PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the April 17, 2013 Regular Meeting

DRAFT **DRAFT**

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on April 17, 2013, 6th Floor Training Room, Stamford Government Center.

In attendance were:

Commissioners:	Joe Andreana Mike Macari David Winston Althea Brown
Staff:	Laurie Albano Kevin Murray
Guests:	Will Palmquist – Bike to Work Anthony Martinelli – League Director Bobby Davis – Religious Tent Service Laura LaBosky – Courtland Avenue Project Ann Brown – Courtland Avenue Project Craig Baker – DOMUS NINER Jon Hoch – DOMUS NINER Marc Roman – SALL Marge Bernstein – Goodbody Garden John Zito – ALL Tim Curry – Greater Stamford Tennis Association

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Joe Andreana.

Mr. McGuinness did not attend the meeting.

Review of the March 20, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Brown made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Winston

YES: Ms. Brown
YES: Mr. Winston
YES: Mr. Andreana
ABSTAINED: Mr. Macari

Mr. Macari abstained because he did not attend the March 20, 2013 Commission Meeting.

Staff Reports

Laurie Albano – Recreation & Directors Report

- We are getting ahead of the storm damage, the Parks Department staff and the Highways staff have been doing a great job getting everything ready.

- Parks will be open May 1st.

- Met with the Board of Representatives for the Budget Presentation on Monday, April 15th and it went very well.

- Just received notification that the Board of Finance cut very little money from our budget.

- Recreation is preparing for Softball Leagues.

- Ms. Albano stated that she received and e-mail back from the Law Department regarding the Boys & Girls Club Kaboom Playground that was approved in concept by the Commission. Assistant Corporation Counsel, Burt Rosenberg has some concerns and his recommendation was not to move forward. It is going to take a team of City employees to facilitate and move this forward; Ms. Albano is trying to coordinate with the different departments. Ms. Albano sent a letter to Director Orgera and Joe Capalbo in the Law Department suggesting convening this team meeting and asking for their thoughts.

  Kaboom has come back saying that if we want the poured in place surface, which we do, it will cost $12,000 and it will be at the City's expense. Kaboom is also asking the City to remove the old playground and dispose of it.

- Mr. Andreana stated that when the Commission gave tentative approval, the Commission was under the impression that it was going to be at no cost to the City.

In view of the Budget issues if it's going to be donated, that is what the Commission's approval was based on.

- Ms. Albano will keep the Commission posted.

- At the Board of Finance Budget Hearing there was a concern by one of the members. During the non-prime time permitting season people are playing on the fields specifically West Beach Park. The fields are packed, and thr concernis that it is mostly nonresidents. Ms. Albano suggested discussing the issue at one of the Special Meetings. Should the Park Police be checking the fields during the non-season? Mr. Andreana stated that the distinction should be whether it's an organized league playing or just pick up games. The parks are there for people to use.

Kevin Murray – Parks

- As we approach Opening Day, May 1st, the Parks Department is attacking all the major areas.

- By early next week there will be about 20 seasonals on hand. The number will be 30 seasonals for the season.

- Working on fence repairs, vendor is waiting on material for 12 fence issues that we have in the park system.

- All of the piers at Cove Marina and Czescik Marina have been repaired except for the I dock section. The I dock will be completed once new dock section from Sullivan Floatation get delivered in early June.

- Opening day was last weekend for the Marina season.

- Opening day was a big success for most leagues on our fields.

- Belfor Restoration has completed sanitizing concessions at Cove and Cummings stand and beach vendor has put all of his equipment back.

- Bathrooms have opened on the weekends on selected sites.

- Will be restoring Fort Stamford Sign, it will be centered behind the wall so it is viewable from the road. It will be the same color as Cove Island with gold letters.

- There is a lot of work to be done in some areas of Cove, but confident that it will safe and usable by May 1st.

- Quigley repairs will be done the first week of May.

- There is a contractor that came in to do some dozer work, topsoil grading. There is also a vendor in place to do some hydro seeding at Cove Island Park.

- There is a contract in place to repair the curbing damage at Cummings Beach and Cove Island.

- The 5 docks that were purchased from Brewers Marina have been brought to the site and into the water; the repairs will start early next week.

