

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the September 17, 2014 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on September 17, 2014, 10th Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Joe Andreana
 Dave Winston
 Lyda Ruijter
 Beth Cooper

Staff: Laurie Albano
 Kevin Murray

Guests: Erin McKenna – Mianus River Park

 Michelle Rampen – Huntington’s Walk

 Rich Baber – RF Youth Boxing 5K

 Enzo Iorfino – Bocce Tournament

 Lisa Coggins – Cummings Park

 Patricia Liotta – Cummings Park

 Margarita Xistris – Cummings Park

 Representative Kieran Ryan – Cummings Park

 Representative Gloria DePina – Jackie Robinson Park

 Brian Kriftcher –Stamford Peace Basketball

 Martin Levine – Mayor’s Office

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Joe Andreana, Chair.

Ms. Brown did not attend the meeting.

Mrs. Cooper will be a few minutes late.

Review of the August 20, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes.

- At the August 20, 2014 meeting only Commissioners Andreana, Winston and Brown were present. Since Ms. Brown is not present tonight the item needs to be tabled.

Mr. Winston made a motion to table approval of August 20, 2014 Minutes to the October 2014 Commission meeting.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Staff Reports

Laurie Albano – Recreation

- Recreation Fall Registration opened on September 8th, still ongoing.
- Brochure is online. Ms. Albano distributed hard copies of the brochure.
- Recreation fall adult leagues are shaping up with good numbers. Recreation is hosting a Dodgeball Tournament on September 26th.
- The Sacred Heart field will be used for some Rec programs on weekday afternoons and Saturdays. Will not be using the inside of the building, but will make use of the field in the back with the Soccer Tykes Program and some afterschool programs as well.
- Terry Conners Ice Rink is busy with the start of the fall/winter season.
- There was a meeting today regarding Terry Conners Ice Rink floor and the City's lawsuit against Arena Systems. At this point the contractor is saying that the City specs were inadequate and called for too much air in the concrete. The City Engineer will review the specs and an independent Engineering Report that was done, and Legal will keep fighting it. The contractor offered to do a quick fix, but the City Engineer is not happy with that.
- Terry Conners Ice Rink has two Capital Budget projects in the works for the roof, the doors and door frames.
- There are no problems with fall ball and permits for soccer, football and baseball.
- Recreation held successful softball and beach volleyball tournaments on September 6th.

- At Ms. Albano's request a summer wrap up meeting will take place on September 22nd with Director Orgera, Kevin Murray, Aquatics Director and Ms. Albano's Assistant Matt Nordt to discuss all the beach park issues from the summer.
- This year we had to provide 5 year stats as an addendum to the Annual Report.
- Recreation and Terry Conners revenue is on target.

Kevin Murray – Parks

- **Jackie Robinson Park** – Scheduled to be reseeded this month.
- **Scalzi Bathrooms** – Stamford Police Department is currently investigating contractor responsible for vandalizing purchased block for the bathroom renovations at Scalzi Park. Work will continue this week 9/15/14 with new selected contractor at no cost to the City. Bathrooms will not be usable this year; they will be open for the spring. Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission would like estimated completion dates for ongoing projects in the parks from the Engineering Department.
- **Riverbank Park** – Mr. Murray attended the Board of Representatives, Parks & Recreation Committee meeting on Tuesday, September 16, 2014, for the resolution mandating that Newman Mills/River Walk Park is designated a parking permit park. A Public Hearing will be taking place in the month of October for approval.
- Courtland Avenue stone wall that was damaged by accident has been cleaned up in house and will await the State project for widening the road. Eyesore has been removed, picture was provided.
- **Cubeta Stadium** – On September 12th Repucom Corporation had 35 volunteers at the stadium painting dugouts, stadium walls, concessions and railings. City provided all the materials.
- Mr. Murray provided the Commission with a copy of the 2013 – 2014 Annual Report for the Maintenance Division.
- **Kane Avenue Update** – Mr. Murray organized a meeting with Mr. Ottaviano, Stamford American Little League and a few neighbors. Mr. Ottaviano agreed to the trial period for the end of the month in regards to having the cage still up. Mr. Ottaviano was happy that Stamford American Little League plans to extend the backstop fence for preventing foul balls going into his property and also sound barriers by the batting cage; it will need the Commission's approval. Stamford American Little League agreed to continue to use the wooden bats and having the L Screen locked for their use only, which has been working. Signage will be installed to prevent commercial vehicles from parking overnight, Mr. Murray will discuss with Director Orgera.

- **Cummings Park** – Two gates will be installed this week for Soundview Avenue entrance, gates will be locked daily at 9:00 p.m.
- **Seasonal Departure Dates** – First wave departure September 15, 2014, second wave departure September 30, 2014. Will keep 4 to 5 seasonals on staff to assist with fall cleanups.

Erin McKenna – Update on the Renovation of the Parking Lot at Mianus River Park.

