

STAFFORD RECREATION COMMISSION
Special Meeting
Staffordville School & Zoom Video Conference
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Date: Wednesday September 17, 2025

Members: Chairman - Dave Baciochi, Secretary - open, Harold Blake Hatch, Tom Topping, Todd Levesque, Bill Utermarck, Jose Scarpa, James Talamini, Steve Munn

Members Present: Dave Baciochi, Harold Blake Hatch, Tom Topping, Jose Scarpa, James Talamini, Steve Munn, Bill Utermarck

Members Absent: Todd Levesque

Recreation Director: (Open)

Guests Present (in person): Laura Lybarger, Rich Smith, David A. Baciochi

1.) Call Meeting to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm with seven (7) members present (Four in the room, three on Zoom) and three guests in the room. Dave neglected to initiate the Zoom meeting recording.

2.) Review and Accept Minutes from previous meeting (06/11)

- a. On a **MOTION** by Blake, seconded by Jose, the minutes of the June 11, 2025 commission meeting were approved unanimously.

3.) Correspondence:

- a. **Membership update.** Tyler Hanna and Matt Martel were officially removed from the commission per Selectman action. Todd Levesque has declined to renew his membership when it expires in October. The Commission would like to thank Todd for his contributions over the past 10 years.
- b. **Summer Rec activities update & fall soccer activities.** Amber sent in a report outlining the successful summer rec season. Notably, 150 unique campers grades K-7 attended, with an average of 99 kids per day. Rich reported that fall baseball and softball is underway. And summer ball was healthy, with Stafford hosting a statewide tournament for Girls Junior League softball (ages 13-16). Andy R. sent in a report that Sandlot baseball was successful with 8 sessions, 35 kids, averaging 17.3 kids per session, in a separate report that Dave forgot to bring up at the meeting.
- c. **2024-2025 Fiscal Year Stipend Requests:** Baseball, softball and soccer stipend requests were distributed. Basketball, football and wrestling stipends were never requested and the funds were returned to the general fund. Dave will include an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss consolidating the annual reporting that the Rec Commission requests of the youth organizations.
- d. **Laura Lybarger** shared a flyer promoting the Bosco Fowler Memorial 5K. It is on September 28, 2025 starting at 11am at Stafford High School.

4.) New Business:

Schedule of Regular Meetings for CY 2025 (2nd Wednesday except July and August):
Jan 8, Feb 12, Mar 12, Apr 9, May 14, Jun 11, Sep 10, Oct 8, Nov 12, Dec 10

- a. **Staffordville School & Recreation activities public discussion:** Tabled until next month. There were several new ideas to add to our recreation wish list, including a walking path along the river.
- b. **Active engagement to increase participation in youth sports (Rich):** Rich indicated that baseball and softball enrollment was up 20 players this season and suggested that some of their more aggressive advertising has successfully reached more families. This triggered a fruitful discussion about several ideas that could help. Clinics with open invitations, clinics with college or professional athletes, an open house fair for families to come find out, an online and paper flyer identifying what is available and who to contact about all youth related activities, and more. It was hard to pin down how best to handle the logistics for this to be successful. The consensus was that this idea needed to be worked some more. This topic will be included in our October meeting. Dave wants to reach out to neighboring towns to see what works for them.
- c. **Swimming instruction (Steve):** Steve advocated that we work vigorously to reinstate swimming lessons at Staffordville Lake in time for next summer. It improves overall safety when more people know how to swim and the lessons event itself creates a safe social space. After substantial discussion, Dave agreed to include this as an agenda item for next meeting. There were several sources of more information we took to follow up with including the American Red Cross, Star Hill, one or more local residents, and Ellington Recreation.
- d. **Recreation Director Going Forward:** Tabled until next month's meeting. Dave hopes to brief the selectman candidates prior to our next meeting. He also shared what the Rec Commission provided to the most recent POCD blueprint in 11/2022, which can be found on the Soccer Club website under SSSC NEWS, Stafford Recreation.

5.) Old Business:

- a. **FY 2025-2026 Budget Status:** This is unchanged from previous status. The Board of Selectman have removed the stipends budgeted for our youth sports programs (\$9,400) as part of the cost cutting brought on by the budget referendum failures. The elimination of such funding shifts a fund-raising burden onto the youth programs.
- b. **Signage for Smoking, Vaping, etc. at youth fields:** Following recent approval for signage at youth sporting locations, Dave B purchased signs indicating No Smoking, Vaping, Drug or Alcohol use. They are the same signs that Rich purchased and installed at Kealy Field. Signage has been installed at the Stafford High and Stafford Middle schools at the fields used for youth soccer. Rich reported a noticeable decline in smoking and vaping activity at Kealy this summer.

6.) Adjourn

- a. Dave indicated that our next meeting will be Wednesday October 8, 2025. On a **MOTION** by Blake, seconded by Tom, the commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Bachiochi, Acting Recording Secretary

Signature

Date

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