

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2020 -- 6:30 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

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For all publicly broadcasted meetings, public comment on agenda items or topics in accordance with the Town charter may be submitted in writing in advance or by live audio via GoToMeeting.

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Written comments may not be read in their entirety, but rather similar messages may be aggregated or paraphrased for submission to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Live audio comments may be made via GoToMeeting by calling from your telephone.

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chairperson of the meeting. The Parks & Recreation Commission Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced in the same manner as if the meeting were held in person.

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1. Call to order.

Chair Hajj called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners Matt Beaupre, Noah Carver, Jon Chase, Kevin Clang, Jennifer Hajj, Morgan Matthewson, Kate Southard, and Rocky Stone. Also present were Parks & Recreation Director Peter Bushway and Town Council Liaison Colleen Rix (by phone). Commissioner Heather Kenniston was absent. A quorum was present.

4. Adjustments to the Agenda.

Motion by Chair Hajj; seconded by Commissioner Beaupre to add to New Business, Agenda Items 12b, Selection Committee for 2021 Commission Officers and 12c, Discussion of social media comments. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Chair Hajj; seconded by Commissioner Carver, to add to Unfinished Business, Item 11g, Discussion of instruction and guidance from Town Attorney regarding FOI matters, Town Charter and Ordinances as they effect the Commission. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Chair Hajj spoke to the full agenda for the meeting and the need for the Commission to be mindful of it and the time span of the meeting.

5. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit). -- None

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

a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020.

Motion by Commissioner Beaupre; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

b. Director's Report for November 2020.

Motion by Commissioner Chase; seconded by Commissioner Southard to approve the November 2020 Director's Report. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7. P&R Newsletter for December 2020.

Commissioner Beaupre asked about the schedule for basketball that Director Bushway said would be adjusted.

8. Report from Finance

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Commissioner Carver asked what would happen to funds for the Holiday Parade. Director Bushway said some minimal purchases for decorations would be made for the holiday tree and for more ground decorations including lit boxes and presents that will surround the tree. The decorations will be closer to Rte. 32 or closer to the 'Welcome to Montville' sign and cost approximately \$1,000. Commissioner Stone asked about the reimbursement for the summer camp tents. Director Bushway reported he has emailed Mayor McDaniel and will contact him for the third time tomorrow. Commissioner Matthewson asked about the status of the remaining funds for the holiday parade. Director Bushway commented any monies not used would go back into the Town General Fund.

9. Review of Recent Programs and Events

a. October and Current 2020 Events and Programs

i. Trick or Trunk (October)

Director Bushway reported the event had a great turnout of just under 1,000 people. He said five (5) trunks did not show probably due to the light rain and one (1) trunk was present that had not signed up for the event. He also reported the fire/police were also present and he thanked everyone who participated.

ii. Judo (on hold)

Director Bushway reported judo was still on hold and would be even longer given the increased rate of Covid infection. Chair Hajj said consideration should be given later as to how to support residents' interest in judo. Director Bushway commented the problem with the sport is it having more one-on-one physical contact.

iii. Karate

Director Bushway reported this week was the second one of the 8-week karate program and said everyone was being safe with no issues. He said there are in-person and a virtual classes. Chair Hajj asked about the responsibility for Covid contact tracing; Director Bushway said it was a requirement of instruction and information about it would be shared with him.

iv. Gymnastics

Director Bushway reported gymnastics classes began on November 17 and said masks, temperature checks, and hand sanitizing are required. Parents have the ability to watch the classes from a video feed by the instructing facility at no cost to the Department.

v. Dance

Director Bushway reported dance class began an 8-week session on Saturday, November 14 and will try to have a mini recital on January 20 at the Fair Oaks parking lot. Plywood is being sought for the tap dancers to perform on.

vi. Yoga

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Director Bushway reported the last class for the session will be soon and said the same instructor would hold a Saturday class starting in January. The instructor for the proposed Wednesday class wants to begin it in the new year.

b. November 2020 Events and Programs

i. Basketball Evaluation Clinics

Director Bushway reported the basketball clinics and indoor volleyball would not start until January 19 pending a decision about the use of the schools as adequate space is needed.

ii. Indoor Volleyball

See the comments for 10.b.i above. Director Bushway said volleyball would continue until May 2021.