- Work on parking lot at West Beach will start on April 22, 2013. Paving will begin at Scalzi Park starting next week as well.

- Mr. Murray gave an update on the Cubeta Stadium lighting. Shock Electric has the contract to change the distribution center with coordination with CL&P, the proposed date to turn down the transformer is Monday, April 29th. It will take 6 days to change out the system, while doing it the Purchase Order had to be increased to supply and install and remove all concrete pads. They are putting in a new transformer, CL&P will be purchasing the transformer, but we have to supply the pads. After 6 days they will turn on the transformer and night play will most likely begin in early May.

Mr. Winston made a motion to bring up under New Business request from Representative Pat White to amend last month's Commission's Resolution regarding Newman Mills Park opening and closing hours.

Seconded by Ms. Brown Unanimously Approved

Consent Agenda

No Consent Agenda.

Special Events

Pastor Bobby Davis – Miracle of Faith World Outreach, Inc. – Use of Jackie Robinson Park for Camp Meeting 2013 – Religious Tent Services – Sunday, July 21, 2013 thru Sunday, July 28, 2013 from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts on Friday, July 19, 2013 and Clean-Up Ends on Monday, July 29, 2013 – 150 Adults and 50 Children.

- Mr. Winston stated that the Commission only permits this type of events for seven days to prevent damage to the turf.

- Mr. Andreana suggested to tentatively approving the request with the difference that the set-up of the tent be on Sunday, July 21, 2013 and take down on Monday, July 29, 2013. If this does not fit their schedule, Pastor Davis will contact the Commission.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve Miracle of Faith World Outreach, Inc. request to use Jackie Robinson Park for Camp Meeting 2013 – Religious Tent Services from Monday, July 22, 2013 through Sunday, July 28, 2013. Set-up on Sunday, July 21, 2013 and the take down on Monday, July 29, 2013.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Alex Karman – South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) – Use of Veterans' Park for Bike to Work Event – Friday, May 17, 2013 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. – Set-Up Starts at 7:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 9:30 a.m. – 30 Adults.

- Hoping to get about 30 people this year.
- Commission asked that the park be clean after the event.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Macari Unanimously Approved

Jonathan Hoch & Craig Baker – DOMUS Foundation – Use of Cove Island Park for 2nd Annual DOMUS NINER – Sunday, September 29, 2013 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:30 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 12:30p.m. – 150 Adults.

- This is a four hour event; everything is contained within the park.
- The event was a success last year.
- Mr. Baker will have to contact Frank Fedeli from Cashiering and Permitting regarding the Special Parking Passes.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Ms. Brown Unanimously Approved

<u>Old Business</u>

Ann Brown – Engineering Department – Courtland Avenue Improvement Project – Park Land.

- Ms. Ann Brown from the Engineering Department stated that this plan was presented to the Commission in 2010. With the improvement that they were proposing to Courtland Avenue there was some of the park land that was going to be acquired for the right of way, about 10,000 sq. ft. There was a Public Hearing in June of 2012 and March of 2013 and some of the comments from the Public Hearing it's what generated the new proposed plan. Some of the concerns were the left turns into the businesses and apartments, they want to dedicate a straight thru lane

as well as a dedicated left turn lane, and to accommodate for that they will need more park land to be taken, they will now need 17,000 sq. ft. The State DOT has agreed to provide the City with a piece of land in the area that can be used as park land. The piece of land is down East Main Street on the corner of East Main Street and Myrtle Avenue. This area of land is 38,000 sq. ft.

- The Commission had questions such as who is going to cover the expense to turn the land into a park and the design of the park, Ms. Brown, did not have the answers, Mani Poola, Traffic Engineer would know the answers. The Commission was also concerned with the location of the land. Ms. Brown stated that there is no set design for the park land; she is here to explain the concept.

- Mr. Andreana also wanted to know what is going to be done to replace the trees that will be taken down for the project.

- The State DOT will be replacing the stone wall that was damaged at the park.

Ms. Brown made a motion to table the request until further details are provided on what the proposal is for replacing what it's in the park now, who is going to pay for making the new park and what the plans are for lighting and safety for the new park.

