

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING  
Minutes of the March 18, 2015 Regular Meeting**

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on March 18, 2015, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

**In attendance were:**

Commissioners:            Joe Andreana  
                                      Dave Winston  
                                      Lyda Ruijter  
                                      Althea Brown  
                                      Beth Cooper

Staff:                            Laurie Albano  
                                      Kevin Murray

Guests:                        Lou Casolo – Lione Park  
  
                                      Henry Yoon – Smoke Free Parks  
  
                                      Anne Fountain – Smoke Free Parks  
  
                                      Ted Jankowski – Smoke Free Parks  
  
                                      Lisa Coggins – Resident  
  
                                      Margarita Xistris - Resident

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Joe Andreana, Chair.

**Review of the February 18, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.**

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

## **Old Business**

### **Lou Casolo – Lione Park Renovation Plans/Drainage Issues.**

- Mr. Lou Casolo, City Engineer updated the Commission on the soil issues at Lione Park.
- As the Boys & Girls Club's project evolved the City started to take soil samples and delineated remediation areas as a result. This work was done in conjunction with TRC Environmental Engineers.
- Since then the project has become larger, but no more borings are needed per TRC. The only areas that we have to deal with are the areas we already know about.
- There is a good estimate of what needs to be removed, it helps that some of the areas are under paved areas. Regarding remediation, the standard says that we'll have dig out 2 feet under a paved area and 4 feet under pervious area. The cost comes to almost \$100,000.
- Mr. Casolo has been working with some engineers at Redniss to determine the depths of excavation. Still in discussion with all parties as to how the work gets executed.
- Mr. Andreana stated that in an effort to expedite the go ahead on this project, all the Commission can do is to recommend that someone finds the most expeditious way to do it.
- Contaminants are located below grade and they do not come up, without disturbing the subgrade, the park is safe. Mr. Casolo has been in contact with TRC about this issue; currently there is no order to do a clean-up because the soils are deeper.
- The remediation can be done as an early project, but the issue that comes with that is open excavation and security. There will be potential piles of fill that are contaminated and needs to be secured. The logistics have to be worked out when the project gets underway. The remediation can also be done concurrently with the construction work.
- The sense of the Commission is that they would like to keep a grassy space at Lione Park not a synthetic field.
- \$180,000 still available to do the soil remediation work.
- Mr. Casolo suggested that meetings with all parties involved continue. Money has to be in place to support the job moving forward.

- Mr. Winston stated that he likes the idea of wrapping it all into one project.
- Mr. Murray stated that the State Legislative House passed the bill for the sporting lights at Lione Park. The Commission would like more information on the lights, and asked Mr. Murray for a report on what the plan is.
- Mr. Andreana started a discussion on artificial turf fields. Mr. Andreana spoke about the potential danger of artificial turf fields, how the chemicals from the crumb tires used to make artificial turf fields, reach excess temperatures of 140°/160° F in the summer time. Activity tends to degrade the particles, break them down into finer dust. Mr. Andreana is worried about kids playing on these fields and breathing in these particles, a lot of States have raised these issues. Unless an artificial turf that is 100% safe will be installed, the City should take a position to put a moratorium on these fields.
- Mr. Casolo stated that when prior turf fields were installed similar questions were raised. Water testing has been done at West Beach to look at what happens with the runoff. Mr. Casolo does not know of any reported complaints of injuries as a result of burns due to the high temperatures on the field. There has been a number of years since the fields have been in place, if there were reported issues it should be documented.
- Ms. Anne Fountain stated that the issue has come up and a Study was done in 2011 by the Department of Public Health. They worked with toxicologists and environmental experts in this field, they deemed and came out with a statement that there is no elevated risk with using turf fields. As far as the high temperatures go, Ms. Fountain will have to refer to the study or call the State Department of Public Health to answer the question. Ms. Fountain will forward a copy of the study to the Commission.

**Kevin Murray – Cummings/Soundview Gate Schedule.**

- Mr. Murray requested approval of the proposed Cummings/Soundview gate schedule:

**Off Season Gate Schedule – October 1<sup>st</sup> thru March 31<sup>st</sup>**

Monday thru Friday – Gates will be open 7:15 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily

Saturdays and Sundays – Gates will remain closed

**Park Season Gate Schedule – April 1<sup>st</sup> thru September 30<sup>th</sup>**

Open 7 days a week 7:15 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily.

Gates will be opened by Parks Maintenance Staff daily outlined in the schedule

above and closed daily by the Parks Police.

