

Town of Montville Parks & Recreation Commission  
**Regular Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, April 15, 2015**  
6:30 p.m. – Town Hall – Town Council Chambers

1. Call to order

Chairman Scott LaVallie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Joseph Berardy, Nancy delaCruz, Scott LaVallie, Karen Perkins, and Kristin Ventresca (6:39 p.m. due to a previous coaching obligation). Absent were Commissioners Eileen Cicchese, Kerri Lawton, Gilbert Maffeo, and Derek Wainwright. Also present were Parks & Recreation Director Peter Bushway, Town Council Liaison Laura Tanner, Councilors Billy Caron and Tom McNally, Mayor Ronald McDaniel, and Public Works Director Donald Bourdeau.

3. Adjustments to the agenda

Chairman LaVallie proposed moving item 9(a) to the beginning of the agenda.

9. New Business

a. Future of Fair Oaks Community Center – Town Councilors

Chairman LaVallie thanked the Mayor and Town Councilors for attending the meeting to discuss the future of the property. He is interested in hearing their thoughts and positions as well as receiving some guidance regarding the Commission's role in its future. He stated that the Commission has long-regarded the facility as a Community Center that should be developed for the use of the people of the Town. There has been discussion of moving Youth Services to the building, to which they have no objection, but would like to be involved in the process. They would also like to either renovate or raze and build a new facility on the property that properly accommodates both Youth Services and Parks & Recreation.

Mayor McDaniel stated that he is in line with the Commission's views and that the ultimate goal is to create a "spectacular" Community Center. The moving of Youth Services to Fair Oaks has been in discussion for the past 17 years, but, due to a lack of adequate funding, has been unable to do so. The location, being at the geographic center of the Town and near the schools, is most ideal as opposed to their current location on Route 32. They have been in the process of reviewing the space, maintenance, IT, and electrical needs as well as working on the relocation of the re-use room. Funding has been received with the understanding that Youth Services will ultimately be moving into the building. In addition, some funding has been allocated and fieldwork, including a playing field and drainage project, has been re-prioritized in an effort to utilize the property more fully. The improvements they are planning will also benefit the Parks & Recreation Department and their programs. He added that they would like to maintain the police sub-station at the facility. It was clarified that no final decisions have been made.

While the building does meet the current building requirements, it was agreed that, given proper funding, razing and constructing a new facility that is better designed to meet their needs would be ideal. The Mayor is confident that there will be enough room to accommodate everyone and that they will be able to work together to obtain a favorable result for all. Should they opt to permanently move their Summer Camp Program to Fair Oaks and continue to have the cooperation of the High School and the Board of Education, the proposed plan would be acceptable with the Commission. Concerns were raised regarding the ability to accommodate the P&R Programs and other programs, which are currently being held in the shared rooms, i.e., gymnasium and library, once Youth Services' move is finalized. The delegation of rooms to Youth Services has been planned with respect to occupancy issues, location of fire doors, and practicality. Final details regarding the scheduling of various programs in the shared spaces will need to be discussed once the move is finalized.

Councilor Tanner clarified the Commission's request for direction regarding the question of who has control and authority over the building and its inhabitants and from whose budget the funding would derive. Chairman LaVallie concurred, stating that, as a Community Center, the facility would fall under the auspices of Parks & Recreation, but, aside from the STEAP Grant, which was received four to five years ago, and those items included in the Public Works budget, they have not received any funding for capital improvements. While he is hoping for the Town Council's support in providing the necessary funding in the future so that the Commission may improve the facilities for the people of the Town, he questioned whether it should continue to be included as a line item in their CIP budget. The Mayor agreed that, while they have allocated funds to preserve the "envelope" of the building, i.e., brickwork, siding, roofing, more resources do need to be invested to the improvement of the building.

Discussion ensued regarding the grant process. Mayor McDaniel stated that, ultimately, the Town Council controls everything as they control all budgetary matters, including the acceptance of grants. Director Bushway does have the power to apply for grants with the assistance of other Town agencies, as necessary, and they do not need the Town Council's approval to apply for grants. He recommended that the Commission determine their priorities and utilize that information for any grants they apply. Director Bushway stated that he has applied for three grants and one has been approved. In addition, a grant for the installation of sidewalks between the Tyl Middle School, Fair Oaks, and the Nature Center was also received.

Councilor Caron recommended appointing a representative from the Commission to take part in the meetings with the Youth Center so that their input may be considered and advocating for their needs by attending the Finance Committee meetings and/or communicating to the Town Council through their Liaison. It was his understanding that Parks & Recreation runs the day-to-day operations of the facility under the auspices of the Mayor. He also supports any upgrades to the facility and any grants the Commission would like to pursue.

Councilor McNally added that, while the short-term goal is to move the Youth Center to the facility, the long-term goal is to create a Community Center. To this end, Parks & Recreation should run the day-to-day operations under the auspices of the Mayor, while the maintenance of the facility should be under the Public Works Department. He recommended the possibility of appointing the Commission as an ad-hoc committee for the Fair Oaks Community Center. He added that they should prioritize their needs and seek grants or, possibly, donation of services.

