

These minutes are subject to approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission held an in-person meeting on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 with an opportunity for public participation, at the Newtown Teen Center, 53 Church Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clinton DePaolo at 6:00pm.

Present: Clinton DePaolo, Warren Spencer, Aaron Britton, Adam Angerami, Tony Filiato

Staff Present: Amy Mangold

Absent: Vincent Yanni, David Payne, Carl Samuelson

Public: Chris Rice, Tim Rice

Public Participation:

Chris Rice of 151 Brushy Hill Road, Boy Scout Troop 370 Sandy Hook proposed an Eagle Scout Project for the Orchard Hill Nature Center. He chose this preserve which is meaningful to him as he grew up visiting this spot which is near his home and he sees the opportunity for work to be done. He would like to build 6 new benches for the preserve (replacing those at two current sites and adding two new locations, with 2 benches in each of three locations). He chose locations for joggers and walkers to rest, relax and enjoy views. He presented a map and photos of the specific locations (see attached). He asked that the town remove the current bench and supports before his project commences.

The project was well-received by the commission and thought to be a wonderful idea with which he should move forward. He was asked to research good quality wood that won't splinter. He was also asked to pre-mark the locations so that Carl Samuelson, Assistant Director Parks, could make a site visit to confirm locations.

The plan is to complete the project by the end of June.

Acceptance of Minutes:

February 27, 2024 Minutes were accepted.

December 2023 Minutes will be accepted at the next commission meeting due to attendance.

Old Business:

Discussion and Possible Action

- **New Commission Members**

Chairman DePaolo welcomed two new commissioners, Adam Angerami and Tony Filiato, and thanked them for volunteering for the position.

- **Capital Improvement Plan Update**

Some elements were tweaked but in essence, no significant changes were made.
Field Lighting update will be discussed separately (see below).

- **Pickleball Update**

Ms. Mangold reiterated that the commission decided the best location of the new pickleball courts is the current temporary site. A meeting was held with First Selectman Jeff Capezi on the subject. Active pickleball advocates Bill Manfredonia, Jan Brown and Bruce Goulart were included in the meeting and the Stantec map was presented with the commission's recommendations. Mr. Capezi agreed that the current location is a great fit. We were asked by the Fairfield Hills Authority to hold off until the final proposal from the developer, WIN, was in. WIN is expected to have approval on the historical designation from Hartford by the end of the quarter and from the federal government shortly after that. Everyone is in

agreement that we will wait for a couple of months. Ms. Mangold was asked to put together a chart of the locations that were considered and notes with regard to each location (please see attached).

If we can move forward in two months, we should have enough time to submit for the ARPA grant as well as for STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program). Chairman DePaolo commented that building is required by 2026 in order to qualify for the ARPA funding.

Additionally, Ms. Mangold shared that she will be meeting with Jan Brown and Bruce Goulart tomorrow. They want to discuss the popularity of the temporary pickleball courts and would like to discuss usage moving forward. The current Tournament/Special Event Reservation Form and fees were discussed. This will be considered further together with Ms. Brown and Mr. Goulart.

- **Parks and Recreation Annual Budget**

The legislative council will be voting on this soon. The council had questions and comments which were addressed by Ms. Mangold and Mr. Samuelson. The council will discuss continuing to lease a Toro lawnmower vs. purchasing it. The discussion is ongoing.

Contractual services for mowing have gone out to bid as the last bid took place before the COVID pandemic. Ms. Mangold reported that this Monday a required walk-through with all companies took place and all properties were visited. Six companies were present and their bids are due on March 27 at 11am.

- **50th Annual Rooster Run**

Commissioner Aaron Britton, also a member of the Rooster Run Planning Committee, reported that the committee has met twice and will meet again this month. Plans are coming along and they are looking at vendors and food for after the race, a DJ and possibly a band for different parts of the race. Mr. Britton plans to visit a local market to request an in-kind donation of prepared food. Sponsor letters are going out. Ms. Mangold shared that the Newtown Bee created a unique logo for this year's anniversary event. The committee has decided upon tie dye shirts and special race bibs which will include a pull-off ticket for a brewery (can be redeemed after the run).