Seconded by Winston Unanimously Approved

New Business

Marjorie Bernstein – Stamford Garden Club – Request for Blanket Approval for Events Held at Goodbody Garden at Fort Stamford.

- Ms. Bernstein stated that Stamford Garden Club is responsible for the maintenance of the Goodbody Garden at Fort Stamford. Stamford Garden Club would like to request a blanket approval for events that are held at the Garden, this approval will include any function that may involve more than 25 people being at the Garden at one time. It is her understanding that prior approval is not needed if it is anticipated that there will be no more than 25 people attending a function at one time. Ms. Bernstein anticipates that the maximum amount of people they will have is 50.

- When they have an event on mind, they will need to check and make sure the Garden is not being used for another event such as a wedding.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve the request allowing the Stamford Garden Club to have events at the Goodbody Garden at Fort Stamford with up to 60 people without having to come to the Commission.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Newman Mills Park – Opening and Closing Hours.

- At the last meeting the Commission voted to establish opening and closing hours from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Newman Mills Park. This is due to the request of the neighborhood and the neighbors to the Board of Representatives Parks & Recreation Committee requested that the park be open from 8:00a .m. to sundown.

Mr. Winston made a motion to pass a Resolution setting the opening and closing time for Newman Mills Park from 8:00 a.m. to sunset.

Seconded by Ms. Brown Unanimously Approved

Tournaments

Tim Curry – Greater Stamford Tennis Association – Use of Scalzi Tennis Courts – Friday, May 10, 2013 to Sunday, May 12, 2013 – 11th Annual Stamford Open.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Tim Curry – Greater Stamford Tennis Association – Use of Scalzi Tennis Courts – Friday, July 19, 2013 to Sunday, July 21, 2013 – Connecticut Public Parks Tennis Championships.
Mr. Macari made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Craig Lippmann – Thomson Reuters Company Softball Tournament – Use of Cummings 1 & 2 – Saturday, June 1, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Laurie Albano – Revised Dates for Sharkey Laureno Tournament.

- Ms. Albano stated that there was conflict with the dates for the Sharkey Laureno Tournament previously approved by the Commission.

- The new dates are Monday, August 5, 2013 thru Thursday, August 15, 2013.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve the new dates for the Sharkey Laureno Tournament – Monday, August 5, 2013 thru Thursday, August 15, 2013.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Correspondence

Letter from Concerned Parent Regarding Federal and National Little Leagues.

- The Chairman of the Commission received an anonymous letter regarding the operation of Federal and National Little Leagues and it had to do with internal policies. The Commission will not entertain an anonymous letter, but will state the fact that the Commission does not want to get involved with the internal operations of any Little League. Any complaints should be taken up with the District, State and National organizations.

Letter from Pasquale Ottaviano Regarding Issue with Kane Avenue Baseball Field.

- Mr. Ottaviano lives two houses away from the Kane Avenue Baseball Field and is complaining about the noise at all hours. What bothers Mr. Ottaviano the most is the noise from the batting practices.

- There is extreme use of the field; the situation goes on from March thru November.

- The entrance gate is supposed to be locked at night.

- Mr. Ottaviano also complained that the field it's a dump, there are two refrigerators, large dumpster, a mound of soil, stones, contractor trailer.

- Baseball going into neighbors' yards.

- Mr. Andreana asked that the League gets together with Kevin Murray and give a time frame within the next two weeks on how that area is going to be cleaned up and come up with some thoughts on how to improve the quality of life of the neighbors.

- Mr. Rocky Cuscuna volunteered to take responsibility to reconcile with this neighbor. Mr. Macari asked that if the League was responsible for locking the field at night to make arrangements for that. The second thing to do is to take away all the debris and anything that is a hazard. The third thing is to look at the issue of balls hitting his house. Mr. Cuscuna stated that some of the neighbors do not want the gate locked at night because they want to walk around the park, they asked if they could put the lock on after they are done walking, Mr. Cuscuna is not sure if they lock it every night or not.

- The dumpster is a City dumpster requested for Volunteer Day, Mr. Andreana stated that the dumpster has been filled and seating there for a long time, the parks are not dumpster sites, as far as the contractor trailer, if it's not removed in the next two weeks, make arrangements to have towed.

