

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the August 19, 2015 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on August 19, 2015, 10th Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Joe Andreana
 Dave Winston
 Lyda Ruijter
 Althea Brown

Staff: Laurie Albano
 Kevin Murray

Guests: Katherine Snedaker – Pink Concussions

 Maureen Boylan – Soccer Fields

 Erin McKenna – Master Plan for Cummings and West Beach

Call to Order

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

Mrs. Cooper did not attend the meeting.

Review of the July 15, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimously Approved

- Ms. Ruijter pointed out to the Commissioners that on page 3 of the minutes it states that it is OK for Commissioners to attend the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee meetings as long as they do not participate. Later on in the minutes it states that Corporation Counsel recommends that it is better for the Commissioners not to

attend the meetings. Ms. Ruijter finds this issue still unclear.

- Mr. Andreana explained that the Commissioners can attend the Internal Committee meetings. However, if the Internal Committee disapproves an activity that person can bring it up to the Parks & Recreation Commission. The Commission is the appellate group, and if a Commissioner attends the Internal Committee meeting he/she would have firsthand information and in effect participating, the Commissioner would have to recuse him/herself from that vote.
- Mr. Andreana stated that from now on this will be a Policy, if a Commissioner attends the Internal Committee meetings and something is disapproved and brought up to the Commission, the person that has attended the Internal Committee meeting will not be allowed to vote. It is best that the Commission follows the guidelines of the Legal Department and not attend the Internal Committee meeting.

Discussion

Vision of Parks Though 2035.

- Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission would like to establish some deliverables and setting some time frames. The Commission will define a vision statement for the future of Stamford parks and try to set a time to schedule when this document will be produced.
- The Commission needs to discuss the following:
 - Placing the Stamford PD and Parks Police on the October Agenda. Getting report on problems and what the Commission can do to enforce some of the rules for the following summer.
 - The Commission also has to establish ground rules or an Ordinance to define the Commission's role in the early planning and pre-planning of park modernization or modifications.
- Ms. Brown stated that Enforcement Meeting is in the works for October. An e-mail has been sent to the Chief of Police, waiting to hear back from his Assistant regarding his availability. Parks Police are also invited.
- Mr. Andreana asked Ms. Brown to present the Agenda for the Enforcement Meeting for review at the September Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting.
- Mr. Andreana suggested that Friends Groups are not invited to the October meeting to give their presentations.
- Mr. Winston stated that it is fine to have the Enforcement Meeting in October for the first year, but feels that the meeting should be in November going forward when the

season is completely over.

- Mr. Winston stated that the Commission needs to start crafting a Draft Policy Statement. The statement will indicate what the Parks Commission is doing by having this meeting; it will also indicate that it will be done on an annual basis and how it will be done. Mr. Winston is fine with a one on one discussion for the first meeting, but going forward the citizens should be involved and allowed to speak, it should be more of a Public Meeting.
- Ms. Ruijter agrees with public input and also suggested meeting with the Police Commission as well. Mr. Winston feels that the first meeting should be kept small, and it can be expanded later on.
- Ms. Brown wrote a document regarding roles and vision, over the last couple of months, information on open space and enforcement has been included.
- The document:

Policy

- Role & Policy regarding public/private park coalition.
- General vs. dedicated funds.
- Restricting park usage, permit only.
- Synthetic vs. natural grass fields.
- Tree Policy – cut down/replace.

Role

- Clarify P & R Commission in Parks planning.
- Field usage across all sports venues.
- Define P & R Commission in Parks planning.

Vision

- Planning for future park/green space for growth – Open space.
- Ms. Ruijter put together a proposal for putting something into a Policy. As a new Policy any proposal for renovation, alteration or addition to any park will have to be presented first to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

The public needs to have more input. Project will come first to the Parks & Recreation Commission and they will set some parameters. Second step could be setting up a Taskforce consisting of each of the neighborhoods surrounding a park, representing several demographics, representing someone from conservation, planning.

- Mr. Winston stated that the Commission needs to make it simpler at first. Rather than generating large scope documents, the Commission should use the information given to them. For example, information from volunteers and information received from the Chief of Police when he attends the October meeting can generate a paragraph about how the Commission would like to proceed in the future. The Commission needs to go over the Policies that are already in effect.
- A timeline should be created for the planning process.
- Mr. Andreana envisions coming up with a Vision Statement that reflects what the Commission sees for the City of Stamford parks over the next 20 years. During September, October and November the Commission should concentrate on the vision of the parks, and produce a statement by the December meeting.