New Business

Discussion and Possible Action

- **Field Use & Field Lighting Fees**

A Special Meeting for Field Use was held on February 27, 2024 and included representatives from community sports groups. It was decided that after 7 years with no increase, Field Lighting Fees will be increased from \$75 to \$100 per hour. Electricity costs have increased. Lights at Treadwell Memorial Park and High Meadow Field are being modernized and upgraded to LED lights.

- **Volleyball net pole purchase**

This item will be discussed at next month's meeting.

- **Youth Basketball/indoor sport surcharge fees**

Ms. Mangold relayed that the indoor surcharge fee for youth basketball has not been changed in a number of years. These fees tend to be kept lower than for other organizations as fewer improvements and no maintenance are required, other than new scoreboards in the gyms. It had been suggested to NYBA to raise to \$25 per player for Newtown residents and \$50 per player for non-residents. NYBA has already taken action on this and has charged the increased rates.

AAU is looked at separately. It is a for-profit organization and as they don't have a 501(c)(3) they do not fulfill our requirements and should be charged differently. Ms. Mangold is awaiting their 80% resident equity report and more clarity on the NYBA-AAU program. She proposed a rate of \$50 for residents and \$75 for non-residents. This will be looked at for the next season as they have already collected fees for this season. This topic will be revisited at next month's meeting.

Correspondence:

Ms. Mangold reported that Chris Reuther, President of Newtown Babe Ruth Baseball, relayed that they would be updating the memorial for Bob Glander at Glander Field. They plan to complete this update by the Fanfest on May 19. There will be a rededication for the memorial with the Glander Family. They will be expanding the memorial to a wider design with a home plate design and a new bench.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman DePaolo reiterated his thanks to the two new commissioners. He also relayed that Rose Ann Reggiano recently retired and Ms. Mangold is responding very well to the challenge of managing the transition of work at such short notice and during such a crucial time prior to the summer season. Mr. DePaolo offered the commission's help with anything that is needed. Both he and Aaron Britton have taken part in the interview process to hire a new Assistant Director of Recreation. We have had some well-qualified candidates and will find the right person in this position to support Ms. Mangold. As evidenced by the vast amount of programming and events, there is a lot that goes into this position.

Director's Report:

Ms. Mangold shared that the two maintainer positions have been filled after a long search. Steven Joseph has started and is an asset to the department, and Kyle Hastings will begin his position on March 18. We are very pleased to have a full crew after a lengthy search.

Ms. Mangold relayed that it has been a challenge with Ms. Reggiano's departure with both the short notice and timing just before the busy summer season. She highlighted that the office staff has been helping with the transition and their efforts have been instrumental and she is grateful for the team work and support. A lot of great tasks are being accomplished.

The spring & summer brochures are available and they have been submitted to The Newtown Bee for distribution of the spring/summer insert. They are packed with wonderful programs and special events.

Partnerships:

Ms. Mangold relayed that a new partnership with Everwonder Museum has been established and we are hosting a Mad Hatter's Tree Party on May 11 at Dickinson Memorial Park. We are also partnering again with the CH Booth Library on their literacy program at Dickinson Day Camp. This program was started after the COVID pandemic when improved literacy skills were needed and it was so popular that it was continued. The library funds this program. Newtown Youth and Family Services is working with us for summer employment – they cover the cost of gate attendants, particularly at the Newtown Park and Bark. Claris Construction will again be the title sponsor of our Summer Concert Series and we will also be partnering with the CH Booth Library for the Tuesday Tunes concert series.

