



GORDON OLIVER
CHAIRMAN

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Parks and Recreation Commission

31 ARBOR WAY P.O. BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

THOMAS BOSCARINO
CYNTHIA COSTANZO
KEVIN HAYES
ROBERT LAREW
THOMAS STAUFFER
SHAY DRAKE
CHRISTOPHER WEITZ
JENNIFER MULLIN

Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes of the Meeting, September 14, 2016 7:00 PM @ 31 Arbor Way

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gordon Oliver, Thomas Boscarino, Kevin Hayes, Christopher Weitz, Cynthia Costanzo, Shay Drake

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Tedford, Director, Parks and Rec
Julia Connor, Administrative Secretary, Parks and Rec
Kevin McKee, Ellington Resident
Keith Wolff, Ellington Resident

- I. **CALLED TO ORDER:** Gordon Oliver called the meeting to order at 7:27 PM.
- II. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** August 10, 2016 – Regular Meeting

MOVED (WEITZ), SECONDED (HAYES), AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 10, 2016 REGULAR MEETING.

IV. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Keith Wolff opened up the forum. His son, Devin, is repeating 6th grade due to a recent academic change. Devin would prefer to try out for the 7th grade basketball team, as that is the same group of players he has been playing with in previous years. Cyndi asked whether he would play on an 8th grade team two years in a row, if he was allowed to “play up” this year, as she was interested in maximizing the opportunities for all players, including Devin. Since his reasons for wanting to play up was to continue to play with his friends, Keith stated that he doubted Devin would be interested in playing a second 8th grade year. Bob stated that based on the league rules, Devin is currently eligible for either the 6th or 7th grade team, and there is no league rule that prohibits playing up one grade level. Cyndi wanted to clarify that a current move to the 7th team would not technically preclude him from possibly playing a second 8th grade season, and it would not. Kevin McKee then spoke on behalf of his fourth grade son, Dylan. He asked the Commission to consider allowing Dylan to tryout for the 5th/6th grade travel basketball team. Other parents whose children had “played up” in the past had expressed that their children had grown from the experience, and Kevin believes that Dylan would easily fit in with the older age group, especially after experience at the AAU level. He believes that

Dylan would thrive and be able to utilize and develop his skills in the travel basketball environment. He has been exposed to participation with older groups in the past and has not had a problem, according to Kevin. Cynthia asked what he would do if he was making this decision if he was on the commission and a parent approached with this request. Kevin explained that he thought the recreation level is a good fit for players who aren't at the travel level yet, but that he believes Dylan is at that level, so he was asked to make this decision, he would not see any harm in allowing a player to try out for an older grade level, since if an independent evaluator did not believe the player was at the appropriate skill level, they would not be placed on the team. Chris asked if there were significant differences between the levels being discussed, and Tom clarified that it wasn't simply a switch from one rec program to an older rec program, but a switch from a rec program to an older travel program. Kevin stated that part of why he wants this opportunity for Dylan is that he would be with other players at the same level, and there would be less practice time spent instructing the less experienced players or going over basic skills. He doesn't plan to continue asking for the opportunity to play up; he simply wants to get Dylan into the environment of a travel program as soon as possible. Cynthia wanted to express that rules are made in the town that are based on what is best for all involved, and that sometimes the programs that are offered provide enriching experiences for children based on the interaction with their peers, and not always the sport-specific training and instruction. At this point, Keith and Kevin both thanked the Commission for their time and left the meeting.

Cynthia felt that there were significant differences between the two requests. The concern with both is that a player being "moved up" is potentially taking a roster spot from another child. However, if moving Devin up this coming year is something that is approved by the commission, there needs to be foresight into future years of roster placement, and there would need to be a plan so that he doesn't receive an additional year of 7th and 8th grade basketball. Cynthia feels that if he plays this year at the 7th grade level, then he would only be permitted to tryout for the 8th grade travel roster the following year. Tom feels that this decision could set a precedent for other children who repeat an academic year in the future. A change to the rule will be required before any decision is made. However, any decisions that are made will be based on the best opportunities for all players. The discussion will be continued at the October 12 meeting.

- V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Gordon received a call from the First Selectman on September 13, stating that a detailed set of plans with a cost breakdown in regards to the turf project should be presented to her office by the end of the second week of October. She stated that the plan would need to go through Planning and Zoning, Wetlands, Finance, and the Board of Education in order to be continued. Chris Weitz stated that it would be ideal if the First Selectman attend the October 12 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, and to provide copies of the aforementioned plan, in order to discuss the next step in the project process. Tom asked that the plan be provided by October 11th by 12:00 noon in order to circulate the information to the members of the Commission.

- VI. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT: None

- VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Finance: None
- B. Outdoor Facilities: None

- C. Operations: None
- D. Maintenance: None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. State Bond Update/Turf/Lights at EHS and Schwartz Park tennis courts –A detailed set of plans with a cost breakdown in regards to the turf project should be presented to the First Selectman’s office by the end of the second week of October.

IX. NEW BUSINESS: None

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (BOSCARINO), SECONDED (HAYES) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:04 PM.

/jec

Submitted by: Julia Connor, Administrative Secretary, Parks and Rec