- Mr. Andreana asked that Rocky Cuscuna and Kevin Murray address the situation with the neighbors and try to come up with a compromise.

Addendum to Agenda

Stamford American Little League – Review of Recent Permitting and Sanctioning Violations and Field/Permitting and Construction Violations.

- Mr. Andreana stated that at the end of the discussion whoever wishes to speak needs to sign the sign in sheet and they will be given 2 minutes to address the Commission.

- Mr. Macari stated that the Commission wishes to have a civil conversation and asked everyone present to hold the feedback back and keep it civil. Remarks cannot be of a personal nature. This is going to be one of what the Commission thinks will be many conversations that the Commission will have with many of the Leagues and entities.

- Mr. Macari stated that the initial reason for this meeting was that because the Stamford American Board had no representative at the April 2, 2013 meeting that resulted in some action and because of subsequent things that happened at the field the Committee decided to have a direct dialoge with Stamford American Little League.

- At a February meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission District Administrator, Scott Miller, and several Little Leagues came in front of the Commission to talk about the National Lione Federal Merger, which the Commission supported. At that meeting 50/70 Baseball was also presented to the Commission. The request was denied, the Commission feels that they will be able to recruit better ball players from other leagues, thereby diluting their talent pool for All Stars. The Commission asked Scott Miller to come back with a unified six Little Leagues wanting to do 50/70, so everyone will have the same rules and internal accountability. The Commission felt that 50/70 Baseball did not make sense unless everybody was doing it.

- On March 20, 2013 a Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting was held, representatives of Stamford American Little League, Chris Brecciano and Marc Fraioli asked permission to operate a Girls Softball program, the Girl's Middle School program. The Girl's Middle School Softball Program is currently administered by a separate Charter for Babe Ruth Baseball and has for many years. Mr. Macari emphasized that the space was covered by an existing organization that was permitted and sanctioned by the City of Stamford. The request was denied because of this reason. Even though it was explained to the Commission that this was going to be done by a private organization, it was done under the auspices of Stamford American Little League. It was a Stamford American Little League Web Address, contact information and officer, it was also on the Stamford American Little League Website and also the North Stamford Website until it was taken down and it was

referenced as that the play will take place in District 1 and District 2. The Commission surmised that it was not a private program, so the request was denied. A couple of days after the decline was issued, two e-mails were forwarded to the City of Stamford, one from Rocky Cuscuna and the other from Marc Fraioli announcing a private Little League Program, which according to Stamford American Little League's Charter it's not permitted. The letter from Mr. Fraioli stated that the City had no authority over what they do on private fields. A follow up meeting was set up for April 2, 2013 which was announced in advance. Mr. Macari stated that the sports landscape has changed in Stamford, many other requests have been turned down. At the end of the meeting the Commission decided to issue a Cease and Desist Order to Stamford American Little League to ask them to stop playing, do not register anymore girls for softball, they were taking girls away from a currently sanctioned program. Leagues get to use the City fields for free; all the City requires is that the leagues act like a partner to the City. The Cease and Desist Order was adhered to.

- About a week ago it was brought to the Commission's attention a problem at the Vine Road field. The Commission was informed that the field was not going to be ready for opening day due to some issues:

  Issue #1: Phil D'Amico and the City was lead to believe that some seeding or some sodding was going to be done on a small part of the field, it turned out that Mr. D'Amico's counsel was not to do it, because the field will not be ready for opening day. Mr. D'Amico then found out that the entire field was sodded and still not ready to play on.

  Issue #2: In October 2013, the Commission approved new dugouts for the Vine Road field. After the dugouts were installed, it was found that the dugouts were 2 ft. by 3 ft. bigger. Stamford American Little League did not get a C.O. from the Building Department on the dugouts, because by process Stamford American Little League was given a temporary C.O. Stamford American Little League should have come back to the Commission to inform them of the modified plans, because it is City property.

  Issue #3: A Batting Cage was built, the President of the league told the gentleman responsible for the maintenance and upkeep on Board of Education property that he had been given a verbal by a person that it's not in this room and no longer works for the City. The Commission never gave a verbal for anyone to put up a Batting Cage. A Permit is needed, it is City property. Through a series of conversations it was decided to allow Stamford American Little League to put up the Batting Cage for the kids not by the Commission, but by the Board of Education's representative Al Barbarotta.

