

Wallingford Parks & Recreation Commission
Special Meeting
Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, September 13, 2023 @ 5:30 pm
Parks & Recreation Department
6 Fairfield Blvd., Wallingford

- Call Meeting to Order: Chairman Sullivan called the meeting to order @ 5:00 pm
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call

Commissioners in Attendance: Chairman John Sullivan, Vice Chairman Don Crouch, Lori Cooke-Marra, Lars Edeen, Steve Rossacci

Recreation Department Staff Present: Kenny Michaels, Director of Recreation Parks & Recreation

- Approval of prior meeting(s) minutes (June 21, 2023)

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Don Crouch and seconded by Steve Rossacci to approve the minutes from the June 21, 2023 meeting. Vote: unanimous

- Public Comment (10 minutes) – none
- Trails Work Group – Scott Gray - Brief Overview

Kenny introduced Scott Gray to the group. Approximately two years ago, Scott wanted to create a Trails Work Group to have a trail system. It started at Tyler Mill because Scott was a steward on the Conservation Commission and an avid mountain biker. After meeting with the Mayor, the Trails Work Group was approved. The Trails Work Group is led by Scott Gray, Diane Lendler and Mike Miller. The Group is made up of users that know the trails, work on the trails and use the trails. Many volunteers help with projects that the group is working on.

Scott Gray: He handed out the last three reports that he gave to the Conservation Commission at the last three meetings along with the summary of the Trails Work Group and the mission **(See attached)**. Scott has a lot of training in the outdoors. The Trails Work Group was created in April 2023 and since then they have made tremendous accomplishments. There are protocols for proposals. The proposal is given to Kenny Michaels to review. If Kenny agrees with it, it then goes to the Conservation Commission. They will listen to Scott's proposal and ask questions. They will make recommendations, and Kenny will make the final decision. If it is approved, Scott will take it to the Trails Work Group and they will bring in volunteers. Once the trails are blazed and re-routed, mapping will need to be done. Scott says he engages with the public on the trails to see what they like and don't like about the trails.

- Fall P&R Brochure (Lori Cooke-Marra) - Lori found a few inconsistencies and misspellings in the Parks & Rec Brochure. The next brochure will be the Spring Brochure. Lori would like to be involved with the proof reading of the next brochure. Lori will look through the Fall Brochure, and any corrections she will inform the Parks & Rec staff to make the changes.

- Cameras Doolittle Park - The cameras are up and running. The cameras are going live stream to the Dispatch Department at the Police Department. The License Plate reader is working well. There is a License Plate reader at the main entrance to Doolittle Park and one on Henry St. into the back parking lot. First ARPA fund project that was completed. If anyone on the Commission is interested in taking a trip to the Police Department to see how the cameras are working, John Sullivan will schedule a time.

- Community Pool Update - Town Council had voted in favor at a recent Town Council Meeting to put the Community Pool Project back out to bid. Awaiting the Mayor's direction on this to see how the town will proceed.

- Legacy Garden Nominees Update and Ceremony - Kenny indicated that a dedication may be done in the Spring of 2024. Kenny said there is enough space for four more monuments in the garden. There are criteria that would have to be met in order to be qualified for a monument. If there are any groups that the Commission members can think of that would be a good nominee, let the team know at the next meeting on November 8.

- Update and Discussion on Organizing Park Cleanups
 - Wallace Park - John has been working at Wallace Park with the Parks & Rec Maintainers. They painted the pillars white, planter brackets were hung and plants were put on two sides of each pillars. John planted flowers. John painted all the electrical and traffic control boxes and painted the irrigation cage. John asked Public Works for water, and he is now able to water the plants. The center monuments were edged by the Parks & Rec Maintainers. John planted 24 mums around the center monuments. Kenny and John co-signed a letter to the Electrical Division as well as the DPUC to put planters on the posts going up the side of Quinnipiac and Ward St. Specs are needed. Lori asked who will maintain the planters. John has a couple of options for who will maintain them. John would also like to get power at the center circle. He would like to put two flag poles up and have them illuminated. A dog bag dispenser will be installed. John would like to walk around to the neighbors houses with a letter stating improvements have been made to the park and we would ask them to help us keep the park clean and report any problems to the Parks & Rec Department. When mums are ready to be taken out, John is going to try using red stone instead of mulch.