Special Events

No Special Events.

Old Business

Katherine Snedaker – Pink Concussions.

- Ms. Albano distributed a copy of the summary of the current State law regarding concussions, which was just slightly changed to now require that all youth athletic activity from ages 7 thru 19 require a written or electronic statement on concussion awareness/recognition in line with the CDC guidelines.
- Ms. Snedaker shared with the Commission data that she collected in the Norwalk Public Schools this year. The data showed how many concussions were reported in the 11,000 kids in Norwalk. There were 111 concussions reported to school nurses, of those 60 were non-sport, 51 were sport. The official school concussions were 27.
- The Connecticut concussion laws only apply to student/athletes who play for their official High School/Middle School team. It does not cover youth sports, Parks & Recreation, private, non for profit or Catholic Schools.
- The City of Norwalk took action and passed the guidelines to cover another 6,000 kids. These guidelines now apply to 6,000 youth players and 800 coaches. What it says is that if they are going to use City land the coaches and parents have to have concussion education.
- Concussion education is free on-line CDC. The Coach has to take an on-line course, and parents have to be given an education sheet (available in Spanish).

- When there is a sign that a kid has suffered a concussion, the Coach has to pull the kid from the game and for 24 hours the kid can't go back in, parents are notified.
- There is a check list for the Coach to go thru when there is a possible head injury, lowering liability for the Coach, the sports organization and the Parks & Recreation Department. Copy of the form goes to Parks & Recreation and the parent. Parks & Recreation will have a copy of every possible head injury, so they can track it. The child needs a Doctor's note to come back to play. In Norwalk, if a parent does not want to bring their kid to the Doctor, they can hold their kid out for 10 days and sign a waiver, after the 10 days they can bring the child back.
- The idea in Norwalk is to create a web of concussion care; it's not just the school's responsibility or youth sports or the parent's.
- Ms. Albano stated that the State law has been amended to require that Municipalities, Parks and Rec, anyone from the age of 7 thru the age of 19 are going to be required to be given a written copy of the CDC heads up or an electronic copy.

Maureen Boylan – Discussion of Cummings Park Master Plan/Soccer Fields.

- Maureen Boylan discussed the Soccer Fields and the current Master Plan presented for Cummings Park and West Beach. Ms. Boylan feels that the Master Plan is a good plan, but she has an issue with the proposal of a permanent structure. The proposed structure is a concession stand and a bathroom that were not agreed to when the fields were installed or built. Ms. Boylan feels that Stamford Youth Soccer can't even maintain the port-a-johns that are currently there. Mr. Winston recalls that the condition for the West Beach Soccer Fields was that no Concession Stand be allowed.
- Ms. Boylan questioned who will be paying for the bathroom if it gets built? Who is going to staff the concession stand during soccer season? As a Tax payer Ms. Boylan refuses to pay for it.
- Ms. Boylan feels that the plan should not have been presented last to the Parks & Recreation Commission.
- The Master Plan calls for new soccer field at Cummings Park. Ms. Boylan disagrees with Stamford Youth Soccer running another soccer field on City fields.
- Ms. Boylan questioned why is Stamford Youth Soccer the only entity allowed to play at the West Beach fields? If there are more teams playing on these fields, then there is the possibility of negotiation where maybe bathrooms could be installed, because now there are more teams using the facilities.
- Mr. Andreana stated that the West Beach soccer fields are not Stamford Youth Soccer entities, they are permitted to use those fields and Park Policy is that youth

activities take precedent. Ms. Albano explained that the West Beach Soccer Fields are only lined for soccer, making it very difficult to put other sports there. 100% of the programming that goes on there is soccer, Youth Soccer with 3,000 kids is the largest user of that facility, but that there are other adult sanctioned soccer leagues using the facility as well.

