



TOWN OF BERLIN
Parks and Recreation Commission
230 Kensington Road • Berlin, CT 06037

Thursday, December 8, 2016
7:00 p.m.
Berlin Community Center

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present: Len Zielinski-Chairman, Donna Bovee, Peter DeFazio, Tony DeFranco, Don Dellaquila, Steve Hinchliffe, Rob Sylvester

Staff Present:

Debbie Dennis - Superintendent of Recreation
Jennifer Ochoa ó Director of Community, Recreation and Park Services
Art Volz ó Public Grounds Superintendent
Jon Zuk ó Golf Course Director
Gerry Salvio ó Assistant Golf Course Director
Marc Bayram ó Golf Pro

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Seb Senia Jan Bennett Harry Josephson
Gerry Paradis Jim Bugella

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Mr. Harry Josephson appeared to thank the Commission for reinstating the 9-hole starting times and wished all present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Gerry Paradis appeared to thank the Commission for rescinding the 11/30/16 season pass termination date. He reported that there were 30 guys playing on Saturday and Sunday (12/3 and 12/4/16) and they appreciated the opportunity to play.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Dellaquila made a motion to approve the November 10, 2016 meeting minutes, seconded by Commissioner DeFazio. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Bovee moved to approve the November 28, 2016 Special Meeting minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Sylvester. The motion was approved unanimously.

2017 MEETING SCHEDULE

Commissioner Bovee moved to accept the proposed 2017 Meeting Schedule. Commissioner Dellaquila seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC GROUNDS

a. Monthly Report

- Leaf cleanup wrapped up today.

- A large food order was picked up at Stop & Shop and delivered it to the food pantry at Pistol Creek by staff.
- Cleaned up lot of dead trees on the tree line that separates Phase II of Veteranø Park and the VFW parking lot.
- Holiday lights are up all around town.
- Fountains at Veteranø Park are shut off for winter. (One fountain is under repair.)
- Skating signs are up all around town ó 2 ponds may not open due to low water level.
- There was a possibility of using budget funds to contract the addition of ADA pathways at Percival Field. After reviewing the budget and speaking with Jack Healy and Dave Thorn, it was decided that Public Grounds staff would install the pathways rather than using a contractor. They will not be paved, but will use screenings, extending to the soccer field, along the parking lot and leading to the existing concrete pad in front of the bleachers. Some additional handicapped parking places will be added.
- Pools have been filled for winter.
- All buildings at Sage Park are winterized. There are power and lights in storage building.
- There has been some digging near Volunteer Park. CNG is installing equipment to prevent the high pressure gas lines from freezing. The affected area was to be behind the gazebo. Once the work is done, Public Grounds we will reseed as necessary.
- Deming Park ó holes have been drilled for the bicentennial sign. Jim Mahoney has been in contact with the Miccaci family, and any ADA railings required will be supplied by the family.
- Zipadelli Field ó Chris Skinner stated he will wait and see if the \$70K capital budget line item will be approved before moving forward with any other improvements. He plans to reassess what is necessary after any Town funded renovation is complete. PG will cut the upper lip in spring to make the field playable.
- Tennis Court ó BHS is putting up exterior fences. The contractor still owes us a gate the will provide PG truck access into the court. The stairs are done. The hoops are not back up yet, and no new lights yet.
- Batting Facility ó Ground has been broken on the new batting facility, there is a mini excavator and a skid steer on site. Nadeau is pouring the concrete footings / foundation. Many area residents have apparently called the Town Manager to complain.

b. Budget Highlights

- There is a large addition FY18 ó the proposed \$70K capital improvement to Zipadelli Field. Aside from that item, the budget is up only about 2.25% (<\$5K) over 2016.