 - Harrison Park Dugouts – no update

 - West Side Field - Steve Rossacci will be working on West Side Field in the next couple weeks. Softball building to be painted.

- Dutton Park - Needs to be cleaned up. The Mayor was approached to have a landscaper come out and work on a design for the park. A bid specification will be worked on for this. The gold paint on the monuments are faded. Nolan's has done work on the monuments in the past and will restore the names on the monuments.
- Director Michaels P&R Update – **(See attached)**

Next Parks & Recreation Meeting Wednesday, November 8th, 2023

Motion to adjourn made by: Steve Rossacci

Second by: Lori Cooke-Marra

Vote: unanimous

Adjourned @ 6:46 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Loriann Ouellette

Wallingford Parks & Recreation

Recreation Commission Director's Report September 13, 2023

Programs/Events:

- **Summer Programs:**
 - Total Activities - 167
 - Canceled Activities - 13
 - Activities Ran - 154
 - Participants – 2,924
 - Running Rate – 92%
- Fall Program Session Begins Monday September 25th
- Hip House Middle School Dance Passes Currently on Sale
- Weber & Gannon Youth Basketball Registration Underway
- Brought back adult Men and Women's Basketball Leagues for the 2023-2024 season

Projects/Facilities:

- New Park Signs have been installed at Harriet Wallace Park and Pat Wall Field. Awaiting the installation of Community Lake and Grand St Park.
- Part Time Maintainers continue great work with beautification of Parks and Recreation Facility and Parks. Continue to mulch and clean out all landscaping. Mulched various gardens and signs at parks. Most recently Budleski Park in Yalesville.
- Need to discuss with Public Works the line striping in parking lots at parks and playing fields. Most notably West Side Field, Pragemann, Harrison and Community Lake. **NO UPDATE**
- **NO UPDATE STILL AWAITING WORK TO BE SCHEDULED BY PW** Completed Ball Field Light Audit end of December. This shows the amount of light bulbs out at each field that need to be repaired. This audit was also sent over to the PW Department so they can coordinate the lift and replacement of bulbs.
 - West Side Baseball - 11 (Need to do West Side SB as winter locks are on the building)
 - Doolittle Park - 2
 - Woodhouse Soccer Field 1 - NONE
 - Community Lake Baseball – NONE
 - Pat Wall – 12
 - Prag Soccer – 2
 - Prag Quad Softball Fields – 13
 - Prag Field #6 – 1
 - Prag Field #5 – 1
- Doolittle Basketball Courts - ***Awaiting Start Date from Classic Turf.***
- ***Doolittle Park Surveillance Camera Project is completed.*** Cameras are up and running with live stream recording stationed at the Wallingford Police Department.
- ***Doolittle Park Playscape that was damaged due to arson last fall has been re-installed and completed.*** In addition, needed playground repairs were also completed and additional safety surfacing was installed by the Public Works Department.
- Bid Opening for the replacement of the OF field Fence at West Side Softball Field is April 4th. This would replace the entire outfield fence on the softball field foul pole to foul pole and increase the height to 24ft to eliminated the layers of netting that has been used in the past and

has been removed due to the continued damage during wind storms. **UPDATE: Westside Softball Field Fence Project has been awarded to Select Fence and Guardrail out of New Haven. Project will increase the fence height in the outfield to 24'. Contractor awaiting supplies from the distributor before scheduling the work. Estimated time of completion from start to finish 5-7 days. *This project has been completed.***

- Working with Nolan Monuments of Hamden to restore the gold coloring on the military personnel killed in action. These names had been colored in gold paint and over time have faded. Awaiting date from Nolan for the work to be completed.
- Council Approved donation of work in the amount of \$11k to be donated by the Wallingford Dog Lovers Association to install water lines and fountains at the Dog park for participants to fill water bowls for their dogs at the park. Project tentatively scheduled for Oct. 9th start date.