- Mr. Murray explained that during the off season the gates will remain closed on Saturdays and Sundays due to lack of Parks personnel to open the gate, nor he has the funding.
- During the season we will also have problems with coverage during some holidays that the City is closed.
- Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission originally approved the gate closure to be 9:00 p.m. to 7:15 a.m., seven days a week and discussed the pros and cons of the proposed change. Ms. Brown would like a sign posted stating the time and closure of the gate as well as the park.
- Mr. Murray suggested asking one of the neighbors to volunteer to open the gate in the morning (volunteer has to be dependable), and asking the Police Department to close the gate at night. The second option is to pay someone to open and close the gate, but we do not have the funding. Ms. Ruijter suggested allowing pedestrian traffic only; Mr. Murray stated that the new design should include that.
- No action was taken, item was tabled to the April 22<sup>nd</sup> Commission Meeting. Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Murray to ask the Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach if they want to designate someone to open and close the gate on the weekend. Mr. Andreana wants Mr. Murray to also investigate if there are any other options available.

## **New Business**

### **Anne Fountain – Stamford Health Department – Smoke Ordinance.**

- Anne Fountain, Director of Health for the City of Stamford, Ted Jankowski and Dr. Henry Yoon attended tonight's meeting to request the Commission's assistance in helping them pass a No Smoking Policy for our parks and limited it to the playgrounds and beaches.
- There have been a lot of complaints regarding second hand smoke and being exposed to it.
- Ms. Fountain presented a proposed DRAFT Smoke-Free Policy for City playgrounds and beaches as well as other material supporting such Policy.
- A number of towns have already committed to banning smoking and all tobacco products in parks, or having a No Smoking Policy focusing on second hand smoke.
- In this Policy Ms. Fountain is focusing on second hand smoke.

- DRAFT Smoke-Free Policy reads:
  1. The use of tobacco or unapproved nicotine delivery products that produce second hand smoke is prohibited in all City playgrounds and beaches at all times.
  2. The Stamford Parks Department shall prominently post and maintain signage on all City playgrounds and beaches.
  3. The Stamford Parks Department shall publicize the Smoke-Free Policy on its website.
  4. The Stamford Park Police Officer shall be authorized to enforce the Smoke-Free Policy by asking persons found to be in violation of the Policy to discontinue use or leave the playground or beach. City Citation Officers and the Stamford Police Department may also enforce the Policy.
  5. The Stamford Parks Department shall update all materials, including permits and rental agreements to reflect compliance with the Smoke-Free Policy.
  
- Ms. Fountain would like for this Policy to be effective on May 1, 2015, but that depends on whether the Commission adopts the Policy and how long it would take to do such.
  
- This is being done all over the United States and all throughout Connecticut.
  
- The Commission agrees with this Policy. Ms. Brown suggested that smoking should be banned throughout the parks, not just the playgrounds and beaches and the Commission agreed with the suggestion.
  
- There must be enforcement in place; lifeguards should not be expected to enforce this Policy.
  
- Signage should be installed.
  
- Mr. Andreana asked that the DRAFT Policy be revised to take out playgrounds and beaches and add all City Parks including all City park property from the entrance to the exit of the park.
  
- After Commission's approval, it will have to go in front of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Board of Representatives, and then to the full Board.
  
- If approved, they will have a PR campaign to get the word out.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve the Smoke-Free Policy for all City parks.

Seconded by Mrs. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

## **Staff Reports**

Laurie Albano – Recreation.

- Ms. Albano reported to the Commission on the results of the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee meeting on March 11, 2015:

## **Consent Agenda**

Penny Mazzucco – Patriotic & Special Events Commission – Memorial Day Parade – Use of Veterans' Park – Sunday, May 31, 2015 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 9:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 2:00 p.m. – 50 Adults and 30 Children.

### **Approved**

Hilary Starks – SoundWaters Celebrates Spring at Cove Island Park – Beach Cleanup – Saturday, April 25, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 9:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 3:00 p.m. – 75 Adults and 125 Children.

### **Approved**

Davette Stephens – Joshua & Tyler Stephens Memorial Fund – J & T Fund Walkathon – Use of Cove Island Park – Friday, April 17, 2017 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 4:00 p.m. – 30 Adults and 35 Children.

### **Approved**

Davette Stephens – Joshua & Tyler Stephens Memorial Fund – J & T Fund Walkathon – Use of Cove Island Park – Saturday, October 3, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 9:00 p.m. – 30 Adults and 35 Children.