- Ms. Boylan also complained about the noise coming from the soccer fields very early in the morning on the weekends. Ms. Albano stated that no one is permitted to use the field before 9:00 a.m., if there is any activity going on before that time, it is illegal. Mr. Winston stated that the Police Chief must be informed of this.
- Ms. Boylan requested that money be found in the Budget for enforcement and maybe change the hours of enforcement during the summer hours.
- Ms. Boylan expressed her concern with a new soccer field being put in Cummings Park; she does not want Stamford Youth Soccer controlling that field. Mr. Andreana stated that Stamford Youth Soccer does not control any of the fields.
- Mr. Andreana stated that if there is a justified need for the installation of a bathroom at West Beach Soccer Fields, it is up to the Commission to decide if they agree or not.
- Ms. Boylan suggested that the existing Concession Stand at West Beach by the Little League Field be used instead of building a new one.

Commission took a short break at 8:20 p.m.

Meeting resumed at 8:27 p.m.

New Business

Erin McKenna – Discussion – Cummings Park, West Beach and Cummings Marina.

- Mr. Andreana is concerned that the Master Plan calls for keeping the same number of parking spaces that have been in the park for at least 40 years. We are looking with this park renovation for at least another 40 or 50 years. Mr. Andreana is concerned that Stamford has grown from 105,000 to 130,000 + people, is the parking going to be enough and is there plans in place to provide additional parking and access to the beach?
- Ms. McKenna stated that there are a number of goals for the plan; one of them was to reduce the amount of pervious surface and make it a more natural place. The Plan has reduced the pervious surface by almost 2 ½ acres, at the same it preserves the same amount of parking. There is overflow parking that can be made into permanent parking if needed. There is a limit to the amount of paved parking

lots you want to see in the park. We do not know how people will access parks in 30 or 40 years, they are trying to make it more accessible by foot, by bike and mass transit.

Mr. Andreana feels that 70/80 year old resident is not going to want to ride a bike or take mass transit from North Stamford or the Newfield area, they will rely on cars. Mr. Andreana stated that he offered the thought of the possibility of contemplating using off-site parking and providing transportation to the park on the weekends. Ms. McKenna stated that there is a Bus and Shuttle Study being done for Stamford. Mr. Andreana feels that the Master Plan needs to address the need for additional parking and how it would be accommodated without destroying the park. This could be done by the Land Use Department.

- Mr. Winston stated that he would not want the Marina to be Phase I of the project, and would like the Commission to guide the phasing of the project.
- Mr. Winston reinstated that he remembers that when the West Beach Soccer Fields were built, there was an understanding that no concession stand was going in. Mr. Winston feels that concession stands no longer belong in the parks, food trucks are the way to go.
- Mr. Andreana stated that any of the concession stands that we have were financed and built by the individual leagues, they were not provided by the City. Mr. Andreana feels that the City should not set precedent for a sports venue to have the City finance a concession stand.
- Mr. Andreana stated that he believes that conceptual plans should come first in front of the Parks & Recreation Commission before going to the Parks & Recreation Committee.
- Mr. Andreana requested that Ms. McKenna provides the Commission with the phases and what goes into each phase (what needs to be done to get approval for each phase). Also a bar chart from 2016 out to 2026. A conceptual timeline for the first three phases.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve the Cummings Park conceptual plan; the motion reflects denial of the Concession Stand on West Beach. The Parks & Recreation Commission reserves the right to approve the final drawings for each phase going forward. The prioritization of the phases will show the Marina to be in the latter portion of this development and not take priority.

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimously Approved

Staff Reports

Laurie Albano – Recreation.

- Summer Rec Camps ended successfully August 14 overall/1100 total kids served/always some injuries and issues, but overall went well.
- Some one week vendor camps will run thru the end of August.
- Lifeguards still on duty/limited schedules now and shortened swim areas between flags/usual issues all summer due to limited enforcement.
- Heroy Pool closed for season due to Lifeguard availability/busy summer there with lines on weekends for pool use and some parking issues.
- Breaking in at night at Heroy to use the pool is a problem/fencing was compromised and is fixed, but still too low.
- LAZ Parking has been a big help with non-permitted pool users at Heroy/tickets given.
- Fall Program Brochure is on line and books in/Registration begins in September.
- All spring/summer Adult Softball, Kickball, Flag Football and Beach Volleyball leagues and tournaments have been successful and have good registration numbers/revenue.
- Fall Adult Sports leagues registering now and numbers look good.
- Tentative award for new Recreation Management software/target date December 15 registration.
- New blue recycling cans at Cummings softball fields 1 & 2 have been successful.
- The Westhill High School pool will be back in use for fall swim lessons/open swim.
- Terry Conners Rink had a very successful summer camp program/winter schedule in process and begins in September.
- Terry Conners Rink doors/frame project to begin shortly after Labor Day.
- Terry Conners Rink having concession vendor issues. Ms. Albano and Ken Smith will meet with vendor this Friday to establish City mandates for upcoming winter season.

