

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the October 21, 2014 Special Meeting – 5:00 p.m.
REVISED

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on October 21, 2014, 10th Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center at 5:00 p.m.

In attendance were:

Administration: Ernie Orgera
Martin Levine

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

Staff: Erin McKenna
Laurie Albano
Kevin Murray
Lou Casolo

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:20 p.m. by Ernie Orgera, Director of Operations.

Director Orgera stated that the purpose of this meeting is to meet with the Parks & Recreation Commission and City Staff members who work in Stamford parks on maintenance, construction, Recreation Services and Planning to discuss opportunities for enhancing one another's work in pursuit of improving and maintaining City Parks.

Director Orgera read the section of the City Charter describing the responsibilities of the Parks & Recreation Commission:

Sec. C6-120-2. Powers and Duties of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Parks and Recreation Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Subject to the approval of the Mayor and except as may be otherwise determined by the Board of Representatives by Ordinance, to establish policies and procedures for providing public park facilities and public recreation programs for

the effective, balanced utilization of such areas, facilities and equipment for active and passive recreation.

2. To develop such plans as it deems necessary and useful for the preservation and expansion of natural resources and passive recreation areas in the City.
3. To make all rules and regulations for the use and conduct of all parks and all public recreation areas.

Erin McKenna – Master Plan for Cummings Park and West Beach.

Ms. McKenna stated that since the last time she attended the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting nothing has really changed with the Master Plan for Cummings Park and West Beach. Ms. McKenna explained that they are still doing public outreach, which has included a project survey, a project website, they also have had three days devoted to one on one interviews with people who wanted to sign up and talk to the lead designer. A Public Information meeting was held on June 17, 2014; as a result the lead designer has identified about nine areas of main concern from all the input that derived. The lead designer will present his ideas of each one of those components at the next public meeting. They will be looking at ideas for particular things, for example the roadway network or the beach boulevard or the marina. After a presentation and more public response to the choices presented for each one of the components, they will develop Concept Plans. The next Public Meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 28, 2014.

Director Orgera requested Ms. McKenna to ask Stantec to come and meet with the Commission to give them a briefing on what has transpired with the Master Plan for Cummings and West Beach already. Mrs. Cooper stated that is too late in the process to make changes and that the Commission can attend the meeting on October 28th instead.

Mr. Andreana explained that other towns have the public develop the ideas, and then those ideas come to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review. After the Parks and Recreation Commission reviews the ideas, they will then give the go ahead to the City to start moving ahead with the project. At that point the Commission should take a step back and leave the actual design and implementation to the professionals. Mr. Andreana feels that projects should come to the Commission as a Commission, not the Commission being part of the Public.

Mr. Winston stated that in the timeline of the planning of a park, he sees the Commission in two places of critical importance. One is in the very beginning and the second is after the public has given their input. Staff will meet with Stantec to let them know what they would like to incorporate in the design. Before Stantec starts work it will go back to the Parks and Recreation Commission and they will represent what they see as their best vision for the park as well. Ms. Ruijter agreed with Mr. Winston about coming in with a vision and a mission at ground level, the Commission is part of the

democratic process and represents the people. The Commission's role is also to make sure the process takes place in the right way.

Director Orgera praised the staff for doing an excellent job with the process, not only with Scofieldtown Park, but with the Master Plan for Cummings Park and West Beach as well. The Parks and Recreation Commission have taken a new role and will be part of the process from now on.

Lou Casolo stated that it would be helpful if the Commission's policies and procedures on park planning are established for staff to follow. Director Orgera suggested that staff provides the Commission with the City's process and methodology on park planning.

Director Orgera stated that at a previous meeting with the Commission it was established that the approvals of Consent Agenda items, Special Events and Tournaments will be handled by Laurie Albano, Kevin Murray, Frank Fedeli, Margarita Arenas and himself and not the Commission. The Commission will get copies of the approved or disapproved permits; the appeal process will be with the Commission. Starting with the November meeting the Commission will be using their time for planning policies for City of Stamford Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Andreana requested that the Commission be kept abreast on a monthly basis of work being done in the parks, progress of the work, estimated completion date, what the problems are, etc.

Mrs. Cooper recommended that before putting a Policy in place the Commission needs to look for advice from City staff.

Mr. Andreana asked Erin McKenna to provide the Commission with something in writing explaining what Land Use's responsibilities are relative to the parks.

Mr. Winston would like to be part of the meeting where the City selects the ideas that will be implemented by Stantec for the Cummings and West Beach Project. This is where in the process Mr. Winston believes the Commission should be. Mr. Winston would also like to attend the meetings that discuss what the next projects will be.

There was some discussion about the process of approval. Mr. Winston stated that the process of approval needs to be clarified for the Commission.

Director Orgera stated that City staff will alert the Commission about what projects they are working on.

Mr. Casolo suggested that Ms. McKenna advise the Commission of any new Park Projects in the radar. At the end of development process with stake holders and designers, the concept goes back to the Commission. Mr. Andreana suggested that a written report be given to Kevin Murray and he will present it to the Commission.

Ms. Albano suggested that an Engineering representative and Ms. McKenna attend the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings quarterly to give a progress report. Ms. Albano also stated that it would make good sense to assign a City Engineer to parks.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Margarita Arenas
October 24, 2014