

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the October 16, 2013 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on October 16, 2013, 5th Floor BOE Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Joe Andreana
David Winston
Althea Brown
Mike Macari

Staff: Laurie Albano
Kevin Murray
Ernie Orgera

Guests: Brian D'Antoni – Playground Donation
Gina Aiello – Playground Donation
Ernie Orgera – Playground Donation
Erin McKenna – Mianus River Park and Cove Park
Jeff Yates – Ecological Restoration Plan Mianus River Park
Dianne Selditch – SoundWaters
Charles Pia – Little League
John Trattaroli – SALL
Adam Effren – SALL
John Gonzalez – SALL
Jeff Goodman – SALL
Tricia Lepore – SALL
Michele Corrow – SALL
Pete Karukas – SALL
Rob Glander – SALL

Jeff Wirz – SALL

Nick Montagnese – SALL

Larry Miller – SALL

Butch LaMotta – SALL

Perry Pierce – SALL

John Saba – SALL

David McHale – SALL

John Hoch – SALL

Scott Brown – SALL

Jackie Dudek – SALL

John Tromba – SALL

Mark Otis – SALL

Jason Benner – SALL

Lynne R. – SALL

Matt Shostic – SALL

Jake Morton – SALL

Dan Dwyer – SALL

Speakers:

Dominick Lacerenza – SALL

Tom Green – SALL

John Linn – SALL

Bob Katchko – SALL

Jen Salvatore – SALL

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Joe Andreana.

Tim McGuinness did not attend the meeting. Ms. Brown is running a few minutes late.

Mr. Macari made a motion to table the approval of the September 18, 2013 Minutes since there is not a quorum of the members that were present at that meeting.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Mr. Macari made a motion to move Perry Pierce to last item on the Agenda since he is going to be late to the meeting.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Mr. Winston made a motion to move Erin McKenna up on the Agenda after Staff Reports.

Seconded by Mr. Macari Unanimously Approved

Ms. Brown arrived at 6:33 p.m.

Mr. Macari made a motion to untable the motion to table the approval of the September 18, 2013 Minutes.

Seconded by Mr. Winston Unanimously Approved

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve the September 18, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Seconded by Althea Brown
YES: Mr. Winston
YES: Ms. Brown
YES: Mr. Andreana
ABSTAINED: Mr. Macari

Staff Reports

Ernie Orgera and Gina Aiello – Sandy Ground Where Angels Play – Playground Donation.

- Director Orgera stated that a couple of weeks ago he was presented with a very exciting program by Gina Aiello. Director Orgera thinks that it is a fabulous idea for the City of Stamford to accept this program.
- Ms. Gina Aiello explained that the project consist of building 26 playgrounds to memorialize the lives of the kids and teachers who were killed in Newtown in areas where Storm Sandy had affected. Each playground represents one of the victims and gives you an idea of their personality and passions. These are special

playgrounds that give people hope and bring communities together and provide a safe place for kids to play and help the victim families heal.

- Where Angels Play would like to donate a playground to Stamford, then they will fund raise so they could in return give a playground to another community. The next playground will be in Norwalk between November 6th and 10th at Oyster Shell Park.
- Mr. Brian D'Antoni presented a video regarding the playgrounds.
- Mr. D'Antoni stated that they would like to have all of the playgrounds built by Spring 2014.
- Mr. Winston suggested that Cummings Park will be an ideal spot for the playground. Mr. Andreana stated that with the Master Plan for Cummings Park anytime within the next year will not be feasible to install a new playground. Director Orgera suggested West Beach, since it is the only beach park that does not have a playground; Mr. Andreana agreed that West Beach will be a good option. The playground will go on the beach area.
- If the playground is constructed on a beach, it will take about three days. If it is constructed on land/cement it takes about another four days.
- There will be no cost to the City. The City will have to accept the playground as a gift. Where Angels Play will donate money for the upkeep and maintenance of the playground, but the insurance will go under the Parks & Recreation Department.
- To accept the Playground as a gift, Director Orgera will have to go through the Board of Finance, Board of Representatives and Planning.
- The playground will be in memory of Jesse Lewis.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve the Where Angels Play playground donation to go on the beach at West Beach and trusts Director Orgera to put it into the planning phases as necessary.