10. Upcoming Programs and Events.

a. December 2020 Programs and Events

i. Holiday Light Contest

Director Bushway reported the contest is done in conjunction with the Montville Rotary and said awards are presented to winners in three (3) categories and another to the grand prize winner. Interested persons must sign up for the contest and the list of houses are listed on the Town website.

ii. Wreathmaking Class

Director Bushway reported he reached out to Montville Florist regarding the wreathmaking and holiday centerpiece classes on a Saturday and Sunday, December 5th and 6th respectively. The fee for the wreathmaking supplies is \$30 and Director Bushway asked the Commission whether it wanted to make money on the class. The Commission decided to conduct the class at cost due to the pandemic. Registration will be Monday thru Thursday for resident signups and a signup will be held for nonresidents. Families will be accommodated in the Community Center gym for the purpose of social distancing. Per a question by Commission Beaupre, Director Bushway said the maximum class size will be 20-30. Chair Hajj asked Director Bushway to put the information together for the class and send it to the Commission.

iii. Holiday Centerpiece Class

Director Bushway said the cost for the centerpiece class was similar to that of the wreathmaking class. Motion by Chair Hajj; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to add at cost the wreathmaking and centerpiece classes to the December program offerings, Agenda Item 10.a.ii and 10.a.iii. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

iv. Holiday Scavenger Hunt

Director Bushway stated he got the idea for the scavenger hunt from Florida as a replacement for the Holiday Tree Lighting and Holiday Parade. He said he contacted local businesses who are on board for the hunt. An information sheet was emailed to the Commission about the event. Director Bushway said funds would be needed to purchase the 11-inch stuffed bears at \$310 each. He said the goal is to purchase 25 of them and to solicit businesses for the cost.

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Families will go the businesses to locate the stuffed bear and its name to complete their scavenger hunt sheet. Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Clang to add the scavenger hunt to the December 2020 program of events. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

v. Holiday Memorial Tree

Director Bushway said this year is the second for the memorial tree—hanging a decoration on the holiday tree and reflection in memory of a lost loved one—scheduled for December 12. He said the event is limited to 20 people and said masks will be supplied if needed. Commissioner Chase said he heard the presentation by Mrs. Jean at a Town Council meeting last year.

11. Unfinished Business

a. Discussion to have documents relative to the Parks & Recreation Commission for distribution—ordinances, Town Charter, bylaws, etc.—to address Commission questions. Commissioner Chase reiterated his comments from the October meeting concerning the relative documents that speak to governing actions and authority of the Commission and clarification sought from the Town Attorney regarding the same. Commissioner Stone said he thought there was to be a meeting with the Town Attorney that he said needs to happen to finalize the documents. Chair Hajj said she wanted the documents to be finalized but said they could be changed or added to. Motion by Chair Hajj to approve formalization of the Town Charter, Bylaws, Ordinances, and other documents for newly appointed commissioners and for reference purposes. There was not a second to the motion. Motion failed. Chair Hajj asked that Commissioner Chase contact the Town Attorney to set up a time to meet. Commissioner Chase explained he did not second the motion as he was not sure what the list of documents included. Commissioner Stone said he listed the documents in August. Commissioner Beaupre said he was okay with the overall discussion but said a decision needed to be made instead of going back and forth. Commissioner Southard said she remembered the documents and said they had everything the Commission needs. Chair Hajj said she has the table of contents for the documents and that they would be stayed for two (2) months; thereafter, if nothing were done, they would be taken as is.

b. Development of Parks & Recreation Logo

Commissioner Stone reported that there seemed to be no interest from the school district within the last 30 days about creating the logo. He said the options are to move on without them or have the Commission take on the project but said he was not sure how to proceed. Commissioner Stone said he reached out to several school classes within the district and said distance learning may be the issue.

c. Holiday Parade (December 2020)

This event was cancelled and relayed to the Commission by Director Bushway via email.

d. 2020 Decorations

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Director Bushway reported Public Works would be putting up the holiday decorations next week. Commissioner Chase asked about the flags that he said seemed to be a Public Works function. As well, he said the Commission had spoken about redirecting the decoration funds and said he felt the Commission needed to take steps to return the funds to the Town Council. However, Chair Hajj said the Commission had not come up with definitive ideas yet but said it may be time to do so. Commissioner Clang commented on the decoration funds being in the budget and why the Commission was not putting them up. Commissioner Chase explained the history of the appropriation of the decoration funds by the Town Council and its involvement to present for the benefit of Commissioner Clang. Per his request to add an agenda item to discuss social media comments, Commissioner Stone referenced a politically motivated, social media post that criticized the new Commission and its intent to use the funds for other things such as tutoring. He said he responded to the post and spoke of the large turnover on the Commission, of reaching out to the Town Council Liaison and the Town Council as to why the Commission was given the job of decorating, and further reaching out to the Town Council for clarification given spending the funds on frivolous banners was not in the best interests of the townspeople given the Covid crisis. Town Councilor Rix said she was not aware of the post but concurred with Chair Hajj about having people attend the meetings to voice their concerns and obtain responses. Commissioner Stone was supported for defending the Commission and he thanked Town Councilor Rix for being a champion of the Commission. Town Councilor Rix said the Commission still had time and said if the appropriation is not used it would go back to the Town Council but said the Commission may be able to come up with additional programs for use of the funds. Commissioner Southard spoke of the accusation about not having pride and being tone deaf to the funds for banners. She said the stance is not that the Commission does not want the banners but that it is a public works job. Motion by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Chase to remove the item from the agenda. Discussion: Commissioner Chase said if a new program requires funds in the future, then it can be discussed. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