Pickleball:

Bill Manfredonia, one of the pickleball advocates, has informed us that Fred Hurley of Public Works will be mending the cracks on the temporary courts at Fairfield Hills. They have a new product that they are eager to try and they are waiting for a dry period to execute the repairs. Nets will not be put up until this work has been completed.

Ms. Mangold relayed that this Friday she will be running the St. Patrick's Day Party at the Teen Center for Grades 5 & 6 and that later in the month on March 23, she will be managing the annual spring Egg Hunt at Dickinson Park. Vendor packets have gone out for the Strutt Your Mutt event on May 18. The Senior Citizens Spring Fling takes place on April 5 and we are working with the Senior Center.

Applications for summer staff are coming in and Rita is focused on the work of boat slip rentals. 7-8 slip renters are not returning for various reasons (unrelated to service or satisfaction) which opens up the opportunity to confirm people from the waitlist.

Maintainers have been repairing a lot of fencing, particularly areas which have been affected by snow removal.

Assistant Director, Recreation Report

See Director's Report.

Assistant Director, Parks Report

See Director's Report.

Commissioners Out & About:

Commissioner Britton commended the maintainers on clearing the snow on the Fairfield Hills Campus. This has enabled people to walk the paths and trails throughout the winter.

Motions:

- Commissioner Warren Spencer made a motion to accept the February 27, 2023 Minutes. Commissioner Aaron Britton seconded the motion. One abstention (was not present at the meeting). All voted in favor, the motion passed.
- Commissioner Aaron Britton made a motion to approve an increase in Field Lighting Fees from \$75 to \$100 per hour, after having no increase for 7 years. Commissioner Warren Spencer seconded the motion. All voted in favor, the motion passed.
- Commissioner Warren Spencer made a motion to approve an increase for NYBA gym use rates/surcharge to \$25 for residents and \$50 for non-residents. Commissioner Aaron Britton seconded the motion. All voted in favor, the motion passed.

Adjournment of Meeting:

Commissioner Aaron Britton made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Warren Spencer seconded the motion.

Chairman DePaolo declared the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

The next regular meeting is scheduled is Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Balbes, Clerk