PARKS AND RECREATION

a. Monthly Report

- Santaø Parlor ó participation on Monday night, 11/28 was low, with higher attendance on Tuesday, 11/29. There were 45 kids total. Ms. Ochoa commended Ms. Dennis on the Santaø Parlor program, noting that it was an overall great experience for families.
- Tinsel Run ó 170 registered, and 164 actually ran the race on 12/3.
- Registration for Winter Programs is underway.
- Began contacting last yearø staff for the upcoming Summer Programs to assess returnees.
- Basketball scheduling has been a challenge ó Willard gym is not available due to installation of solar panels. Also, there have been issues in the past with switching

players to stack teams. There have been a few attempts to push back this year, but Ms. Dennis has stood her ground for her policy against that practice.

b. Budget Highlights

- P&R is requesting a part time position, (\$17K annual salary, non-union position) with recreation and programming background to help Ms. Dennis with programming. Other than that, the budget is up less than \$2500.
- Field rental, Pavilion rental and lighting fees have been raised \$5 to \$10 depending on the field. Depending upon the field, the last fee increases were in 2002, 2003 and 2009. Commissioner Sylvester wondered if the increases should be in \$20/\$25 increments to cover more of the actual cost.

Commissioner Bovee inquired about the actual cost of field lighting. Currently, Scalise softball, Zipadelli and Hubbard fields are lit, and there are separate meters on each of those fields.

Mr. Volz informed the group that Scalise Field costs an average of about \$2,500/month when lights are used. Ms. Dennis remarked that there is a trend for municipalities to charge youth leagues for such costs, since they're using the areas, and the youth leagues charge the players.

Ms. Dennis stated that summer camp makes money, and basketball is close to turning a profit, but there are custodial fees associated with that program. Berlin P&R programs are affordable for users but also covering their own expenses.

Doug Truitt handles hardship requests to reduce or waive fees.

As a matter of interest, Ms. Dennis noted that summer camp was free when she started at P&R, then went up to \$50 / \$75 for the whole summer. Summer camp is now at \$60/week.

TIMBERLIN GOLF COURSE

a. Monthly Report

- Leaf clean up continues.
- There have been 2 applications for snow mold on greens.
- The irrigation system has been blown out and closed for the winter. (An outside vendor comes with a compressor, and Timberlin's two employees help with the process.)
- Timberlin is closed for the season due to the low temps and wind chill. There weren't many days lost to rain and the course had its' earliest opening in spring 2016. This may balance out the course closing in early December. Commissioner Dellaquila inquired if the course may reopen in the case of a "heat wave." Mr. Zuk said it may be possible, but it would depend upon the overnight temperature, the estimated time of thaw, etc.

Another factor in the decision to close the course was the sanding of the greens on 12/8/16. A 1/8" thick cover of sand was laid down on the greens to protect the crowns of grass plants. If there is low/no snow cover over the winter, the plants can dry out. If this application wasn't made by 12/9/16, there may not be another opportunity to protect the grass prior to the predicted storm on Sunday, 12/11/16.

Another risk was weighed in the decision to close Timberlin. When the top level of turf freezes, but the ground beneath is not yet frozen, use of the turf can actually cause the top layer of grass and roots to shear off and damage the course long-term. December, 2015

temps averaged in the 50s, but this year we have lows in the 30s, 20s and teens, and the health of the course can't be risked for a couple of hours of play.

b. Golf Pro Report

- Several programs were run for adults. There were on average 9 participants each time ó mostly women. Ladies are taking up the game ó the Tuesday evening game is usually full (40 in league - usually 24-30 attend).
- Also, ran several junior programs ó one during spring vacation. Ran PJ junior league, which is geared toward middle school-aged kids. Junior club and inter-club (ages 14-18 can play on Timberlin team for no charge ó fee donated by men's club) ó they also play Hartford Golf Club, Shuttle Meadow, Wethersfield Country Club at no charge. The team gets the serious players who play all summer.
- Created the Be B.E.R.L.I.N. Proud program that teaches both life skills and golf skills.
- Private instruction - John Vitale (a local teaching pro) did a good job helping out with private instruction, and will likely be moving on next season.
- Veteran's Day ó ran Lessons for the Vets ó 3 hours of free instructions for veterans. Unfortunately, it was a cold day, so Mr. Bayram only gave a few lessons, but the recipient veterans were happy to receive.
- Going forward, Mr. Bayram wants to focus on juniors. Mr. Ted Pisk, retired pro from Stanley, gave kids free instruction. While he can't give every junior free instruction, Mr. Bayram would like to put together a plan for 1 or 2 fifteen-minute lessons per month for the juniors. He feels these are the future golfers of Timberlin.

