

CHATHAM PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
7-14-2020 6:15 PM at Crellin Park, Rear Pavilion, picnic tables on the grass

in Attendance: John Wapner, Kevin Weldon, Donal Collins Town Supervisor, Mike West, Anita Fiorillo, Jim Marks, Jesse Ortiz

Mike West took everyone's temperature and had us fill out a health check sheet. Everyone was masked. Two people per picnic table, except for one with three people.

1. Report from Mike West

A. The weekly testing requirement for COVID took two of the lifeguards out of the equation. It got too late in the game to find replacement lifeguards of good caliber. So the decision was made to close the pond to swimming. The beach has been roped off.

B. What is open at Crellin Park update – allowed are the following activities: fishing, walking, tennis (singles and doubles) and working in the community garden. In addition the baseball field has been opened. There are temporary signs to limit the way the field is used. Permanent signs have been ordered.

The skate park opened the week of July 6 and will be open until the scheduled work commences at the end of July. It is used by high school students, young adults, and now, parents with young kids. The largest crowd that has been seen contained about 6-8 kids.

Some people have complained about the behavior of off-leash dogs. A leash rule has been put in effect stating that dogs must be kept leashed at all times. This is helping.

The soccer field remains closed. There have been occasions when parents have walked onto the field to do drills with their kids, but this has not happened often.

Volunteers can work in the park. Mike is still waiting for the Town attorney to approve the protocol for such usage which is to include a hold harmless agreement.

C. Trails update – some clearing continues to link Crellin Park trails to the trails at PS21.

Mike heard from the Columbia Greene Work Force program which services young adults. They identified a 20 year old man and some others who are interested in helping with the trail project. The Work Force program will pay them for their work. The young man Mike spoke with could potentially be a supervisor of a volunteer crew.

D. Other Park-related developments – The Town has just started organizing contracts with the Chatham Reds and youth baseball. The hope is we can get groups back in and using the Park.

Brian at ACP will drop off a walk-behind mower or brush hog so Mike can attack the sumac thicket on the hill behind the baseball diamond.

Mike described a music event that PS21 has scheduled at PS21 and in the Park in August. Individual musicians will be assigned a pod of listeners (no more than 10) to listen while the music is played. The music from other pods will be audible but well-distanced. The locations of the pods are in the process of being determined by PS21.

Jesse asked about the motion detector lights for the skate park. Skate park construction will start July 24 and signs will be posted. The lights will be installed when the basic work is completed.

At this point, Supervisor Collins left to attend a Planning Board meeting.

2. Discussion of what we can provide for the community from August through October, led by John Wapner

Mike West described an initiative undertaken in Hudson. They rolled out a schedule of 1-2 hour-long activities that people have to register for. This was developed in collaboration with arts

organizations, community groups, exercise trainers, etc. He suggested we could do something similar at Crellin.

For example, Bindlestiff might be able to host a circus skills class; PS21 might be able to develop an arts program. The Park would be a host location and Mike West would facilitate the activities. The Front Pavilion might be completed by mid-September and it would be a good place to have exercise programs such as tai chi or Zumba. These could also be held on the grass if weather permits. There could be some sort of tennis drill program developed also.

Other partners might be the Chatham Reds, the Morris, and Kid's Club. But if we do this, Mike will need help with park maintenance as he will have less time available for that. Other suggestions were fly fishing lessons, a program on migrating birds and monarch butterflies, archery lessons, something from the Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Jim Marks suggested that the Town could get some good public relations from tying the completion of the Front Pavilion to the opening of these special programs.

Mike was asked what infrastructure projects could be handled in the Park during this period of low usage. He said the Park needs new lifeguard chairs. He also needs Copeland to come look at a dip in the basketball court, which becomes a small pond when it rains. And there is a new crack in the tennis court.

In order to proceed with these special projects the following steps should be taken:

1. First would be for the Town to decide that it wants to help people during this period of time.
2. Then we must determine guidelines for closure of the programs should there be a surge in COVID cases that can be connected to the Park – or perhaps, just a surge of cases in Columbia County. This will avoid the push/pull that surrounded the opening and closure of swimming.
3. Subsequent to establishing a closure plan, we would need to determine how these special programs would be funded. Would each one have an attendant fee? Would there be a scholarship program funded by either the Town or CARP?
4. If Step 1 is approved, the Rec Committee should work - simultaneously with Steps 2 and 3 - to develop a list of program offerings.
5. Tal Rappelyea should develop a generic contract covering any groups or individuals who might want to lead an activity in the Park.