- The Highway Department helped Terry Conners Rink with a new paved snow dump pad behind the rink and will be working on some outside sidewalk drainage issues soon.
- Recreation will be hosting a permit meeting on August 27th for all fall sports sanctioned users.
- Terry Conners Rink and Recreation fees still have not been approved. Will go in front of the P & R Committee again on August 27th.
- Recreation continues to work to create new revenue opportunities with the large young adult population with alternative type tournaments/leagues and cross promotions with local businesses/D.S.S.D.
- Recreation/Terry Conners Rink revenue reports were provided.
- List of events approved by the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee at the July 11, 2015 meeting:

Consent Agenda

Kristen Hayes – Sheryl Gerard – Girl Scouts of Connecticut – Horseshoe Beach area and Restrooms – Fall Camporee – 10:00 a.m. Saturday, October 3, 2015 to 10:00 a.m. Sunday, October 4, 2015 – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 12:00 p.m. – 30 Adults and 120 Children.

Frank Fedeli made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

Unanimously Approved

Maria Sandoval – Grupo Quetzal – Flag Raising – Guatemalan Independence Day – Columbus Park – Sunday, September 13, 2015 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 11:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 2:15 p.m. – 35 Adults and 15 Children.

Frank Fedeli made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kim Gerbert

Unanimously Approved

Special Events

Mary Lynch – TMK Sports & Entertainment – 5K Run/Walk for Health & Hunger – Use of Cove Island Park and City Streets – Saturday, October 17, 2015 from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. – Set-Up Starts at 7:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 9:30 a.m. – 200 Adults and 50 Children.

Kim Gerbert made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Frank Fedeli

Unanimously Approved

Matthew Nordt – City of Stamford Recreation Services – Kids/Adult Run/Obstacle Event – Cove Island Park – Sunday, October 4, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. – Set-Up Starts at 7:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 12:00 p.m. – 200 Adults and 100 Children.

Frank Fedeli made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

YES: Frank Fedeli
YES: Ernie Orgera
YES: Kevin Murray
YES: Kim Gerbert
ABSTAINED: Laurie Albano

Rohanna Wagener Delossantos – Future 5 – Back to School Chalking – Kiwanis Park or Veterans’ Park – Friday, September 11, 2015 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 2:00 p.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 6:00 p.m. – 10 Adults and 60 Children.

Frank Fedeli made a motion to deny request.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

Ms. Rohanna Wagener Delossantos can appeal the decision to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Tournaments

Fortunato Daniele – Stamford Italian Club – Use of West Beach Soccer Field or Lione Park Soccer Field for Tryouts – Sunday, August 16, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Laurie Albano made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Frank Fedeli

Unanimously Approved

Kevin Murray – Parks.

- June/July Parking Financial Report for Stamford Beaches from LAZ was submitted.
- Three Memorial Benches site approvals have been granted for Cove Island in which will be installed by City staff once delivered.

- Completion of Field Materials Bids which gives us the best possible price of all materials for our maintenance operation by Parks staff.
- Playground repairs/inspection reports have been collected and organized for scheduling of any safety hazards by certified playground installer.
- Steel decorative toters have been added in a few high volume areas for recreation use and also beach users at Cummings.
- **Mayor's Departmental Review** – August 17th Parks/Facilities presentation to Mayor/Administration Staff which focused on 4 key areas which will contribute to departments making a meaningful impact in the future.
 1. Summary most significant contributions in your department.
 2. General overview of strengths and weakness/new opportunities.
 3. Measure positive impact the department is having on the individuals and other departments.
 4. Strategic direction/vision and plan for Fiscal Year.
- Major beaches and parks continue to be very active.
- Capital upgrades process has begun of identifying park upgrades for this year's Capital Budget submission by Parks staff. Will be going in front of the Planning Board in October. Mr. Murray welcomed Commission's opinions.
- Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Murray to ask Engineering to provide a set of specs for City playgrounds.
- The only major project going on in the parks is at McKeithen Park.

Correspondence

No Correspondence.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 16, 2015.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Winston

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Margarita Arenas
August 26, 2015