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimously Approved

Mr. Andreana congratulated Kevin Murray for being the new Parks & Facilities Manager.

Laurie Albano – Recreation

- Fall registration in Recreation is just about to be over; we are a little bit down over last fall. There is about \$100,000 in fall revenue.
- Recreation is going to start a Junior Life Guard Program this winter.
- Ms. Albano has been involved with the Mayor's Children's Parade, which will take place this Saturday at Cove Island Park from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

- Scofieldtown Park Public Hearing went well; they got a good representative sample of people's different interests in the park. There will be two more Public Hearings, there is also a survey that has been established and was sent to a lot of stakeholders. There is also a Facebook page.

Some of the ideas that came out varied from an Ice Skating Rink to a Basketball Court, a Weather Station, History Walk, Walking Paths, Dog Park, Bird Sanctuary, etc. Some people didn't want to disturb the character of the neighborhood.

- The funding for the Architect for the Cummings Park and West Beach Master Plan has been appropriated and it's waiting on Board of Representatives approval.
- Work on Barrett Park will start soon. There is a possibility that some of the paving will have to be done in the spring.
- Ms. Albano received a punch list both for the Cove Playground area and Scalzi Park. Engineering is working with the contractor to finish the job.
- Kosciuszko Park trail funding was approved. Work will begin as soon as Engineering goes out to bid.
- There will be a Capital Budget Meeting with Planning on November 12, 2013. A Phase IV for Scalzi to expand some of the parking has been added.
- Ms. Albano stated that Rick Redniss thanked the Commission for their help with the Boys and Girls Project. Mr. Redniss informed Ms. Albano that they made it through all of the other Board and Commissions unanimously. Because some of the soil is contaminated, they may qualify for some Brownfield funds.

Kevin Murray – Parks and Facilities Manager

- Mr. Murray is in the process of inputting all Capital Projects.
- The Operations team will be at Cove Island this weekend to assist with the Mayor's Children's Parade.
- Currently doing renovations on Softball fields and Baseball fields, prepping for the winter and spring.
- Park closings started on October 1st, port-a-johns will be put out.
- One of Mr. Murray's big projects coming up are the 16 playgrounds we currently have, there is a lot of work that needs to be done on those playgrounds.
- Mr. Murray will be working on filling the vacant positions we currently have. Interviews for a Marina Supervisor will start next week, there are 31 applications. After the Marina Supervisor is hired, Mr. Murray will be looking at hiring a City Plumber.

- Mr. Andreana stated that it is already October and all the signs and advertising at ball fields need to come down.
- Mr. Murray stated that his new title is Parks and Facilities Manager.

Erin McKenna – Approval of the Ecological Restoration Plan for Mianus River Park.

- Ms. Erin McKenna stated that Trout Unlimited and the City of Stamford partnered on getting an Ecological Restoration Plan done for Mianus River Park.
- Mr. Jeff Yates, Board member of the Friends of Mianus River Park, explained to the Commission that they have been working over the last two years particularly on finding a way to work on restoring this park in a way that enhances the experience for all of the users, but also and more importantly to maintain the natural space and the ecological diversity.
- Mr. Yates gave the Commission a copy of the Lower Mianus River Park Ecological Master Plan.
- The work will be done on pieces at a time; they are not proposing to shut down the park at any time.
- The Plan is primarily driven by restoring and rebuilding the infrastructure that is in place now and then starting to rehabilitate the riverbanks and the vegetation.
- Trout Unlimited is a conservation group; they have been over the years involved in significant youth information opportunities. They run programs at Mianus River Park, taking students to do bug studies and to learn more about the ecology of the river and the Mianus watershed, but more than anything they do conservation work.
- The plan includes taking some of the existing main trails that are starting to get degraded and helping rebuild them, making them better. Building them so that they can actually hold up to the foot traffic they were designed for back in the 70's as well as reducing some of the number of trails, but increasing the number of accesses to the river. They will also look at options such as elevated boardwalks and things of that nature.
- This plan proposes a long-term, collaborative approach to restoring the ecological health of the park, improving the park's infrastructure and creating a newly restored park that can be cherished for generations to come.
- The goals are:
 - To enhance the park experience for all users
 - To protect the fragile ecology of the park's woods, wetlands and river
 - To build a sustainable system of trails
 - To increase and encourage stewardship by all users