BENCH PROPOSAL

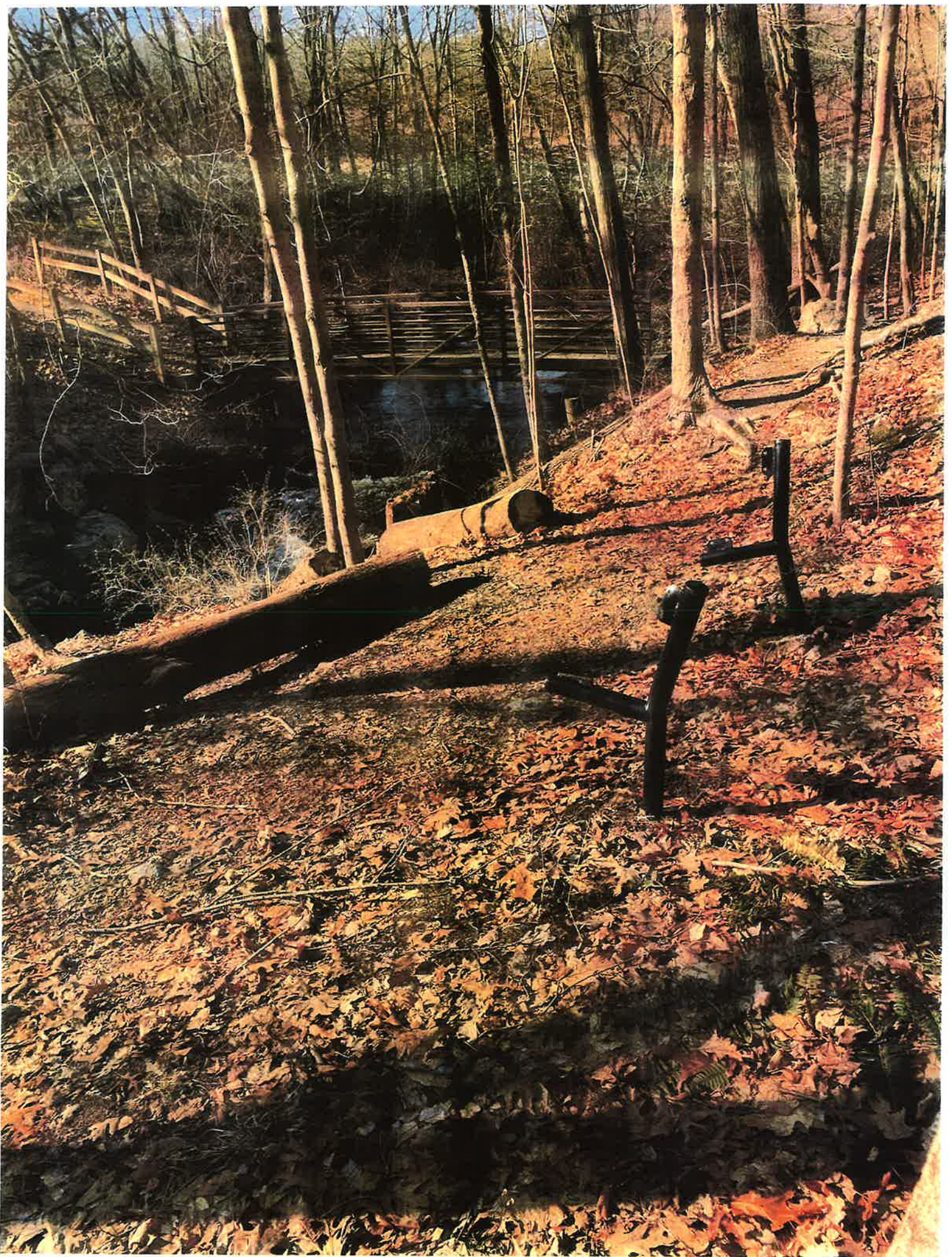
EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