While there are junior golfers from out of town (Southington, mainly), the majority of junior golfers are from Berlin. Hawk's Landing has a large junior program óJunior Little League,ö so it gets the majority of Southington junior golfers, but Timberlin still draws the better Southington golfers who want the challenge of the course. Hawk's Landing focuses on outings and has a large practice facility. Timberlin's PGA Junior League is similar to Hawk's Landing Little League- for ages 8-13. Unfortunately, Timberlin's PGA Junior League has dropped off ó there are so many things they can be doing, and golf takes time and money. Still, it is a great introduction to competitive golf ó it's great to get parents out there with the kids.

- Mr. Bayram has a database of about 4K names. About 1/3 of blast emails sent are opened and recipients are reading the specials. Each time a blast is sent about night golf, 80-100 play and the email is the only form of advertising or notification. Night golf generated \$4K this year. Mike's Golf Outlet (a used golf business) asked Mr. Bayram to swap databases. Mr. DeFazio requested that some privacy policy language be posted on Timberlin's website so there's notice, and stated that Mr. Bayram should use his best judgment when deciding who gets Timberlin's customer info.

c. **Revenue Report** ó through November, 2016, Timberlin is \$93K over last year (greens fees and carts). October and November, 2016 were \$3K below the prior year, but overall still had a good year. There were 67K+ 9 hole plays, which amounts to \$67K season CIP revenue.

d. Budget Highlights

- Proposing a cart storage area in the upper parking lot (east side by the 15th hole), and part-time attendant (\$5,500 increase) for that location. Golfers will execute a rental agreement through pro shop, bring that agreement to attendant, the attendant will retrieve a cart, check the cart for damage when going out and again when coming back in.

- There was some vandalism to carts this year ó calls were made to people who appeared on police reports for such vandalism. The Town Manager's secretary and Steve Waznia drafted a letter to those individuals stating that the Town is willing to work out payment terms for the damage on carts. The proposed process will allow much more control over the process and the opportunity to spot damage far quicker. Right now, the process / position is experimental ó there will not be an attendant there all day and night. Donald will be responsible for washing the carts daily. The plan is to plant 60-80 arborvitae trees along the hill behind the 15th green, and a split rail fence along parking lot. The trees will also serve to isolate the 15th green from parking lot noise.
- Timberlin was at almost \$300K in labor costs 4 years ago. After last job transfers, that number is down to about \$119K. A portion of that money was transferred into the part-time account to pay for the 2 additional seasonal people starting spring 2017. (Timberlin doesn't need those extra 2 people in winter.) Cutting those full time salaries (\$150K), the associated health insurance (50K), plus unemployment and Social Security, Timberlin saved a great deal. Aesthetically, it has suffered a little bit, but financially it looks good going forward.
- Advertising increased from \$5K to \$7K. A \$2K ad package with CT Golfer online guarantees us a full-page profile, and it increases Timberlin's ranking within Connecticut courses. Timberlin has worked with Jim Bugella who has helped the course to increase its exposure. Through his marketing contacts, Mr. Bugella gets Timberlin desirable spots on Good Morning America, Travelers, British Open, and PGA Championships for a fire sale rates. While there is always a desire to reduce advertising costs, there is usually positive feedback after ads run on television.
- Bank service charges increase \$2,500 debit card processing.
- Requesting \$42K for a permanent tent roof. The current tent needs new canvas and siding (\$10K for 10 year life span) and requires about \$2,100 in annual labor to assemble, wash, fold, store, light, hang signage, etc.) The permanent aluminum roof has a 50-year life expectancy. The sides are open, and tarp sides roll up and down, and it may be enclosed in the future to allow for heating and air conditioning as well.

