

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting – August 16, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.
Town Council Chambers

MEETING MINUTES

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comments by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced.

1. Call to order.

Vice-Chair Stone called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners Matt Beaupre, Noah Carver (6:35 p.m.), Jon Chase (6:35 p.m.), Mary Hillman, Morgan Matthewson, Deborah Schober, and Rocky Stone. Chairperson Kate Southard and Commissioner Kevin Clang were absent.

Town Council Liaison Lenny Bunnell (6:35 p.m.) and Recreation Director Peter Bushway were present.

4. Adjustments to the Agenda. – See Item 11a.

Motion by Commissioner Beaupre; seconded by Commissioner Carver to add Item 11a. *Discussion of new playground at the Community Center property.* Discussion: none. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0-0; all in favor. **Motion carried.**

5. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit).

Vice-Chair Stone asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:

- a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of July 19, 2023.

Motion by Commissioner Matthewson; seconded by Commissioner Schober to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of July 19, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0-0; all in favor. **Motion carried.**

7. Recreation Director’s Report August 2023.

Director Bushway summarized his August 2023 Director’s report that included the conclusion of summer camp on August 12. It was successful having served 230 kids including 30 children who were on the waitlist. An email was received from Fast Signs about the tennis/pickleball court signage that will be ready next week; Public works will remove the existing signs and install the new ones. The sidewalk near the courts was completed and surrounding grass loamed and seeded. The Inferno Food Truck Festival was postponed to Sunday, July 30 due

to inclement weather and attendance was low, 500-600 people; eleven of the thirteen food trucks were present. The band Red Light will play at the Summer Concert Series tomorrow night. The Mud Run, a fundraiser for the Oakdale Fire Company and Youth Service, will be Saturday, August 19. A meeting with a playground company was held regarding equipment for Desjardins Park on August 15. Plans for the Mostowy Property from CLA Engineers that identifies options for the space was distributed to the Commission and other contracts are expected next week. Commissioner Chase remarked that CLA gave no credence to recommendations made by DEEP; he will provide another copy of the same. Vice-Chair Stone noted CLA was probably not aware of the DEEP ideas.

8. Report from Finance.

Vice-Chair Stone reported receiving a copy of the 2024 Department budget and remarked on confusion about the transfer of funds by the Finance Department as he thought it was the principal duty of the Commission. Commissioner Chase remarked the Finance Director may have overreaching authority and the Commission should keep an eye on the budget.

9. June Newsletter.

Director Bushway reported that Friday, August 18 is the deadline for entries to the booklet and will cover the period from October to the end of December. It is believed there will be a winter farmers market pending information from Chairperson Southard. A new gymnastics instructor will begin classes on September 12th; dance classes will begin on September 9th. Vice-Chair Stone remarked on glitches with last year's Montville 5-K Race—the lack of markings and some race participants got lost. Director Bushway noted he does the markings for the 10-K Race. Commissioner Hillman noted her name was not included in the list of commissioners.

10. Parks and Facilities

a. Camp Oakdale Large Pavilion

Public Works Director Carlson is on vacation for 2 ½ weeks; there were no updates on the status of the large pavilion.

b. Basketball Courts at Camp Oakdale

Vice-Chair Stone inquired about the bid package for the basketball courts: Director Bushway reported he has a bid for the slab but the other contractor cannot get here. Per a question by Commissioner Matthewson regarding the slab, the Director explained the existing court would be grinded down and covered with asphalt.

c. Tennis and Pickleball Courts

Vice-Chair Stone reported on 340 members who are using the tennis and pickleball courts. There are good guardians of the space although signage to deter skateboarding and other such activities will be helpful. Public Works Director Carlson is working on obtaining a surveillance camera there; Director Bushway noted there is electricity and a separate pole is an option but would require the help of Public Works and IT for internet access. Vice-Chair Stone remarked he would attend the next Public Works meeting for information regarding the status of the bathrooms.

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d. Desjardins Park

Director Bushway reported on speaking with a contractor yesterday about renderings for the Desjardins Park; one from China and another from Canada, but U.S. based companies will be checked. Vice-Chair Stone remarked that the courts need work.

e. Dance Room Update

Director Bushway reported about two (2) mothers involved with the dance room update who said they got permission from Town Council Chair McNally and Town Councilor Yuchniuk to make phone calls to contractors for estimates for the same. Renovation of the dance room would mean the loss of a closet and storage space is needed as dance is not the only program offered there.

f. New Community Center Update

Vice-Chair Stone reported the subcommittee met earlier this evening regarding the community center and more information will be gathered to finalize the data. This data will then be presented to the Commission and then to the Town Council. New London just went through this process so a lot of its data was available for review. The Community Center will include Youth Services, a gymnasium, pool, and the Recreation Department. Funds are needed to finalize concepts. The existing Fair Oaks site does not have enough space for the community and although the building is currently in use, it needs to be demolished.

11. Unfinished Business. – *Item 11a, added to the Agenda per Item 4. Adjustments to the Agenda at this time.*

a. Discussion of new playground at the Community Center property.