CHRIS RICE

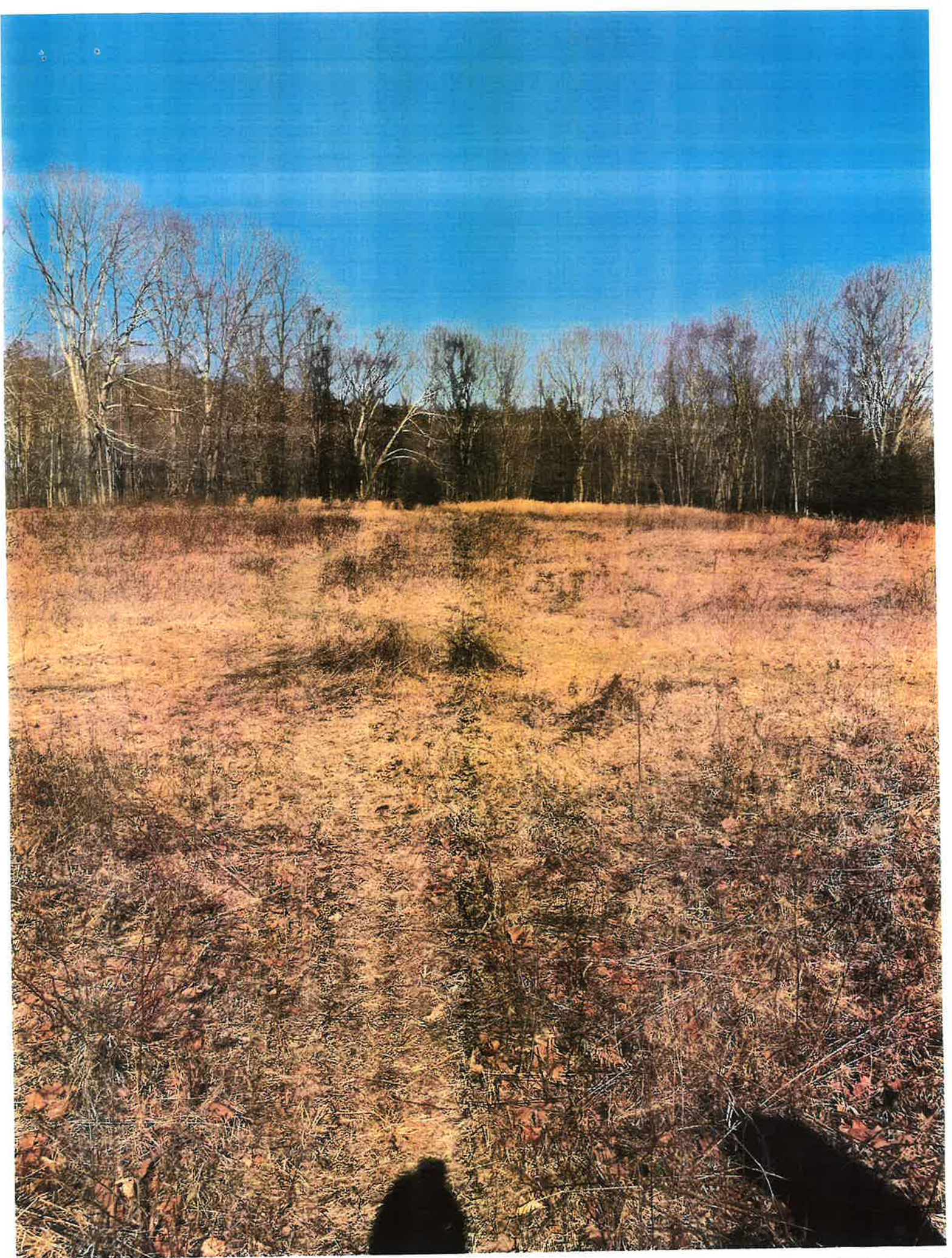
TROOP 370

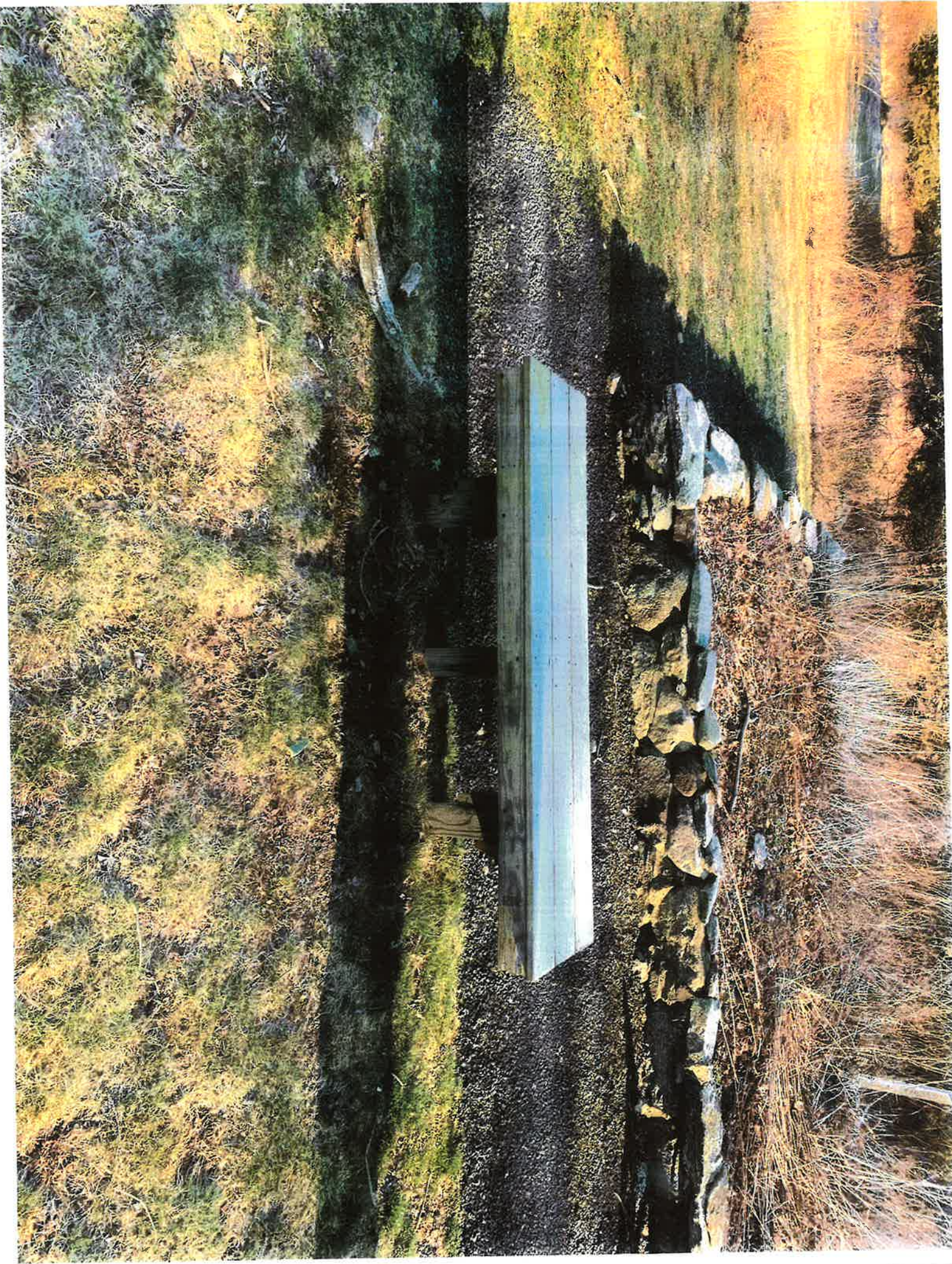
MARCH 12, 2024













Pickleball Space Considerations 2024

| Location | Favorable Aspects | Challenges/Considerations | Favorability |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| Dickinson Tennis area | Flat with existing courts | Displace tennis, to close to residential area for lights and noise pollution | No |
| Dickinson Pond Area | Level park setting | This is camp and concert and event space. Wetland and courts would flood. Lack of parking nowhere to add parking. | No |
| Other Field Space at Dickinson | Level area | Masterplan shows wetland Education Center and it is wetland | No |
| Athletic Fields | Level area | Used by sports teams, we do not have any to give up | No |
| Treadwell Tennis & Pickleball court | Flat with existing courts | Displace tennis, to close to residential area for lights and noise pollution | No |
| Treadwell Park | More of a sports complex than other locations | No open unused space that is large enough for 10 to 12 pickleball courts | No |
| Fairfield Hills location 4 | Level with nearby infrastructure | Used for large events and would compete with NYA and High Meadow parking | No |
| Fairfield Hills location 3 | Level with nearby infrastructure close to Senior Center | Participants might park at Senior Center, close to road, could cause noise and light pollution for Brewery & homes down Mille Hill South, cramped area at Plymouth Hall | Possible not best |
| Fairfield Hills Location 5 | Level area away from all buildings | Might cause noise for Kent House, very close to road, difficult access for parking, takes away event space, no infrastructure available. | No |

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|-----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Fairfield Hills location 2 | Close to parking, near desired location of current space | Not level, would need a lot of dirt work and extra work for accessibility and infrastructure | Probably not best |
| Fairfield Hills location 1 | Current temporary location, could add two to four more courts without displacing more parking. Space has worked for 8 years and is extremely successful and desirable to participants. It is level, Has infrastructure for electric. Accessible. Public works is adding more parking to this area. | none | Yes |