- Their primary concern is fixing the trail system so they can also then address the river and the ecology.
- Ms. McKenna stated that this is a continuation of the Management Plan that was done in 2006.
- The vast majority of the work will be privately funded.
- The same ecological restoration expert is also doing a low impact design for the parking lot at Mianus River Park. Mr. Andreana stated that the design of the parking lot needs to come to the Parks and Recreation Commission for approval.
- Mr. Andreana stated that any specific projects other than the maintaining of the paths need to come in front of the Commission for approval.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve conceptual plan for continuation of work of Friends of Mianus River Park.

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimously Approved

Erin McKenna – Approval of the Master Planting Plan for Cove Island Park.

- Ms. McKenna stated that there are a lot of many different groups that want to do plantings at Cove Island Park; it was decided to do a Master Planting Plan to guide those efforts.
- A group of stakeholders got together that include Parks Department staff, SoundWaters, Terry Connors Ice Rink, The Cove Island Park Conservancy and the Solid Waste Department.
- The Master Planting Plan also includes benches, trash, recycling and garbage corrals for the totters.
- Another element of this plan is dunes along the east beach to protect the inner part of the park.
- The plan is not completed yet, when it is, Ms. McKenna will come back to the Commission for approval. In the meantime while it's Capital Budget Season they would like to make a Capital Budget request to install the dunes and also do the program for the benches, garbage and recycling.
- Ms. McKenna wanted to notify the Commission of what they want to do and to see if the Commission approves of the concept of creating the dunes.
- Mr. Andreana wanted to make sure that this is consistent with FEMA and Federal Government requirements.

Mr. Macari made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Ms. Brown

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

Back to Regular Agenda.

Consent Agenda

Barbara Preli – Rogers International School – Use of Cove Island Park for 10th Annual Turtle Trot – Friday, May 16, 2014 – Rain Date Thursday, May 22, 2014 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 9:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 2:00 p.m. – 100 Adults and 825 Children.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Macari

Unanimously Approved

Special Events

No Special Events.

Old Business

Dianne Selditch – Update on Plans for the SoundWaters Boatshed.

- Ms. Selditch stated that the most immediate plan is the shed. The shed is an important structure for SoundWaters, they use it as storage, but more important, the shed is part of the history of the Cove. The shed has been there for a very long time, maybe as early as when the mill was there. If there are any thoughts of demolishing the shed, SoundWaters feels that this is the wrong direction to go, SoundWaters' plans are to continue with the shed.
- SoundWaters has hired an architect, surveyors and engineers to determine what they can and cannot do. The most important is the FEMA regulations and they cannot do anything without honoring FEMA. FEMA has a couple of major restrictions for anything that is happening on the coast, mainly they have the mean high water mark (BFE) and the structures have to be at least 15 ft. above that, down there it's probably 10 ft. above where it is right now.
- SoundWaters has adjusted their design to be able to meet the FEMA requirements and still protect the historical integrity of the shed. They will be using materials that will break away. FEMA requires walls that look like blinds so that if a storm surge comes the walls would just kind of flat. SoundWaters will then take on the responsibility, if that happened, that they may have to re-build the slats. The frame of the shed and the roof of the shed which will be above 15 ft. will stay. SoundWaters will be moving with this project rather quickly and will keep the

Commission informed.

