Park and Recreation Commission

John Bittmann, Chairman
Ronald Sill
Bruce Sill
Heather Beauton
Jose Rivera (BOAT)
Michael Kelleher
vacant

Minutes

(meeting recorded)

Monthly meeting: Monday, April 14, 2025 – held at City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

By roll call, members present: John Bittmann, Ronald Sill (ZOOM), Bruce Sill, Jose Rivera (ZOOM) and Michael Kelleher. Heather Beauton was excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. Athletic Director Jenn Moffat was present on ZOOM.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:
MOTION made by John Bittmann and second by Ronald Sill. MOVE to add 8C to the agenda to be Discussion of Mario Tessitore dedication of soccer fields at Witek Park and accept the agenda, as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
MOTION made by Bruce Sill and second by Michael Kelleher. MOVE to approve the February 10, 2025 minutes, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:
Mr. William Harris was present at the February meeting and is here tonight to ask the Commission to consider naming the soccer fields at Witek Park after Mario Tessitore, a resident integral to the Youth Soccer Program for decades.

MOTION made by Michael Kelleher and second by Bruce Sill. MOVE to close the public portion. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCES:
Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:
Mr. O'Connell reported that the spring season is underway. Little League is back at full strength fielding a 12 year old team this year. There is new leadership in Pop Warner, he will be meeting with them soon.

The pool at the Derby Veteran's Community Center continues to experience problems and had to be closed for a number of days. The swim program is very strong and these closures are impacting the lessons resulting in lower revenues. Currently the receivables are $62,677.01.

Members discussed the need to address these chronic problems with the pool which is 65 years old. It was suggested to develop a proposal for the capital plan to explore funding renovations to the system. There are discussions of a referendum in the fall to deal with capital expenditures and this may be eligible to be included. Mr. O'Connell noted that there are a number of needs at the Derby Veteran's Community Center. The health club has been without air conditioning for more than two years. The lockers are in terrible shape. Mr. Ronald Sill encouraged Mr. O'Connell to develop a list of proposals for the capital planning commission and prioritize the degree of need. It was noted how the playground at Bradley School has fallen in such disrepair that it has been closed. That falls under the

Board of Education but it must be considered an important part of the recreation's summer program as well.

Parks and Recreation Update and Report

- Spring 2025 is underway. The next three months are going to be very busy. Our sports programs are Baseball, Softball(men&woman), Track, Cross Country, Soccer, and Rugby.
- Witek Park, Bradley School and Ryan Complex have rental schedules.
- Five (5) loads of clay were needed for our baseball and softball fields. Thanks to Capital Plan Commission.
- At The Coon Hollow Picnic Grove basketball courts, the first order of repair will be the lighting system.
- DVCC continues to battle pool problems. We had to close a couple of days causing a loss of revenue which our swim lesson program generates.
- The Derby Little League Program is banking on a successful season with increased participants this year.
- We will be meeting with the new leadership of the Derby Pop Warner in the near future.
- **Recreation Receivables: $62,677.01 as of April 6th, 2025**

High School Athletic Director's Report:
Ms. Moffat stated spring is underway and as always, the schedule is dependent on the spring weather. Practice is being held at the Little League fields as well. Public Works is working on getting the Bradley School fields ready for play as well.

(from Board of Alderman and Alderwoman monthly reports)

Athletic Updates

- Our DOHC Wrestling team completed its season with Sophie Mraz placing 4th at the Girls State Championship Meet. Sophie is only the second female derby wrestler to place in this meet. Anthony Shivas was the runner-up at the CT State Open and advanced to compete at the New England Regional Championship meet in Rhode Island. Anthony was recognized on March 12th at the CHSCA All-State Banquet. Anthony was also honored for being Academic All-State
- Quincy Carter competed in the Indoor Track & Field Championships in Boston MA in the 55M Dash. Sebastian Amaya, Jaylen Titus, Quincy Carter, Zyare Petree and Jarell Williams were recognized at the CHSCA All-State Banquet on March 12th.
- Our Cheerleading team placed 6th at the CIAC Class S Championship Competition on March 1st and advanced to compete at the team of the year competition at North Haven High School.
- Our Unified Sports teammates of the year have been announced. Antonio Ortiz and Emma Hyder. They will be celebrated at the Unified Sports banquet on April 28th at the Aqua Turf.
- DHS hosted a Unified Volleyball game between DHS and DMS on March 19th. DHS and DMS will join together again and play a kickball game on 4/22.
- Spring sports started at DHS with baseball and softball pitchers and catchers on 3/15 and all sports practices on 3/22. DMS spring sports began practice on 3/31.
- The baseball mound is set to be resurfaced by Derby Public works on 3/28 and is projected to be ready for the first scrimmage of the season on 3/31.
- There is an issue that is happening with the Payden Park scoreboard and I am currently working with OES to come up with a solution.

NEW OR OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Budget:

Mr. O'Connell stated that the Board of Apportionment and Taxation has approved the 2025 - 2026 budget. The request showed only a very small increase and maintains the status quo.

B. Update on the YMCA request to hold a summer program at Bradley School:

There have been no further discussions and is unlikely to go forward.

C. Mario Tessitore dedication of the soccer fields at Witek Park.

Mr. Tessitore served the Derby Soccer program for more than 40 years. It was his passion for the sport that brought soccer play to Derby creating the recreation program and feeding into the school soccer programs. Members indicated that he is likely known at the Godfather of Derby Soccer.

MOTION made by Ronald Sill and second by Michael Kelleher. MOVE to strongly recommend to the Board of Alderman and Alderwoman to forward to their naming committee the request to name the soccer complex at Witek Park for Mario Tessitore, long-time director and founding father of Derby Youth Soccer. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION made by Michael Kelleher and second by Ronald Sill. MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.