e. Mostoway Project (hereafter known as the 'Mostoway Property')

Commissioner Chase asked for the Agenda item name change and spoke of the tour with the DEEP conservation representative and for future feedback by commissioners who were present. He said the tour was productive and a lot was learned but said there were existing paths and trails that were not navigable. Commissioner Chase said he had spoken with Director Bushway about low cost ideas for making the paths and trails passable through clean-up and by support from the community for public use of them. He said he was willing to proceed on his own without major expenditure. Chair Hajj clarified that moving forward on the property was a slow process as it needed to be surveyed. She also stated the Commission was notified after its purchase by the Town of its potential purpose, without consult beforehand.

f. Potential Events and Programs

Director Bushway spoke about some ideas he had for programs that could be conducted on Saturdays or could be taken home as a kit for completion. He talked about the purchase of holiday decoration kits at the total, low cost of \$100 for an event to be held on December 12.

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He also mentioned a gingerbread house kit at a cost of \$5 each that could be made at the Community Center or also taken home. Chair Hajj asked about the funding for these programs. Director Bushway said funds would come from the Programs or Special Revenue budget line items depending upon the number of kids who participate. Chair Hajj also spoke about having a scarecrow making kit for next year to generate more attendance given only three (3) participated this year. Commissioner Matthewson spoke about using sea glass to make a Christmas tree, a project that cost \$35 for her entire school class. She asked if it would be okay to provide feedback about it and said she would send the information on Monday. Chair Hajj suggested getting some projects that are adult oriented as some do not have family.

- g. Discussion of instruction and guidance from Town Attorney regarding FOI matters, Town Charter and Ordinances as they effect the Commission.

Commissioner Chase explained that this would be an opportunity to get guidance from the Town Attorney and said he would try to schedule a meeting. Commissioner Stone asked if the meeting would occur on a non-meeting night. Commissioner Chase said the discussion could occur as part of a regular meeting by starting the meeting a half hour earlier depending upon the Town Attorney's availability. He said he would try to make it happen for the next Commission meeting. Chair Hajj spoke of information she obtained from Mayor McDaniel on periodic FOI courses given through venues in which the Town has membership.

12. New Business

- a. To consider and act on a motion to approve the 2021 Meeting Schedule.

Motion by Chair Hajj; seconded by Commissioner Beaupre to approve the 2021 Meeting Schedule. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- b. Selection Committee for 2021 Commission Officers.

Commissioner Beaupre explained that the selection committee for Commission officers consists of the vice-chair and two (2) other Commission members. He said a slate is brought forward at the January meeting for a vote at the February meeting. Commissioner Southard said the process could be done via email and asked for two other members. Commissioners Carver and Matthewson volunteered.

- c. Discussion of social media comments.

This item was moved up on the Agenda and discussed under Item 11d.

13. Communications -- None

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

Chair Hajj asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

15. Remarks from Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor Rix remarked she liked the ideas to boost morale for the holidays. She proposed placing the bears for the scavenger hunt in the windows at the Public Safety

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Building, Town Council, Dinosaur Place, and other places they can be seen. She also said she would travel to get ideas for the holiday lights and concluded she was looking forward to 2021.

16. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway -- *None*

17. Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioner Southard thanked Director Bushway for adding new programs to substitute for the ones that would not be taking place. Commissioner Chase thanked the Town Council and Town Councilor Rix for their support as well as Town Council Chairman May regarding legal opportunities. He also thanked Town Councilor Caron for his support of the community and for property not being used for storage by the Town or residents. Commissioner Carver said he was desperately excited by Director Bushway's amazing new program and thanked him for raising the morale of the residents. Commissioner Beaupre said he had no comments. Commissioner Matthewson said she was looking forward to the activities and to bringing the Town together. Commissioner Stone thanked Director Bushway and said the Trick or Trunk event was fun. Chair Hajj echoed all of the remarks and said she was excited for the new programs and for next year.

18. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

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.**