### **Approved**

Davette Stephens – Joshua & Tyler Stephens Memorial Fund – Co-Ed Tournament – Use of Cummings 1 & 2 – Saturday, May 30, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

### **Approved**

Davette Stephens – Joshua & Tyler Stephens Memorial Fund – Home Run Derby – Use of Cummings 1 & 2 – Saturday, June 27, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

### **Approved**

Davette Stephens – Joshua & Tyler Stephens Memorial Fund – Men’s Softball Tournament – Use of Cummings 1 & 2 – Saturday, July 18, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Approved**

Judson Bell – Sharkey Laurenno Scholarship Fund – Use of Cubeta Stadium for 14 Year Old Round Robin and 15 Year Old Round Robin – Saturday, August 1, 2015 to Monday, August 10, 2015 from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

**Approved**

### **Special Events**

Pamela Conte – STARelief – Use of Courtland Avenue Dog Park for Doggy Day Palooza – Saturday, May 30, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. – Clean-Up Ends at 5:00 p.m.

**Approved**

Eden Huang – Health and Social Services Department – Use of Part of Lione Park for Family Day Event – Saturday, May 16, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:30 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 5:00 p.m.

**Approved**

### **New Business**

Erin McKenna – Dog Signs for Mianus River Park.

**Held**

- For the record, Mr. Andreana questioned whether or not the D.S.S.D. pays for the Special Events fees.
- Busy with camp registrations for spring and summer; camps are near full.
- Preparing Budget Presentation Reports.
- Have been having league meetings with in-house leagues and external holders, sanctioned users.
- Heroy pool status still unclear, the City’s plan is to try to get the pool open again.

- Terry Conners winter season is winding down. The rink stays open year round; they will have an active spring.
- Ken Smith and Ms. Albano will be preparing a rink master plan encompassing both maintenance issues and process review.
- TCR Capital doors/frames to commence soon.
- Will be doing intermediary repair of the roof mansards until the full roof replacement, hopefully in the spring of 2016.
- Fee increases for Recreation and the Rink are on the Agenda for March 26, 2015 – Scott and Ken will attend the meeting while Ms. Albano presents the budgets that same night.
- Ms. Albano distributed a copy of the Recreation monthly revenues, will submit a copy of TCR next month.
- Fireworks bids are due on April 16, 2015. The date of the Fireworks will be Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> with a rain date of Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Stamford Symphony will perform at the Fireworks Show this year.
- New Recreation web based software RFP responses are due on April 6, 2015.
- Mr. Andreana suggested that the grassy field at Lione Park could be a good area to test Mr. Mike Pappa's organic field products that he suggested at a previous Commission meeting.
- Mr. Andreana asked Ms. Albano for a report on the Basketball Program and what they are doing (Stamford Peace and Tom Pia) for the April meeting.

### **Kevin Murray – Parks**

- Vets Park Concept/Planning meeting #2 was cancelled and has been re-scheduled for April 16, 2015.
- **Dorothy Heroy:** Met at the site on February 19<sup>th</sup> to review interior mechanicals with City Staff, plans for the 2015 include drawings needed and coordination with the State per regulations. There will be a meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss plan for this season. The mechanical room is not in code.
- Hired seven seasonals this past Monday, found out from H.R. that these workers are allowed to work 40 hours per week for the program from March 16<sup>th</sup> thru October 15<sup>th</sup>. Phase II will be an additional 7 employees starting on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Work plan to work on athletic fields opening and park openings per the extended season and

athletic schedule.

- Board of Finance Budget Presentation will be on Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. and Fiscal Committee of the Board of Representatives on Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. Once finished, Mr. Murray will provide the Commission with a copy of the Budget Presentation.
- Public Planning Meeting #3 for Cummings Park, West Beach and Cummings Marina Master Plan has been re-scheduled to Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Government Center Café – 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Beach Parking Management Meeting with City staff for upcoming 2015 season will take place on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Parks Department completed flag/banner hanging for Franklin Street Works in Columbus Park and Latham Park. Overtime for installation is paid by Franklin Street Works.
- Met with Friends of Cummings Park, West Beach and Czescik Park for general park improvements, which they are aware that they would have to come through the Parks & Recreation Commission for approval. Mr. Murray will keep the Commission posted.
- Mr. Murray stated that there is definitely a big drinking issue in our parks. There are constantly beer cans scattered throughout the park, around the permitted areas and in the woods. A No Smoking Policy is great, but we need to focus on the drinking in our parks.
- Mr. Murray informed the Commission that the Parks & Recreation Committee will discuss Scalzi Park to revisit the Park by Permit Only.
- There was a short discussion on why this item is going directly to the Park & Recreation Committee and bypassed the Parks & Recreation Commission. Mr. Andreana will contact Representative Jim Caterbone.
- The Commission also discussed the proposed fee increase for out of town residents that the Commission proposed at a previous meeting. Mr. Andreana understands that there is a proposal going out to increase the permit fee to \$30 for Stamford residents as well as an increase to the Senior \$7 fee, which the Commission did not know anything about. The Commission unanimously agreed that they are not in favor of increasing any resident fees.
- Mr. Andreana asked that a Memo go out to the Board of Representatives Parks & Recreation Committee stating that the Commission proposed increasing the Day Pass to \$50 on November 19, 2014, the purpose was to alleviate the crowding at our beach facilities and not as a means of increasing revenue. Whereas, increasing the

\$20 permit fee for residents and possibly the \$7 senior fee is clearly a revenue producing act and the Parks & Recreation Commission is not in favor of this increase.