Upcoming –

- Look to extend dugouts at Prag Fields 1-4 using Prag Endowment
- Community Lake Shoreline Clearing Fall Clearing. Will be submitting quote requests to do the fall clearing of the Community Lake Shoreline Clearing.
- Discuss Potential Landscape Design Project for Dutton
- Discuss Lufbury Pavilion and Playground upgrades in current 2023-2024 budget

Wallingford Trails Work Group

Report For 9/14/23 Conservation Commission Meeting

Since the prior meeting On 8/10/23, the following work has been completed by the TWG:

- A third and final trails brushing party completed the overall brushing of the Tyler Mill Recreation area trail system. The focus for this event was on the Pink South Trail, the Purple Trail by the Northford Road entrance, and the Maltby Lane Kiosk area.
- One work party completed sawyer work in Marcus Cook Park.
- Four work parties completed sawyer work in Tyler Mill, clearing blowdown trees on the Red North, Orange and Yellow Trails, and twice on the Red South Trail.
- One work party at Tyler Mill revisited the closed entrance to the White South Trail, where the trail blockage material had been removed and the trail closed sign damaged. The sign was reattached, and the entrance to the trail was once again blocked off.
- An Inland/Wetland Permit was filed for the Ferguson Woods Bog Bridge proposal.
- The final cribbing work was completed on the Blue/Black Trail in Tyler Mill, with the installation of double cribbing at the Muddy River horse crossing point.
- Scott Gray presented the concept, organization, responsibilities & recent accomplishments of the Trails Work Group to the Wallingford Parks & Rec Commission at a 9/13/23 meeting.

At the August CC meeting, the question of volunteer work hours involving the Trails Work Group was raised. I went back and tallied the recent TWG accomplishments, and have the following to report: Between the Pink Trail reroute in Tyler Mill on 5/30/23 and the second Tyler Mill brushing event on 8/1/23, a total of **291 volunteer hours** were logged.

Since 8/1/23 through this report date, the Wallingford Trails Work Group have logged an additional **63 volunteer hours**, for a current total of **354 volunteer hours since 5/30/23**.

Respectfully submitted by Scott Gray – 9/14/23

Wallingford Trails Work Group

Report for 8/10/23 Conservation Commission Meeting

Since the prior meeting on 7/20/23, the following work has been completed by the TWG:

- One work party completed extensive trail reroute scouting on the Yellow Trail in Ferguson Woods. This included necessary trail relocation & potential bog bridge planning to remove this trail from private property. A thorough proposal has been drafted regarding this plan, and is available for review tonight.
- The trees along the Tyler Mill - Blue/Yellow trail "field edge" section were pruned back, as requested for equestrian passage.
- Two work parties were organized to thoroughly brush the trails in Ferguson woods. These involved five volunteers, and all sections of trails there are now completely cleared.
- One work party examined the cribbing proposal on the Blue/Black trail in Tyler Mill, where the "horse crossing" at the Muddy River is located. The existing proposal was agreed upon, with minor detailed adjustments made. This job will be undertaken when appropriate supplies have been obtained.
- A second work party was organized to continue brushing trails in Tyler Mill. Completed by 6 volunteers were the Yellow, Blue, White, Red, and Green trails in the northern section of Tyler Mill. The Red South trail was also completed and is now thoroughly cleared.
- Three work parties completed necessary sawyer work to clear blown down trees on the following trails: Ferguson Woods – Yellow Trail; Tyler Mill – Blue/Black, and Red North Trails.
- Several proposals previously drafted and submitted to Kenny Michaels & Mike Miller still need to be reviewed. These are all Tyler Mill related proposals, and should be reviewed tonight.