  Issue #4: Stamford American Little League decided to build a road from Vine Road to the Batting Cage. The President of the league engaged a contractor who does work with the City of Stamford and informed the contractor that he had a Permit to

build the road and take down trees from City property. Stamford American Little League has been told to close the road, they have not been told yet to replace the 40 ft. trees that were taken down and it was not reported to the Police Department that City property was destroyed. These are the reasons why Stamford American Little League was asked to come in front of the Commission.

- Mr. Andreana stated all that has transpired in the last couple of weeks, has transpired because Stamford American Little League brought it upon themselves, had they follow the plans that they had submitted, had they accepted the Commission's rulings of the last couple of months, this would not be necessary tonight. The Commission has only followed the guidelines that have been established.

- Mr. Andreana asked Ms. Albano to find out for Little League Baseball Fields that are off of school property, what is the extent of the park and where does the Board of Education property begins.

- **Speakers:**

Michael Beldotti:

- Mr. Beldotti, past President of Stamford American Little League, feels that the only people that were hurt were the kids of Stamford American Little League and asked the Commission to please them because they are not getting help from District 1.

Bob Katchko:

- Mr. Katchko from Bob Katchko and Sons Corporation stated that they have done a lot of work at the Vine Road field. They were working directly under Rocky Cuscuna and were told that everything was permitted; later on they found out though other people that there were no Permits. Mr. Katchko would like to clear the name of his company.

Attorney Bob Sargent:

- Mr. Sargent complained that the Agenda for the April 2nd meeting was very vague and the Agenda for tonight's meeting does not make it clear what the Commission is really concerned with. Mr. Sargent was not able to find whether the current Field Use Policy or the Sanctioning Policy were ever adopted by the Board of Representatives and would like to table this discussion to a later meeting. Mr. Macari responded that the April 2nd meeting, it was widely known that Laurie Albano and the Commission will begin a process of what was called the beginning of the architecting of how services were going to be delivered, at that meeting four of the Little Leagues were in attendance, granted Stamford American Little League was not at the meeting. Regarding the vagueness of the

Sanctioning Policy, the Policy is something that is signed by the leagues every year, Mr. Cuscuna is fully aware of what the Sanctioning and Permitting Policy is and what its rules and regulations contain. Mr. Andreana stated that there is nothing to table, because this is an information item and the Commission is not going to vote on anything. This item is informational to all of the leagues involved.

Mr. Macari stated that the Parks & Recreation Commission is the Policy Making Board for parks and recreation and there is only limited instances where the Board of Representatives needs to be apprised of what the Commission does. The Sanctioning Policy is being reviewed by the Law Department.

Chris Brecciano:

- Stamford American Little League wants to work as a partnership with the City.
- Mr. Brecciano wants the Commission to be aware that the league is solvent, that they have the funds to do the renovations on their field for the betterment of their kids.
- There is a lot of passion and pride for Stamford American Little League
- Mr. Brecciano understands that procedures need to be followed and things need to be done correctly and that is something their Board will be aware of and look at in the future. Stamford American Little League wants to work with the City.

- Mr. Andreana stated that each of the Little Leagues are playing on City property. It is a privilege not a right to play on those fields. The leagues have the responsibility when they use the fields to adhere to the City's rules.
- Mr. Andreana mentioned the many letters the Commission received and stated that some of the allegations on those letters were not good; some of the letters deal with improprieties that could prompt Police investigation. If the Commission gets more letters, the Commission does not have the authority to look into any improprieties, but can certainly launch a Police investigation.
- Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Cuscuna to request to be on the Agenda for the next meeting if he wants to explain why the dugouts at the Vine Road Field are bigger than the ones that were originally approved by the Commission.
- Ms. Rachel Menti wanted to address the Commission regarding the Handball Courts at Scalzi Park and Cummings Park. The Commission asked Ms. Menti to send a written proposal and to request to be on May 15, 2013 Parks & Recreation Commission Agenda.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Special Meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 7, 2013.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 15, 2013.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Macari

Seconded by Ms. Brown

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Margarita Arenas
April 18, 2013