**The Commission took a break at 8:50 p.m.**

**The meeting resumed at 8:59 p.m.**

## **Discussion**

### **Vision of Parks Through 2035.**

- Ms. Ruijter distributed a DRAFT of an outline for a Park and Open Space Plan (POS Plan) for the Commission's review.

### **Park and Open Space Plan (POS Plan) –Sketch**

March 18, 2015

#### **Introduction:**

The City of Stamford is fortunate to have an extensive park system given by nature, preserved and managed through previous generations and which has provided for a high quality of life for all of our residents. Today, the P & R Commission and Staff continue the mission of preserving, enhancing and expanding the City's legacy of parklands, providing green space, safe environments and recreational facilities for present and future generations.

#### **Purpose of Park and Open Space Plan.**

This POS Plan is to serve as a guide for City Boards, Commissions, Agencies and Staff, as well as for interested citizens and volunteers for decision-making related to policies, acquisition, development and design of parklands and facilities, financing strategies and operations.

The Park and Open Space system contributes to the quality of life by providing clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, flood storage, passive and active recreation, flood management, and education. Within this POS plan the relationship with the City Boards, Commissions, agencies and staff whose purview overlaps with that of the P&R Commission will be described and clarified.

This POS Plan provides a comprehensive overview of the guidelines, assumptions and approaches for the park and open space system as a whole, and is a complement to the separate, detailed plans for each of the parks.

This POS Plan may serve as a required basis for participation in any Federal and State Park and Open Space aid and grant programs.

## **Mission of P&R:**

- To provide a well-functioning system of safe, accessible, well-planned and maintained parks, natural areas, beaches and shorelines.
- To provide affordable recreational and educational opportunities for all segments of the population.
- To preserve and expand the natural resources in surface area as well as by trees and plants.
- To preserve the historical legacy of the park system.
- To encourage community interaction and City vibrancy by planning for good accessibility to and connectivity between the parks.
- To look to the future and recommend additional space.
- To ensure adequate well-maintained recreational facilities.

## **Outline:**

- Vision, Goals and Objectives: The underlying ideals that guide development of the park system.
- Measure existing inventory of acreage and recreational offerings. Work with the GIS Department to map and develop an inventory of public and private parklands, open space, private and public recreational facilities. Park acreage analysis as compared to NPRA standards. Formulate recommendations for future needs.
- Comparison with other planning projects. Integration and coordination with previous park plans as well as with City planning documents developed by other boards and agencies, such as the City Master Plan, Harbor Management Plan, Individual Park Plans, Environmental Agencies, D.S.S.D.). Analyze implications and underlying assumptions of these plans; communicate with the respective departments, to ensure a coherent and consistent vision.
- Public Input. Understanding demands/deficiencies identified through the public input process. Ensure input by the public, through public hearings and through interaction with relevant City agencies (Social Services, Office of Aging, Health Department, Land Use Committee, schools).
- Demographics: Understanding community dynamics that influence the park system. Analyze housing, economic, ethnic and demographic changes and their relevance for the future needs.
- Park Improvement, Acquisition and Development Mechanisms: Reviewing methods beyond the tax levy to gather funds to acquire, develop and maintain

facilities.

- City Staffing and Operations: Reviewing available resources to manage existing parkland, recommendations for future needs.
- Ms. Ruijter will send an electronic copy of the DRAFT Outline for Park and Open Space Plan to the Commission for their review and to edit as necessary.
- Ms. Ruijter suggested that the Parks & Recreation Commission should work closely together with the Harbor Commission.
- The Commission discussed looking into Grants and contacting the Departments that will be able to help with this process.
- Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission should define throughout the City those buildings and facilities that have public access and those that are blocking the access to public spaces.
- Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Murray to ask Erin McKenna for an inventory of public space.
- Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Murray to ask Robin Stein for an update on the Archstone property. This property is part of the Mill River Park and Mr. Andreana feels that the property looks blighted.

### **Correspondence**

No Correspondence.

**The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 22, 2015.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Winston

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Margarita Arenas  
March 25, 2015