Respectfully submitted by Scott Gray – 8/10/23

Wallingford Trails Work Group

Report for 7/20/23 Conservation Commission Meeting

Since the prior meeting on 6/8/23, the following have been completed by the TWG:

- Two work parties completed the majority of the trail cribbing work on the Blue/Black Trail in Tyler Mill. One uncompleted section remains where the trail meets the Muddy River. This section of work should be discussed tonight.
- Three work parties completed the brushing & reblazing of the Orange Trail in Tyler Mill.
- Rotted bridge treads were removed & replaced on the footbridge on the Red Trail north of the Tyler Mill Road bridge parking area.
- Two new signs were installed in Tyler Mill. One a red arrow at the junction of the Orange & Red Trails, and one highlighting the Red & Red/Black Dot Trailheads at the TM bridge.
- One work party completed removal of yellow blazes on the piggybacked Blue/Yellow Trails in Ferguson Woods.
- One work party scouted and flagged potential reroute/bog bridge options on the Blue Trail in Ferguson Woods.
- The requested new Kiosk design & cost analysis project was completed and is available for review & discussion tonight. See available handout...
- Two work parties cleared 1 blown down tree obstructing the Blue/Black trail, and 4 blown down trees obstructing the Purple trail. Both occurred in Tyler Mill.
- The Blue/Yellow Trail in Tyler Mill, section running along field edge, has been relocated and brushed to accommodate having this trail section being closer to the hedgerow.
- One work party completed extensive brushing on the following trails in Tyler Mill: Purple east, Pink North, both sections of Green, Red South, Blue/Yellow, and Red/Black Dot.
- Several new proposals were drafted and submitted to Kenny Michaels & Mike Miller for consideration. These are all Tyler Mill related proposals, and may be reviewed tonight.

Note that one of the Trail Closed Signs recently posted on the old red floodplain trail in Tyler Mill was recently stolen. A replacement sign was not installed...

Respectfully submitted by Scott Gray – 7/20/23

WALLINGFORD TRAILS WORK GROUP
WALLINGFORD PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

GENERAL OUTLINE/OVERVIEW

The town of Wallingford, Connecticut shall assemble and maintain a Trails Work Group, reporting to and under the leadership of the town Trails Administrator. The overall focus of the Trails Work Group is to ensure that town recreational trails remain safe, user friendly and environmentally responsible.

Additionally, the Trails Work Group shall ensure these trails include options for all abilities and are able to reasonably accommodate all user groups. The Trails Work Group shall consult with the Wallingford Conservation Committee, and/or other town departments as necessary during action being reviewed or undertaken.

TRAILS WORK GROUP DUTIES & STRUCTURE

The Trails Work Group shall be responsible for making recommendations regarding the maintenance, repair, and alterations to town Parks & Rec recreational trails, as well as reviewing recommendations submitted by others.

The group members shall regularly inspect and report on trail conditions. The group shall advise on current issues and potential proactive measures deemed necessary. The group shall regularly interface with members of the public who use the trails, to ascertain the general perception and opinions of public users regarding town trail conditions, safety levels, and any questions or concerns.

The Trails Work Group shall attempt to have representatives of the known user groups as members, one member of the town Conservation Commission, and one member of the Tyler Mill Stewards. The group shall attempt to have members who possess skills pertinent to the use, maintenance and construction of trails. The group shall meet as a body with the Trails Administrator as needed and maintain pertinent documentation of actions being considered and/or taken.

Respectfully submitted by Scott Gray 4/3/23

Trails Work Group Mission

The Trails Work Group of the Town of Wallingford is supervised by the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. Members of the Trails Work Group are appointed by the Mayor's Office and must have the requisite training in trail blazing, trail construction, choice of topography, protection of flora and fauna, and chain saw and other tool use.

Primary duties of the Trails Work Group are the construction and/or alteration of sanctioned and approved trails. All work must be approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation. The Parks and Recreation Director shall meet with the Trails Work Group and members of the public user groups and members of the Conservation Commission, the Environmental Planner and other Town departments as deemed advisable.

Given the number and variety of trails in the Town of Wallingford, it is in the public interest to regularly schedule trail maintenance activities. Trail maintenance is defined as work on sanctioned trails for the purpose of safety, accessibility, removal of obstructions, signage and other work not involving the use of power tools. Maintenance work must be authorized by the Director of Parks and Recreation. Trail maintenance work in the Tyler Mill Preserve shall be coordinated with the Conservation Commission, Stewards of Tyler Mill and the Trails Work Group. The Trails Work Group shall be available for trail maintenance work located in other Open Space and Parks owned by Wallingford as authorized by the Director of Parks and Recreation.

William W. Dickinson, Jr.
Mayor

6/29/23