There is a new regulation that any time food is served, it must be under roof cover from preparation to delivery ó nothing may be walked around in open air. Commissioner Bovee inquired if the budget request should be increased to incorporate the potential future changes now. Upgrading the tent facility would likely attract more golfers. Timberlin should look to its competition and try to improve where it lacks. Outings and tournaments are lucrative, and an improved facility can only increase Timberlin's appeal and status. Additionally, a vinyl tent may only be utilized for about 4 months, whereas a permanent structure is all-season.

The idea of expanding the existing concrete pad footprint was also discussed. The current footprint can accommodate 150 people. The idea of expanding into the front practice green was discussed as a possibility ó there would still be another practice green, and the views are wonderful. Mr. Salvio will obtain cost information to propose for the expansion.

- The driving range got pushed out to the FY19 budget.

2017/2018 Rates

Commissioner Sylvester inquired if, in return for its waived golf fees, BHS reciprocated with no-charge gym usage for P&R. Ms. Dennis replied that P&R is charged time and one-half for custodians on weekends, which comprises about \$11K of the budget. It was calculated that BHS receives about \$6K-\$8K of golf usage, which then costs Timberlin an additional \$6 - \$8K of foregone revenue since paying golfers can not play while BHS students occupy the course. Commissioner Bovee wondered if the various departments should be billing one another at all, or if it's a waste of accounting. FYI, BHS golfers practice most every day, but it's only when there is availability (paying customers come first). During a match the tee sheets get blocked 30-45 minutes. Generally, boys' and girls' tournaments are scheduled on separate days but about once a year they end up on the same day.

Season Passes

The Commission compared and discussed its competition's rates and conditions.

The Senior Restricted Pass rate and conditions were discussed. On several occurrences, senior players have reserved tee times one week in advance, but don't show or show up short handed and waste the block. It is proposed that 9-hole tee times on the back nine may be reserved from 7:00 to 8:50 am. Any 9-hole play from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm will be walk-up only. In the event of an 18-hole threesome, the Senior Restricted golfer may be filled into join that group and golf the first 9 holes. Of course, when there is an open tee time, the starter may fill in the Senior Restricted golfer at that spot. Commissioner DeFazio noted that this is a common practice. It was discussed that the Senior Restricted Pass rate not be increased in consideration of this change.

Mr. Jan Bennett remarked that the Commission shouldn't ignore the golfer's \$1 CIP contribution, which contributes to the golfer's annual cost. While Timberlin's senior rates are lower than Stanley's, Mr. DeFazio observed that more income will likely be realized by opening up tee-times for 18-hole play, than by raising the senior pass fees.

The Timberlin Junior Season Pass is higher than at local Stanley. Mr. Bayram observed that few are sold historically, and he proposes that the rate not increase.

A proposed increase of approximately 2-3% to the Resident and Non-Resident Season pass rates was discussed.

Chairman Zielinski brought up the cart pass punch card incentive program. In 2016, 89 18-hole punch cards were sold. Mr. Gerry Paradis remarked that the cart pass punch cards should not expire or they should carry over to the next season if unused. Timberlin is receiving the income up front to use as it necessary, so why not let the holder utilize it at a later date. Mr. Bugella remarked that he feels that the incentive should return to purchase 12 cart rentals for the price of 10.

Commissioner Bovee moved to accept the Cart rental rates as follows:

- \$17.50 rate per 18 hole
- \$170.00 for Cart Pass Punch Card, which allows 12 rides per card and does not expire

Commissioner DeFazio seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Dellaquila made a motion to accept the Season Pass rates for residents, and change the 9-hole reservation rules as follows: 9 hole reservations may be made for the nine hole side only, from 7-9 am only. Commissioner Bovee Seconded the motion, with all in favor and Commissioner Sylvester opposed the reservation restriction. The motion passed.

Commissioner Dellaquila moved to accept the Non-Resident season pass rates, and change the 9-hole reservation rules as follows: 9 hole reservations may be made for the nine side only, from 7-9 am only. Commissioner DeFazio seconded the motion, with all in favor and Commissioner Sylvester again opposed the reservation restriction.

The next meeting will focus on individual passes, daily play rates.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Sylvester to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 pm, seconded by Commissioner Dellaquila. The motion was unanimously approved.