- Work is about to start to renovate the Mianus River Park lower parking lot.
- The parking lot is currently a dirt parking lot. The parking lot will be paved with permeable pavers and will be using other techniques to filter the stormwater before it ends up in a catch basin and goes into the river.
- Contractor has been selected and work will start probably next month. There will be a pre-construction meeting on Friday. After this project the City will re-pave Marriebrook Lane.
- Mr. Andreana expressed the Commission's disappointment with the way the Engineering Department has handled work in the parks and how long it takes for the work to be completed.

Erin McKenna – Update on the Cummings/West Beach Planning Process.

- Ms. McKenna stated that they are still in the process of gathering input from stakeholders.
- There was an initial Public Meeting on June 17th dedicated to getting input from the public, subsequently had three meetings with the designer on July 15th, July 23rd and September 4th. These meetings were designed to give small groups and individuals the opportunity to talk to the designer about their particular issues.
- There is a project website on which there is a link to their Project Survey, which is in English and Spanish. They have received 400 responses to date.
- The designers are in the process of consolidating their notes and considering options, they have received a lot of detailed input from the spectrum of stakeholders.
- They are in the process of figuring out when to have the next Public Meeting; they have a couple of dates in mind for mid-October.
- There will be a Beach Resilience Planning Study done by one of the sub-contractors.
- Ms. Ruijter stated that she was disappointed that the Public Hearing was held during the summer when a lot of the families are out of town and also stated that none of

the neighborhoods knew about the Public Hearing or participated. As a Commissioner, Ms. Ruijter would like to make sure the City reaches out to all of the stakeholders.

- Ms. Ruijter stated that she feels that there is a great opportunity to connect Czescik to Cummings.
- Ms. Ruijter feels that the Survey was poorly designed, the questions were poorly phrased. Ms. McKenna stated that the designer feels that they have had a big response from the Survey and is providing input that is useful for them.

Mrs. Cooper arrived at 7:16 p.m.

- At the next Public Hearing they will present three to four concept plan options for the purpose of discussion. There's still plenty of time to provide input.
- Mr. Andreana stated that the conceptual design should be presented to the Commission before it's presented to the public. After the final conceptual design, the Commission will approve the final conceptual design or give their input and probably in conjunction with Board of Representatives Parks & Recreation Committee for a Public Hearing. Ms. McKenna stated that she has not done this before. They are doing a concept plan, what the elements will be in the park and also a cost estimate, so you have the basis for doing the next steps which include doing final construction drawings that is when the Board of Representatives get involved, during the construction and budgeting phase.

Erin McKenna – Permission to Post a Sign on the Kiosk at the Mianus River Park Urban Oasis.

- Mr. Andreana stated that there is no need for approval to post a sign on the kiosk at the Mianus River Urban Oasis.

Consent Agenda

No Consent Agenda.

Special Events

Michelle Rampen – Huntington's – Use of Cove Island Park for Walk – Sunday, October 12, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 2:00 p.m. – 75 Adults and 25 Children.

- Should have paperwork for 501 (c) (3) by the time of the walk.
- This event should be added to the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Tiffany Sanders and Rich Baber – RF Youth Boxing Inc. – Use of Kosciuszko Park for Stamford Stand Up for Youth 5K on Saturday, October 25, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 7:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends 2:00 p.m. – 250 Adults and 50 Children.

- Needs TAC approval for use of streets.
- Mr. Murray stated that the design study for the stone pathway on the island is complete and scheduled to bid in October, right now we have not been authorizing any walks to use the loop. Walkers will have to cut across in front of the pavilion behind the playground.
- Donations go to expenses and the Youth Boxing Program.
- No commercial advertising is allowed in the park.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Tournaments

Enzo Iorfino and Al D'Elia – Use of Scalzi Park for Bocce Tournament on Saturday, October 11, 2014 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

- Bathrooms will be closed; there will be portable toilets available.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Winston

Unanimously Approved

Old Business

Representative Kieran Ryan and Pat Liotta – Friends of Cummings Park & West Beach – Discussion Regarding Cummings Park Issues.

- Representative Kieran Ryan stated that he has been contacted during the design process for Cummings Park and West Beach by a group called The Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach. Representative Ryan hopes that someday there will be an approved conceptual plan and it gets funded, this way the existing issues will be taken care of. In the meantime there are neighbors and users of the park who are suffering from the quality of use issues every day today. In discussion with Director Orgera, he suggested that the Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach come in front of the Parks & Recreation Commission with their concerns.

- Lisa Coggins stated that a lot of the residents and the people that are involved in the Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach are concerned with the increase of negative activity in the park and the lack of safety. Residents feel that there has been a reduction in park's patrol. There are only three Parks Police to cover 600 acres over 52 parks in the 38 square miles of the City of Stamford.
- There was a recent shooting in the park, near the tennis courts area on August 30th. The media made a comment that the investigators were not sure of what happened due to the lack of cameras in the area and the unreliability of witnesses.
- Ms. Coggins suggested that the entire park should be closed at 9:00 p.m.
- Mrs. Cooper feels that all the parks should close at the same time, Ms. Ruijter agreed. Some discussion took place pointing out that not all the parks are the same and some of them have athletic activities that end later than 9:00 p.m.
- Ms. Ruijter is concerned that with the gate going up on Soundview Avenue and changing the closing time of the park. Ms. Ruijter feels that we are doing quite a few experiments at once and we won't know what is causing what. Ms. Ruijter would rather try one thing at the time, observe what the result is, talk to the enforcement and then decide if other action is needed.
- Mr. Murray will take care of putting up signs stating new park closing time. Signs can take a couple of weeks to be made.
- If there is a permitted softball game still going on after park is closed, they will have time to finish the game.
- Park closing time change has to be approved by the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Board of Representatives.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve the change of closing hours of Cummings Park to 10:00 p.m. at the earliest possible date after approval by the Board of Representatives Parks & Recreation Committee.