- Ms. Selditch provided to the Commission a copy of the preliminary sketches for SoundWaters Shed Repair Project.
- Commission would like Ms. Selditch to come back when she has the plans for the project.
- Long term, SoundWaters needs an automatic emergency generator. SoundWaters is looking to have a generator platform behind the building, close to the building.
- SoundWaters would also like to put in a dock into Holly Pond.

Dianne Selditch – Update on Raising the SoundWaters Building and Other Storage Options.

- SoundWaters is considering lifting and raising the building as explained to the Commission at the September 18th Commission meeting. An Engineer has been hired to look at the feasibility of actually doing it, how high it would have to be, the cost and how long SoundWaters will have to be out of commission in terms of being able to operate. SoundWaters is seeking funding to raise the money for this project.
- Ms. Selditch will come back to the Commission once she has more information.

Robert Katchko – Stamford American Little League – Parent Discussion.

- Parents from Stamford American Little League attended the Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting tonight to express their concerns and voice their opinion. The main issue is that the constituency wants to have an election for a new Board which is overdue.

Speakers:

Robert Katchko

- Mr. Katchko explained that Little League is supposed to have elections every year, but their Board voted to have them every two years, so now that two years are up. Unfortunately, now that is time for an election, a merger was voted without the constituency approval. The Merger was voted before the elections were due, basically cancelling the elections out and that Board becomes the North Stamford Board and their President who was the former President becomes Vice President of North Stamford, if this merger were to go through.
- American Little League voted on a merger without the knowledge of the constituency. Mr. Katchko reinstated that the constituency wants an election and that they do not want to merge with North Stamford. Mr. Katchko stated that the constituency wants elections, new Board, fair elections supervised by Little League and supervised by someone from the Commission. What the parents want is to rebuild, repair and restore a league that is in decline that was once one of the best and oldest Little

Leagues in the City of Stamford.

Mr. Katchko stated that Little League itself has turned their back at Stamford American.

- Mr. Katchko stated that American Little League has By-Laws which prevent any of the parents present to run for the Board.
- If there is a merger with North Stamford, the Jewish kids that cannot drive on Saturdays are not going to be able to walk to Chestnut Hill Park.
- Mr. Katchko stated that as tax payers they demand that the City gets involved and either force an election or give the children of Stamford another alternative for Baseball such as Cal Ripken. If they are going to do Cal Ripken, they would like the Vine Road field to be the Cal Ripken Home Field.
- Chris Brecciano who was designated as the liaison to the City stated that the May and June Town Hall meetings were cancelled; there was a meeting on September 30, 2013. The notice that was sent out indicated that they would not be able to have an open discussion at the meeting, but asked them to e-mail any questions, comments or concerns and they would address those as a Board at the meeting. There were no e-mails sent and only four or five people attended the meeting. Mr. Katchko stated that the reason why people did not attend the meeting was because the e-mail that was sent clearly stated that it was not an open forum and no questions were allowed. Mr. Katchko received an e-mail about an hour before the meeting stating that the meeting was going to have an open forum.

Dominick Lacerenza

- Mr. Lacerenza represents the 1951 Little League Team. In 1976 they had the 25th Anniversary game, Bruno Giordano who was the head of Board of Recreation at the time and the Mayor brought a Proclamation. At that time they were trying to consolidate leagues. The Proclamation read that the name Stamford American Little League will continue no matter how many they dissolved, because it was the original league, this would be a name that would be continued. Mr. Lacerenza is trying to locate this Proclamation and stated that they do not want the name of Stamford American to ever change.

Tom Green

- Mr. Green stated that everyone would like to have a vote for a new Board.

John Linn

- Mr. Linn is a concerned parent and would like to have a vote for a new Board.
- Mr. Andreana wanted to know if the Stamford American Little League has been providing the service to the four to twelve year old children in its district and has it been a fair service? Service has been provided, but parents are upset because the

younger kids are not allowed to play at the Vine Road field, they feel that the field is underused.

