

**COVENTRY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd, 2016**

The Coventry Parks & Recreation Commission held a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 3rd, 2016 in Town Hall Conference Room B. Jennifer Rodgers called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Alternate Member Jillian Miner was seated for regular member Todd Messier.

Members Present: Jennifer Rodgers, Antonia Conti, Marie Gallo-Hall and Jillian Miner

Members Absent: Todd Messier & Sean Butler

Others Present: Wendy Rubin, Director of Parks & Recreation and Caterina Merriam, Recreation Supervisor.

Presentation:

- Barbara Ally, Consultant and Arts Guild Members Justin and Irina Trzaskos were on hand to present the goings-on of the newly formed Arts Guild, and how they hope to work in conjunction with the Parks & Recreation Commission.
 - Ms. Rubin began by offering some history as to the Parks & Recreation Commission's role as the Arts Commission. Mr. Trzaskos then presented on the founding and activities of the Coventry Arts Guild, including their mission and vision. Their main goal is to connect artists, help them market and sell their work and create a sense of community. They also hope to facilitate public access to the visual and performing arts, create dedicated arts spaces and boost economic development here in town. They hope to meet regularly with both the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Economic Development Commission.
 - Mr. Trzaskos noted that the Guild is preparing for their first public event, to be held in September at Patriots Park. They have already participated in a few Open Studios, including a co-sponsored event with the Library during the 2015 Christmas in the Village event.
 - Ms. Ally explained the group's strategic action plan, and that for them to succeed they must form strong partnerships with other organizations. One way they plan to do this is to develop a roster of artists who are willing to facilitate workshops and presentations for kids to make available to the schools and to other interested groups. Ms. Ally is in the process of preparing her final report for the State, which is a requirement of the Arts as Placemaking grant the Town received to obtain her services.
 - The Commission discussed the various ways the groups can work together, including sharing of resources, co-sponsoring events/workshops, the potential use of the Caretaker's House for the Guild's activities, art involvement at Parks & Rec. events, classes offered through Parks & Rec., etc. Ms. Miner suggested that the group could sponsor a scholarship at the High Schools for students interested in pursuing the arts. Ms. Rubin noted that Parks & Rec. could potentially support the guild with office space/ mailing address c/o Parks & Rec.
 - The Commission agreed to review the resource list that the guild has put together, and will continue to refer any new artists to the Guild.

Audience of Citizens: None.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Marie Gallo-Hall moved to accept the meeting minutes from February 3rd, 2016. Jillian Miner seconded. Motion voted in the affirmative by Antonia Conti, Marie Gallo-Hall, Jennifer Rodgers and Jillian Miner. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Email notice of a grant award to the High School to fund an afterschool yoga program for students.

Staff Report:

A written Staff Report was distributed to the Commission for their review. Ms. Rubin went on to discuss a few noteworthy items:

- Youth Basketball:
 - Basketball is winding down, with end-of-year banquets and the jamboree around the corner. The Wins 4 Life folks will be here at our March meeting to discuss the options for next year's Travel Program.
- Laidlaw Park:
 - \$60,000 worth of labor was donated by "Earthworks" to build a new tournament-level field and improved parking at Laidlaw Park. Ms. Rubin, along with Town Engineer Todd Penney attended a recent Town Council meeting, requesting additional funding to complete the project. The Town Council approved an appropriation of \$30,000. Earthworks will also install the playscape that was purchased last fall. Coventry Soccer Inc. has also donated \$40,000 towards the project.

Old Business:

- Strategic Plan: Tabled.
- FY 16-17 Budget & Capital Improvement Plan:
 - Ms. Rubin noted that Parks & Recreation may be called to a Town Council meeting to discuss our budget. There are a number of things staff have been researching to improve the status of our budget, that will be discussed in future Commission meetings, as well as with the Town Council. Staff are looking at raising fees and changing some program specifics as income generating and cost-savings measures.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: With no other business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 9:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caterina Merriam,
Recreation Supervisor

Please note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission at the next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting. Please see the next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.