Seconded by Mr. Winston

YES: Mrs. Cooper
 YES: Mr. Winston
 YES: Mr. Andreana
 NO: Ms. Ruijte

- Ms. Coggins stated that the neighbors are concerned with parking area off of Soundview Avenue, in front of what used to be a pond. It is an environmental disaster; the area is overgrown and polluted. Neighbors believe that a lot of the negative activity is happening at night, there are contracting vans that back up and dump there. Ms. Coggins asked that jersey barriers be installed to preserve and expand the natural environment and resources that that park area can provide to the community. Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Murray and Mr. Winston to take a look at the situation and come up with some potential solutions, not jersey barriers.

To prevent dumping, Mr. Winston suggested that bollards be used temporarily.

- Representative Ryan stated that Director Orgera had a program to monitor various sites that have recurrent littering and this area off of Soundview Avenue is one of them, maybe a camera could be installed there.
- Mrs. Cooper recommended that the Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach think of some ideas, as well as Mr. Winston and Mr. Murray, then get together to discuss. Mr. Murray stated that the Master Plan will include this area, and we need to come with short term ideas.
- Friends of Cummings Park and West Beach will attend the October meeting to discuss the ideas they come up with.

Discussion Regarding Park Regulations.

- Ms. Albano stated that Burt Rosenberg from the Law Department told her that there is a language under Section 175 that gives the staff the flexibility to create quality of life rules without having to go back to the Boards every time they need to make a safety rule.
- Ms. Albano will keep the communication open and let the Commission know of any new rules.
- Mr. Andreana asked Ms. Albano to indicate what the new rules are at the October meeting.
- Mr. Andreana asked Ms. Albano to put together a list of the beach towns and how much they charge for their permits. Ms. Albano stated she had this done already and she would forward.

New Business

Representative Gloria DePina – Use of Jackie Robinson Park for Special Events.

- Representative Gloria DePina stated that she has an issue with Jackie Robinson Park. There are two events that take place in the park every year, they have amplified music and go on until 11:00 p.m. Representative DePina has called the Police several times; she has received several complaints from her constituents because the music was too loud. The Permit did not state No Amplified Music allowed.
- Representative DePina is not against the Revival taking place at Jackie Robinson Park, but she does not think the residents should have to endure the noise all night long.
- Mr. Andreana proposed that when they come back next year the Commission can do either of two things, refuse their request because they did not follow the rules or

tell them they have one more chance to follow the rules.

- Mr. Andreana stated that the City law says that if they are posing a nuisance after 10:00 p.m. with extra loud noise, the Police can tell them to quiet it.
- Representative DePina stated that if they are allowed to have the revival next year, they should have it without the music or have it at the Yerwood Center.
- Representative DePina is OK with the Commission giving them one more chance, but let them know if someone calls complaining about the loud music, the Police will shut them down. Mr. Andreana reinforced that if this happens again, they will not get another Permit.

Carla Bick, Brian Kriftcher & Lenwood Latta – Discussion Regarding Stamford Peace Basketball.

- Ms. Albano stated that she originally received an e-mail from Carla Bick asking if the Recreation Department could link Stamford Peace Basketball's website to the Stamford Rec website, where we have a link listing all of the sanctioned youth groups that use our fields. Recreation Department does not permit school gyms, so the only link we have for Basketball are the sanctioned, traditional, long time youth organizations such as Stamford Youth Basketball and the Young Timers Girls Basketball which are the community based programs. Ms. Albano explained to Ms. Bick that we just don't put links on the Stamford Rec website from independent organizations that are not sanctioned.
- Mr. Brian Kriftcher explained his program to the Commission, also stating that they are a non-profit program. Stamford Peace serves about 700 kids and is an AAU affiliated program.
- Mr. Andreana stated that Stamford Youth Basketball is a legacy program and that at one point was subsidized by the City, which is why they are endorsed. The Commission does not endorse or sanction other independent programs.

Mr. Winston made a motion to deny request to link Stamford Peace Basketball to the Recreation website.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Correspondence

No Correspondence.

Mrs. Cooper feels that the Commission has a great opportunity to do great things and suggested that they need to come up with a strategy. The Commission should revisit the following:

- Permitting process

- Park & Recreation Fees
- The beaches
- Recreation Services revolving program revenue fund
- Fields
- Budget
- Figure out a way to have the maintenance charge to go back to Parks & Recreation not the General Fund
- Parks Maintenance
- Field usage

Mr. Winston suggested having a couple of Special Meetings.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 15, 2014.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Winston

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Margarita Arenas
September 23, 2014