Submitted by
Dana Borges

Timberlin Revenue Comparison Seasonal

	2015 Season			2016 Season		
	Greens	Carts	Total	Greens	Carts	Total
Jan	\$1,675	\$0	\$1,675	\$1,658	\$0	\$1,658
Feb	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar	24,270	395	24,665	120,709	15,781	136,490
Apr	152,198	19,109	171,307	71,552	25,535	97,087
May	99,446	44,073	143,519	91,773	38,302	130,075
Jun	88,337	41,117	129,454	113,974	51,285	165,259
Jul	92,191	47,968	140,159	104,761	57,166	161,927
Aug	86,730	48,888	135,618	91,672	55,406	147,078
Sep	84,484	46,026	130,510	86,531	49,624	136,155
Oct	48,858	31,488	80,346	47,109	30,279	77,388
Nov	18,836	18,417	37,253	17,356	17,200	34,555
	\$697,026	\$297,480	\$994,506	\$747,094	\$340,578	\$1,087,672
	Revenue Δs 2016 over 2015			\$50,068	\$43,098	\$93,166

MULTICOURSE SURVEY CY2016

RESIDENT - WEEKDAY	Timberlin	Stanley	Rockledge	Hunter	Simsbury Farms
9 holes	17.25	17.00	19.00	N/A	19.00
18 holes	28.50	28.00	33.00	N/A	31.25
Senior 9 holes	12.25	14.00	15.50	N/A	15.25
Senior 18 holes	18.25	23.00	28.00	N/A	24.00
Junior 9 holes	10.25	10.75	15.50	N/A	12.00
Junior 18 holes	17.00	17.50	28.00	N/A	19.25

RESIDENT - WEEKEND/HOLIDAYS	Timberlin	Stanley	Rockledge	Hunter	Simsbury Farms
9 holes	19.50	19.00	21.00	N/A	20.00
18 holes	31.50	31.50	36.00	N/A	33.50
9 holes Senior	12.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18 holes Senior	20.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9 holes Junior	11.75	10.75	N/A	N/A	N/A
18 holes Junior	19.25	17.50	N/A	N/A	N/A

NON-RESIDENT WEEKDAYS	Timberlin	Stanley	Rockledge	Hunter	Simsbury Farms
9 holes	24.00	21.25	21.00	21.00	24.00
18 holes	38.00	36.00	41.00	35.00	39.00
9 holes Senior	16.25	16.75	18.00	16.00	19.00
18 holes Senior	28.00	28.00	36.00	25.00	30.00
9 holes Junior	11.75	10.75	18.00	13.00	15.00
18 holes Junior	19.25	17.50	36.00	21.00	24.00

NON-RESIDENT WEEKENDS/HOLIDAYS	Timberlin	Stanley	Rockledge	Hunter	Simsbury Farms
9 holes	25.25	23.25	24.00	24.00	25.00
18 holes	41.50	39.75	46.00	40.00	42.00
9 holes Senior	17.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18 holes Senior	29.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9 holes Junior	15.25	10.75	N/A	N/A	N/A
18 holes Junior	22.00	17.50	N/A	N/A	N/A

CARTS	Timberlin	Stanley	Rockledge	Hunter	Simsbury Farms
18 Holes	17.00	17.25	17.00	15.00	18.00
9 Holes	10.00	10.25	10.00	9.00	11.00

SEASON PASSES	Timberlin	Stanley	Rockledge	Hunter	Simsbury Farms
Adult Resident	935	925	1,235	N/A	1,230
Senior Resident	700	775	835	N/A	1,120
Junior Resident	480	300	835	N/A	450
Senior Resident Restricted	400	470	600	N/A	650
Junior Resident Restricted	300	100	600	N/A	250
Adult Non Resident	1,600	1,335	1,700	1,390	1,515
Senior Non Resident	1,400	N/A	1,155	750	1,385
Junior Non Resident	700	300	1,155	350	500
Senior Non Resident Restricted	785	750	N/A	N/A	835
Junior Non Resident Restricted	370	125	N/A	N/A	300