Ms. Albano stated that one of the reasons why the younger kids play at Kane Avenue is because the Kane Avenue residents requested that the younger kids play there.

Chris Brecciano

- Mr. Brecciano, Stamford American Little League Board member stated that he does not have a kid on the team, which shows his commitment and passion to help his community and be involved with the sport that he grew up loving with his family, Baseball.
- Mr. Brecciano agrees that the Board is not perfect, but they are trying to do the best they can.
- In addition to the little kids not playing at Vine Road, the Board was told by the Parks Department that the Vine Road field needed to rest. The Board has never heard this complaint at any of their Board meetings.
- Mr. Brecciano stated that there will be an election. If a merger is to take place for the survival of Little League Baseball in the City, if a new Board comes in, it will take them two years to get up to speed and by then the league will be decimate.
- Mr. Murray explained the reason why the City wanted the Vine Road field to rest. The City's intentions was to have every field playable by April 15th, this was not possible due to the position the City was put in when the renovations for the dugouts were delayed and they had to change the scope of the job. In addition, a decision was made to put new sod down, Mr. Murray is not sure who made the decision, and when inspected by Phil D'Amico, Land Scape Specialist, he decided that in order to have the field intact, usable and safe it would need a rest given the sod had not set yet.
- In regards to the trees at Vine Road, Mr. Andreana stated that planting season is until November 10th and the trees need to be planted by then. If the trees are not planted, Mr. Andreana will go and have the people that wanted to put an arrest warrant for the Board out, and get that arrest warrant. The arrest warrant for destroying public property was not issued before because the Commission and Commissioner Macari stood up for the league since the league stated that they were going to plant the trees.
- Mr. Katchko stated that he will take care of the trees himself.
- Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission's purview does not allow them to say what you can and what you can't do within your league. What the Commission has authority over is any mergers that take place. The Commission does not have authority to say that you have to have an election, but the Commission does have authority to say that between the District Administrator, the Regional and the

National Williamsport to straighten out the situation, because the Commission does have the authority not to sanction Little League in the City of Stamford and bring another supplier in for the four to twelve year old age group.

- Mr. Brecciano does not think it's fair that Stamford American Little League has been singled out. The Commission should also scrutinize every other Little Leagues in town and ask them when their most recent election was and if they have submitted their By-Laws. Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission only received one anonymous letter regarding Federal Little League and that is why it was discounted. Stamford American Little League has had many complaints by residents.
- Mr. Brecciano stated that as of tonight's meeting he resigns from the Stamford American Little League Board, but will relate message to the Board.
- Mr. Andreana stated that as of now there is not a merger between any of the leagues in Stamford other than Federal Lione. Mr. Brecciano stated that only a proposal has been submitted.
- Mrs. Jen Salvatore stated that she believed that when there was an issue with Stamford American Little League, parents needed to contact Perry Pierce, District 1 not the Commission. Mrs. Salvatore feels that people are losing sight of Baseball.

Mr. Andreana stated that Stamford American Little League opened the door to all of this back in April, not the Commission. Stamford American Little League told the Commission that they were going to address the issues internally. Evidently the issues were not addressed, because of the request to come before the Commission and the turn out tonight. The Commission is not acting on anything, the Commission will not tell the Board that they will have elections or who to put on the Board. Stamford American Little League has to address these issues not the Parks and Recreation Commission.

- Mr. Katchko stated that American Little League needs more communication and more transparency.
- Mrs. Jackie Dudek agreed that constituency does not get any information from Stamford American Little League Board and that there is a lack of communication.
- Parents expressed their disagreement and frustration that Stamford American Little League did not discuss the merger with the constituency.

Perry Pierce District I Little League – Discussion of Boundaries.