Chairman LaVallie clarified that the question is not whether they control the facility, itself, but whether they have the power to move forward to improve the facility. He and Commissioner Ventresca were agreeable to having a representative from the Commission involved in the discussions, which will enable the Commission to be better informed, and the Mayor offered to organize a meeting with the requisite staff. The Mayor reiterated that the Commission create a long-term plan for the property and, with that, the funding goals can, then, be determined. Public Works Director Bourdeau agreed that the Commission should develop a plan, consider whether they would like to raze and rebuild or renovate the building, and consider completing the project over time.

Chairman LaVallie thanked the Mayor and members of the Town Council for attending the meeting and helping clarify the issue and providing some guidance as to how to move forward.

4. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the agenda with a three-minute limit – *none*
5. To consider and act on a motion to approve:
  - a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, March 18, 2015  
Motion made by Commissioner Ventresca, seconded by Commissioner delaCruz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
6. To consider and act on a motion to review and approve the Director's Report for April 2015.  
Motion made by Commissioner Ventresca, seconded by Commissioner delaCruz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Chairman LaVallie proposed moving item 8(f).

7. Reports from Finance – *none*
8. Unfinished Business
  - f. New Camp Oakdale entrance  
PW Director Bourdeau presented the plan of the parking lot as proposed by the Town Engineer. The parking lot will be re-lined such that the spaces on both ends will be angled and proper signage will be installed directing visitors to one direction. The center will allow for traffic to flow in both directions. Islands and bollards will be installed to slow traffic down and

crosswalks will be installed allowing for visitors and children to safely cross the parking lot. Speed dips, speed bumps, or a raised crosswalk can also be installed to further slow people down. They will be losing only 12 parking spaces. The project is in the budget for approval. The bathroom renovations are now scheduled to take place in the Fall due to other issues that have arose with the electrical upgrades. A fence protector has been installed at Mohegan Field.

a. Town Information Sign – *none*

b. Dog Ordinance

Councilor Tanner will follow-up with the Councilors regarding the status of the Dog Ordinance.

c. Dog Park

Director Bushway stated that Patty Williamson will be spearheading the fundraising for the project and a letter will be mailed to potential donors. She has also purchased a dog suit, which she will don at such events as Little League Opening Day, Trails Day, and the Mother's Day event, to help raise awareness and funds.

Councilor Tanner noted that an article was published in *The Day* newspaper that was posted onto Facebook, where it received much negative feedback. She recommended the Committee review the comments and keep them in mind.

d. Camp Oakdale Wish List

In favor of the bench produced by Jayhawk Plastics, Chairman LaVallie requested Commissioner Perkins consult with PW Director Bourdeau to ensure the ability to permanently install and anchor the bench to the ground. Following the Commission's approval, two benches can be purchased through their Special Revenues Fund and they can, then, discuss how they would like to move forward.

e. P&R Newsletter

The Commission update will be updated.

g. 2015 Budget

Aside from the transferring of funds from the line item for referees to part-time help, there were no adjustments made to their budget.

h. Summer Concert

Director Bushway reported that Wicked Peach has been contacted and he is awaiting the return of their signed contract to which he has added an addendum. He will work with the band and PW Director Bourdeau to ensure that their power requirements can be met. The concert will be held on the football field at Camp Oakdale where bleachers and lighting are available as well as ample space for vendors to park their trucks.

10. Communications – *none*

11. Remarks from the Public – *none*

12. Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioner Perkins expressed her disappointment and frustration with the Commission's conversation with the Mayor and Town Councilors.

Commissioner Ventresca apologized for her tardiness. She is encouraged by their discussion and is hopeful that the Commission will be able to move forward with the direction they have been provided. She thanked everyone who ran the Easter Egg Hunt, which she was unable to attend, but heard went well.

Commissioner delaCruz also expressed her frustration at the lack of any firm response from the Mayor and/or Town Council. She hopes that, though they have been unsuccessful in the past, they will be able to accomplish their goals. The Commission will hold their re-use room sale on Saturday, May 2. Please drop off any items you might have for the sale.

Commissioner Berardy felt that the Commission has not received any clear direction or any concise plan to move forward from the Mayor or Town Councilors and agreed that the Commission should set some goals towards which they may progress.

Chairman LaVallie understood their frustration, but felt that the meeting was a step forward. He felt that some direction and clarity was gained and their task is to create a plan of the facility, determine what needs to be done to achieve their goals, and move forward from there. They may suggest, recommend, and plan, but the Town Council provides the final approval.

13. Remarks from Town Council Liaison, Laura Tanner

Councilor Tanner reported that the Town Council received and will be reviewing the Mayor's budget line by line. She urged the Commissioners to attend the Finance Committee meeting to provide their input. She concurred with the Commissioners who expressed their frustrations as that they had initially approached her with such passion regarding the matter. Nevertheless, she felt that there were some positive aspects and hopes that the Commission can move forward with a plan and a CIP budget be created for the building. She commended the Commission for doing a great job overall.

14 Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Perkins, seconded by Commissioner Ventresca, to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING IS ON FILE IN THE MONTVILLE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE**