

**Haddam Park & Recreation Commission**  
**Unofficial Meeting**  
**Thursday, August 8, 2019**  
**Unapproved MINUTES**

In attendance: Vice Chairman Jason Lonergan and new Commissioner Jennifer O’Neal

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Daniel Belanger

Staff in attendance: Barbara Galloway, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Lonergan called the unofficial meeting to order at 7:26 PM.

2. Introduction of any newly appointed Members

Vice Chairman Lonergan welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Jennifer O’Neal.

3. Election of new Chairman

The election of a new chairman was tabled due to the lack of a quorum.

4. Approval of previous Meeting’s Minutes

The approval of several previous meetings’ Minutes was tabled due to the lack of a quorum.

5. General Review of current budget financial reports (07/2019) and end of fiscal year status

The July financial reports, “Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrance - General Fund, July 2019”, dated 08/08/19 and “Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrance – Capital Non-Recurring, July 2019”, dated 08/08/19, were distributed and briefly reviewed. Vice Chairman Lonergan said that he had been in contact with the Town Finance Director Barbara Bertrand, who had explained that the commission had previously signed several continual three-year long contracts with the current companies. She had noted that in the 2018-2019 year, in order to allow the commission membership to stabilize and to have continual service, these companies had agreed with the then commission chairman to continue to work one year without (new) contracts. Vice Chairman Lonergan said that he also would be in contact with representatives from the service companies to address another single year of service. Since the Town budget for 2019-2020 for this commission has already been finalized without reflecting the companies’ possible price increases, Ms. Bertrand and Vice Chairman Lonergan agreed that the commission and the Town would work with these same companies for this one additional year as long as their annual charges do not exceed the previous year’s charges by more than a specific small percentage. The commission and Town can consider changing to contracts via a bidding process with other companies that would be investigated in the interim or sign new multi-year contracts with the current companies if terms and service both remain agreeable.

6. Unfinished Business

Residents Jennifer and Peter Christopher, representatives involved with the Haddam Little League and who are interested in commission activities, were visitors at tonight’s meeting.

a. *Status of Haddam Elementary School property*

Vice Chairman Lonergan noted that the Town is in the process of working on purposes for the Haddam Elementary School property that the Town has agreed to buy from Regional School District 17 in installments over the next three years. He said that the property has so much potential for gathering many town activities into one space near the center of the current retail/commercial area of town in Higganum. He restated that the commissioners should put their thoughts together and send a report to the Town as a commission regarding future usage of the property.

b. *Status of Great Hill and Brickyard fields*

Vice Chairman Lonergan provided further information regarding the specific service companies that are currently doing the landscaping, mowing, and other work at the Great Hill and Brickyard fields

The commissioners agreed that they must prepare a detailed list of priority repairs and amendments that are needed at both ballfield properties and will research the fees involved with each so they can discuss both and order the most important work to be completed, making the properties safe and more secure and more desirable to potential outside sports groups that might want to use the fields when they are not in use. Mr. Christopher, who works with several teams and knows both of the ballfields well, offered to assist the commission on a volunteer basis by touring the two properties and to delineate the repairs and renovations that are needed for safety purposes for the remainder of this season and also list some additional needed work that should be completed at the fields to improve the quality of their usage for next year.

The commissioners and Haddam Little League representatives introduced and discussed several plausible ideas for making future usage of these fields, especially the Brickyard, more profitable for and the costs of the necessary properties' upkeep more worthwhile to the Town.

c. *Planning for Discussion of the Haunted House event in October with event representatives*

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Grim's Haunted House event representatives Chuck Cook and Jack Calhoun were present. Mr. Cook ("Chuck") distributed a list of responsibilities he had put together to help with planning the events of the weekend of Friday, October 25 and Saturday, October 26. He shared that this haunted house is the creation of Frank Mucciacciaro, his two high school aged sons, and Mr. Cook. Chuck's wife, Brenda, is responsible for organizing some of the children's entertainment and activities on Saturday night. They are hoping that the event will grow each year with additional activities and involvement of multiple town agencies and organizations, making it a continually enlarging public draw. They expressed appreciation for this commission's interest in assisting them with support and further development.

