review that started with mayor Brian Sullivan on how the commission has the authority to review and set the seasonal salaries each year and since the minimum wage has increased each year and technically we do not need to follow minimum wages. He said it was difficult to make those adjustments and then we have next year. He explained that Douglas Morash and he came up with some budget friendly recommendations and still help us to retain staff that work at our facilities and uniform through all the positions and that they do not need to address every position. He asked commission if any questions. He read out loud the salaries of each position. Essentially Doug and myself are recommending to the commissioners is that for playground leaders, playground directors, day camp leaders and two day camp directors all across it ends up budgeting \$ 1,400 additional revenue across all positions a little bit of increase but not a huge number and it will allow us to stay competitive with some of the other local jobs so we can still retain the folks that have been working in these positions and also bring in new employees at the entry level positions. All of these positions have to be CPR and First Aid Certified and that is at their expense. He went over the other seasonal positions Adult Softball Supervisors, Baseball Supervisors, Basketball Supervisors, Field Hockey Instructor, Pickleball Instructor, Soccer Supervisor, Tennis instructor and Youth Sports Instructor. He is recommending to the commission based on some positions that have not been touched in a while is to only increase all positions by a .25 increase except Tennis Instructor and Youth Sports Instructor. The reason is those positions are much higher than other positions Tennis Instructor is \$ 22.00 hr. and Youth Sports Instructor is \$ 20.00 an hr. he asked Douglas Morash if he missed anything.
55. Douglas Morash said he agreed with Michael Tirrell and we are trying to balance each year on positions and going up as a percentage what we wanted to do was to keep the budget in mind and we reached out to .25 increase more a hr. on the positions and it is not a huge increase that Michael Tirrell talked about. We talked about the salary payroll and amount of staff at each location. Peg Goralczyk sent us and came up with the .25 increase for some of the positions. The staff have the flexibility in the summer for example a college student comes home for the summer and has a job lined up for them because they worked the previous summer and they don't have to worry about applying anywhere else like Applebees or any other job. The jobs fit them perfectly.
56. Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions regarding the salary increase to the positions and if anyone wanted to set motion for a voice roll call vote.
- Motion made by Jane DeBarbieri to accept 2022 salary schedule as presented (See chart) motion seconded by Sara Unger roll call vote as follows: Michael Tirrell yes, Sara Unger yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Douglas Morash yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Kenneth Magarian yes. All in favor. Motion passed.
57. Kenneth Magarian said there is no way going to be an issue on finding applicants.
58. Michael Tirrell said based on the applicants last year we could have had a few more playground staff or staff to work spray parks per conversation with Peg Goralczyk, Head Clerk office.
59. Nicholas Morganelli thanked the commission for thinking about the salaries and how you make the increases he appreciate that.

Schedule of bills – (Attached) Designated board members -Approved by Vincent Olinski Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions. Jane DeBarbieri questioned the suburban uniforms and did not know they reuse them each year.

Reports- Michael Tirrell asked Scott Hathaway to go over his report.

1. Scott Hathaway went over the hardscape under pavilion at Bullen's field they are waiting for the weather to break so the pavers can be installed. They got rid of some shrubs on the sides coming down the steps that were filled with trash and he will work horticultural dept. to come up with a replacement plan with something a little less maintenance. He also mentioned a small shed that the Westfield Football uses for irrigation and back flows are stored in is falling apart and possibly work with the carpenter shop to rebuild a new shed. Jane DeBarbieri said it is great to have the school students involved.
2. Michael Tirrell read Jim Blascak's report due not being here tonight. Basketball-Instructional and freshmen divisions have ended, the United basketball is in mid- season and should end around the first week in March. The spring/summer brochure, father/daughter dance and Mother/Son Luau canceled due to low numbers. He said that was too bad he remembered the father/daughter dances with his daughters. Adventure Zone the dept. donated two gift certificates to the Westfield Kiwanis for one week of Adventure Zone. New programs are the instructor supported Open Play Pickleball, teen empowerment and All Star Tuesdays have changed themes. He asked Scott Hathaway to go over his report.

Next Board meeting is March 14, 2022.

Documents used:

Permits

Seasonal staff salary chart

Photo of white ribbons

Schedule of bills-Emailed

Staff reports

Reviewed and approved by Douglas Morash Secretary of Commission

Summary of content via zoom video provided by: Peggy Goralczyk, Head Clerk