- Mr. Pierce stated that he does not speak for the leagues, the leagues speak for themselves. They are independent entities and other than being a representative to them, to the Regional Office and the National Office, Mr. Pierce essentially acts as a liaison between Bristol, Williamsport, etc.
- From a boundaries prospective, District I does not mandate where boundaries exist, as of 2007 all boundaries have been frozen per Little League rules. Leagues have

the option to discuss moving lines or combining Charters, which is the case of Stamford National. Last year Stamford Federal and Stamford National Lione merged and formed Stamford National, they did so and remain within the context of their existing boundaries. Mr. Pierce does not have authority to mandate what each independent Charter does, and he does not have the ability to mandate what mergers do or do not take place. The Regional Office and Little League International only empower Mr. Pierce with the ability to gather information and provide it to them from a local prospective when an issue arises or when Charter discuss merger, or if there is an issue that is causing a question as to whether procedures and guidelines have been followed. Mr. Pierce's role strictly as an information gatherer and to bring that information up. Mr. Pierce's only other role is to run tournaments in the post season and the summer.

- The boundaries of Charters, if people would like to move them, it's a conversation that happens between the leagues; Mr. Pierce helps facilitate some of those discussions. The size of the league is something that does impact potentially services down the line.
- Mr. Pierce stated that he had fielded numerous requests, questions, comments, allegations. Mr. Pierce and the Regional Office have been in almost daily discussions by e-mail and phone regarding the points escalated by some of the people in this room tonight and as well as the ongoing discussions between the Presidents within Stamford. The allegations have been discussed; Mr. Pierce brought the information to the Regional Staff and Mr. Pierce has provided answers back. It is not Mr. Pierce's role to make the decision whether or not the issue is a violation.
- Mr. Andreana suggested that Stamford Little League comes up with a proposal for the future, for the next 20 years that everyone can live with.
- Mr. Pierce stated that the leagues and he need to keep working together to figure out what the right ultimate solution is.
- Mr. Macari stated that the better strategy is to take a long term look at Little League Baseball in Stamford, one league with multiple divisions or two leagues geographically aligned. A long term view that puts in place something that makes sense today and ten years from now has to be the sole objective we have. Anything that is going to work temporarily for one league or two leagues that are going to leave another league or two in danger is not a good plan. Mr. Pierce agreed with Mr. Macari, this is the first of what is going to be a couple of steps, the merger that has been proposed that is in front of the Charter Committee now, which they have not ruled on is the first of a few steps.
- Mr. Andreana stated that Mr. Pierce should let Bristol know about the issue in Stamford with Little League Baseball and to address the issue. Mr. Pierce stated that Pat Holden, Assistant Regional Director was asked to be here this evening, but he had to attend the Massachusetts State Meeting tonight. Mr. Pierce will give him the feedback.

- Mr. Andreana stated that any addressing issues on Little League Baseball should be addressed with an e-mail to dactdistrict1@gmail.com and to Laurie Albano and to Commissioner McGuinness; do not send e-mails to David Winston, Mike Macari, Althea Brown or Joe Andreana they go to the Chairman. Any Commissioner that answers an e-mail that has not gone through the channels, is not speaking for the Commission, they are speaking individually on their own and do not reflect the opinion of this Commission.
- Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Pierce to give the Commission feedback at the November 2013 Commission Meeting whether in person or in writing of what Little League Regional has come up with.
- Mr. Andreana asked Mr. Murray to take care of the tree situation with Bob Katchko or Chris Brecciano. Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission appreciates the work Mr. Chris Brecciano has done.
- Mr. Pierce stated that is not his decision whether elections happen or not, per the By-Laws that are in place, Stamford American Little League has a two year term, it is not atypical for leagues when they merge to keep transitional Boards in place, but ultimately that is not a decision that Mr. Pierce is empowered to make nor speak on behalf of the Region.
- To help communication there should be more meetings and the By-Laws need to be posted on-line.

Correspondence

No Correspondence.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 20, 2013.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Winston

Seconded by Ms. Brown

The meeting adjourned at 10:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Margarita Arenas
October 21, 2013