The Haunted House will again be constructed and housed inside the Haddam Community Center as well as filling the yard around the building. They are working on some additional displays and scenes for the tour experience and are still working on a new scary display scene for the yard on the right side of the building that they did not use last year. Grim's Haunted House Tours will be given Friday night (as the only activity that night) and then Saturday night along with the Trunk or Treat and other child- and family-friendly activities from 6:00 to 9:00 on both nights. There was a discussion of placement of the large tent, which will house the activities and games, and the location of and positioning of the Trunk or Treat vehicles on Saturday night. Candlewood Hill Road will need to be blocked off from the stop sign to the crossover road at the top of the Higganum Green and assistance with traffic control will be needed. Vice Chairman Lonergan noted that there will need to be access for the speedy passage of emergency vehicles on Candlewood Hill Road should they need to go there during the 6:00 to 9:00 events on Saturday night. Vice Chairman Lonergan said that he would speak to Public Works and the Haddam Volunteer Fire Company and Haddam Volunteer Ambulance Service to see how this could all be coordinated.

Commissioner O'Neal noted that she was involved with the Trunk or Treat in Haddam last year and will be able to coordinate and help deal with details and provide the proper contacts for this year. She suggested the need for more lighting to make trick or treating between the vehicles more safe and secure for the children.

She noted that there had been some outdoor lighting last year, but it wasn't really sufficient. There was discussion of renting light poles or getting assistance from the Haddam Public Works Department since someone would need to know how to operate the lighting system. The commissioners and visitors discussed that there is some excavation and paving work currently being done in the front of the Community Center driveway and lot. No one was yet sure how clear, level and finished the area will be by October.

The group discussed advertising for both the Haunted House and the Trunk or Treat, which all agreed should be combined and should begin right away, especially on various social media. Chuck had been told by the high school to go back in the Fall to be allowed to post signage at the schools three weeks ahead of the events. It was suggested that there should be an attempt to coordinate advertising between the Killingworth and Haddam Trunk or Treats since they are both scheduled for Saturday night, October 26<sup>th</sup>.

Volunteer workers will be welcome and needed starting from Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup> through Friday, the 25<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 to 5:30 PM to help with the setup, construction, and finishing of the Haunted House. Volunteers are needed for Friday and Saturday nights to assist where needed with operation of the animated scenes and to act as guides for the children in the House and yard. On Saturday night, volunteers are needed to guide the children from vehicle to vehicle during the Trunk or Treat event, and to work in the activities tent, doing face-painting and assisting with the games on Saturday night from 5:00 to 9:00 PM. Volunteer workers will also be needed on Saturday night/Sunday morning to breakdown the sets and pack up all of the props and equipment. Chuck said that he is hoping to get volunteer high school students, who want to complete some of their hours of community service. He will also happily welcome other volunteer helpers from town.

Chuck reminded the commissioners that the annual Haddam-Killingworth Youth & Family Services (YFS of H-K)-sponsored Pumpkin Run will be held on Sunday and that that group may be working on preparing the Higganum Green area on Saturday and will be using the Higganum Green and the whole area adjacent from Candlewood Hill Road to Haddam Elementary School on Sunday for race-related activities. The Haunted House will be closed at 9:00 on Saturday night and the displays will be taken down during the night and on Sunday morning and will not be in the Pumpkin Run's way outside. He would like to be able to coordinate activities with YFS of H-K and have them take part in both activities. Vice Chairman Lonergan said that he will contact representatives from YFS of H-K to see how they can coordinate/overlap their weekend activities.

Chuck noted that there are internal expenses involved with storing the props and scene pieces during the year, purchasing additional props during the year, as well as for refreshments for workers during the week, and for purchase of face paints and other supplies as well as decorations, candy, and prizes for the games. For the past three years, Chuck and Frank have paid but they could use and would appreciate help with these expenses going forward, if it's possible. Chuck noted that entry to the Grim's Haunted House experience is free, but monetary donations are requested. All of the donations that are collected at the Grim's Haunted House are given directly to the Haddam Food Bank and Haddam Fuel Bank.

There was a discussion about possibly hiring a food truck or asking town agencies to run refreshment kiosks on Saturday evening. Chuck will investigate this further.

The commissioners and Haunted House representatives agreed to further research answers to their assigned questions and report their findings so they can update the

plans at the September 12<sup>th</sup> scheduled Meeting. Vice Chairman Lonergan thanked the representatives for coming and for the information they provided.

7. New Business

a. *Future Capital Planning plans*

This topic has been tabled until there is a fuller commission membership.

b. *Any new ideas for the park-related and recreation-related activities Commission ongoing list*

This topic has been tabled until there is a fuller commission membership.

8. Correspondence

Barbara gave Vice Chairman Lonergan signed application forms from Robyne Brennan, Director of Haddam-Killingworth Recreation Authority for his signature to approve use of the Great Hill Field for soccer this Fall that were mailed to the commission's mailbox.

9. Adjournment

The unofficial meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara D. Galloway  
Recording Clerk