Vice-Chair Stone reported the handicapped gate at the playground had been completed. Plans will be made to have a celebration and grand opening upon its completion and the Commission will be invited. Director Bushway responded to Commissioner Beaupre that a communication board will be installed on the Community Center side of the playground and noted the timeliness of it as there were two (2) nonverbal summer camp participants who spoke no English. A citizen is assisting the Director with the communication board that will be ordered and installed. Repair items that are pending are the strips to go under the slide on the Chesterfield side and the older playground side that was lost during shipping. The post with the hole was repaired.

12. New Business. -- *None*

13. Communications.

Commissioner Chase remarked on a communication he received two (2) weeks ago which he overlook as he presumed the entire Commission had received it. He noted that Vice-Chair Stone has commented on occasion about the seriousness of the roles of the commissioners and the commitment to conducting the business of the people in public. He read into the record the email sent to him by Town Councilor McNally attached hereto to the minutes as Exhibit No. 1 in its entirety as requested by Commissioner Chase.

14. Remarks from the Public of Non-Agenda items (3-minute limit).

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Vice-Chair Stone asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

15. Remarks from Town Council Liaison Bunnell.

Town Councilor Bunnell remarked that at last month's Commission meeting regarding signage at Fair Oaks it was left in limbo with the understanding that the Town Council would make the decision to rename it. The Town Council reworded and eliminated community center from the new sign. Per the Town Council vote, the sign will read *Fair Oaks Home of Montville Youth Service Bureau and Parks & Recreation Annex*. Barbara Lockhart suggested it be named *Montville Community Center at Fair Oaks Home of Montville Youth Services and Montville Parks and Recreation Annex*.

16. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway.

Director Bushway remarked on a FOI request received from Katie Holmes for data on the number of registrations for the dance, basketball, gymnastics, and karate programs for the past four (4) years. A handout of the information sent to Ms. Holmes last Friday and prepared by Carol Bunnell was given to the Commission. It was noted that the reason for the request was not divulged to the Director. Vice-Chair Stone asked that Carol Bunnell be thanked for her assistance in gathering the information.

17. Remarks from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Chase remarked about the communication he read earlier into the record noting that anything that is received in his capacity as a commissioner must be made a part of the record in adherence to his commitment to openness and abiding by the rules. He accepted the praise of the communication towards a more improved, uniform MOU and the capacity of Mayor McDaniel and Director Bushway in the process. Commissioner Chase took exception to the comments about Town Councilor Bunnell who he remarked has been extremely helpful in the process from the beginning for a variety of reasons. He noted his important and professional experience concerning traffic, parking, and signage was extremely helpful and there is nothing to suggest that the comments made toward Town Councilor Bunnell were accurate. Commissioner Schober remarked that Town Council Chair McNally initially complained to Chairperson Southard last year about the driving habits at the field and she then brought it before the Commission. Commissioner Matthewson remarked on her impression that the sign at Fair Oaks would be named differently. Vice-Chair Stone remarked that the last draft of the MOU addressed Commission concerns and improved access to the area but noted that following the suggestions of Town Councilor Bunnell for signs would have more of an impact. As for the Fair Oaks sign, Vice-Chair Stone thought it was vetted that the Commission had no control of the wording of the sign and of the advantages for future grants for a community center down the road. Commissioner Chase additionally thanked Town Councilor Bunnell for his concerns with the final product of the Town Council vote regarding the sign noting the initial proposal for the sign would have removed the Recreation Department, a key user of the facility and should be designated as such.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Hillman to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0-0, all in favor. **Meeting adjourned.**

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Respectfully submitted by,
Gloria J. Gathers
Town of Montville -- Recording Secretary/Minutes Clerk

**AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON
THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE WEBSITE.**

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EXHIBIT NO. 1

Tom McNally <tmcnally@montville-ct.org>

Thu 7/20/2023 6.31 PM

To: Jon Chase <jchase100@hotmail.com>

Good evening,

I want to thank you for your thoughtful questions and concerns last night regarding some of the subject matter. It's always nice to see commissioners, engaged with what's going on in town.

I got the impression that you were a little annoyed that you spent so much time working on the new MOU only to have some opposition at the end. Without seeing the document/ I'm sure it's thorough and well thought out and will be an asset to the town. However, this issue with the access road is getting a little annoying and there's a lot of misinformation going around.

As you know/ Public Works and Parks & Rec are intertwined with lots of things. The Public Works committee has spoken in length over this access road issue and the Public Works Director had no issue with people using it to make deliveries, etc. Unfortunately, Mr. Bunnell has made it his mission that nobody is to go near that road. That will not be beneficial to anybody working these sporting events. Like I stated last night/ we've not had a problem in over 20 years. It was not until about a year ago that there was a complaint because one of the guys on the softball team was driving excessively fast on it. I'm hoping your committee can come up with some commonsense language that states something along the line of, if the access road is needed for emergencies or deliveries that they would drive with due diligence, perhaps have hazard lights on, or maybe even have a spotter walking in front of them.

I look forward to getting this issue resolved as there is still so much good we could be focusing on.

Thanks again for all you do,

Thomas J. McNally

Chairman

Montville Town Council