

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the March 16, 2016 Regular Meeting**

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on March 16, 2016, 10th Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

In attendance were:

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

Staff: Kevin Murray

Guests: Leigh Shemitz – Young Mariners/SoundWaters

 Mike Bagley – Young Mariners/SoundWaters

 Alicia Sullivan – Fitness Zone – Cove Island

 Erin McKenna – Fitness Zone – Cove Island

 Graciela Hernandez – Lione Field – Soccer

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Joe Andreana, Chair.

Ms. Albano did not attend the meeting.

Review of the February 17, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Ruijter made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Winston

YES: Ms. Ruijter

YES: Ms. Brown

YES: Mr. Winston
YES: Mr. Andreana
ABSTAINED: Mrs. Cooper

Mrs. Cooper abstained because she did not attend the February 17, 2016 Commission Meeting.

Discussion

GIS – Relevance for the Parks & Recreation Commission.

- Ms. Ruijter stated that they have continued conversations with the Technology Department, Kevin Murray and the Chief of Staff and found a lot of receptiveness for the GIS idea.
- Mr. Winston gave a presentation to the Commission to discuss the Commission's role.
- Things the Commission needs to work on:
 - By-Laws
 - Create Policies such as Annual Review Approval
 - It's the job of the Commission to become part of the planning process not part of the problem
 - Get information through GIS Program
 - Integrate old Policies into Policy decision
 - Outstanding relationships with Parks & Recreation Committee, Operations and Friends of Groups
- Need to go over the Charter to develop such plans as it deems necessary.
- By-Laws should include an Annual Schedule to include:
 - Meetings
 - Parks Police November Public Meeting?
 - Determine "Short List" (list of priority parks to consider for future improvement)
 - Formation of Sub-Committees – Enforcement, Planning
 - Term & Election of Chairman
 - Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest
- Mission Statement still needs to be resolved
 - Increase in green space
 - Parks inherent component of the wellbeing of the City
 - Better access, better connectivity
 - Provide more/better spaces as demographic require

- Look forward 20 years out

➤ Ms. Ruijter's part of Open Space Plan (POP):

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.

➤ Enforcement

- P & R does continue to support Parks Police
- Does P & R advocate for additional Police?
- P & R input regarding Enforcement issues will come from Parks Police
- Safety Issues need to be recognized
- SPD input as necessary on specific park issues
- How do we measure success?

➤ Friends of Groups:

Identify:

1. 501 (c) 3
2. Elected Board
3. Mission Statement
4. Regular review of goals and accomplishments
5. Clear understanding of tasks
6. By-Laws on file
7. EIN# on file

- Mr. Andreana stated that Sports Organizations should not be part of Friends of Groups; they should be under a different heading.
- Friends Groups go under Kevin Murray's domain, the Sports Groups will go under Laurie Albano and the Recreation Department.
- Friends groups' projects are subject to approval of the Parks & Recreation Commission. They will also need to follow the guidelines of the Mission Statement of the Parks & Recreation Commission and Policies.
- A statement on project funding needs to be added. Friends Groups have to provide funding for their projects.
- Mr. Andreana stated the Board of Representatives Parks & Recreation Committee should not approve any funding if it has not been approved by Parks & Recreation Commission.

- Mrs. Cooper stated the Erin McKenna is very knowledgeable about the planning process and suggested that she be contacted with any questions we may have.
- So far all we have with respect to the Commission’s Policy Planning Statement is the following language:

“Based on the 1997 Parks Master Plan indication of a 1,000 acre* shortfall of open space; the Parks & Recreation Commission’s vision is to pursue the addition of green space in the City of Stamford.”

Note: 1,000 acre shortfall is probably outdated, this number should be reviewed.

- The Staff shall maintain a Short List of number of parks they are considering for development in the next Budget Season (Capital Projects). Mr. Murray stated that the Commission needs to be updated on what is bonded vs. what is not bonded; there is a good chance that a project is approved, it’s funded but it’s not bonded.

Special Events

No Special Events.

Friends Groups Presentation

Leigh Shemitz – Young Mariners – Presentation to the Commission.

- Young Mariners traditionally works with about 60 students for five weeks in the summer, the last week in June thru the end of July. They will be doing this again this summer, but they will extend the program to 60 additional students, some of the students will be in that same period of time and some will be in for an additional five weeks. They will be running the site from June 20th thru August 22nd.
- Together, SoundWaters and Young Mariners are committed to enriching the quality of the educational experience for the young people of Stamford, and the protection of Long Island Sound.
- Part of the merger agreement was to have four members of the Young Mariners Board join the SoundWaters Board.
- **2015 Accomplishments :**
 - **50% Increase in Summer STEM Academy (Stamford Students)**
Summer STEM Academy combines intensive study of math and reading with outdoor experiences over four consecutive weeks, offering practice and mastery in new skills for underserved students from Stamford Public Schools.

- **30% Increase in SoundWaters Sailing Fleet**
After-School Sailing (for all 6 Stamford middle schools) and Summer Camp sailing programs grew to 27 sailboats, introducing over 530 students children to science and sailing.
- **Over 28,000 Students Reached – A New Record**
Over one-third of these students are from underserved backgrounds. SoundWaters was once again the #1 choice of schools studying Long Island Sound.

➤ **2016 Priorities:**

- **Expand Learning Opportunities in Stamford Harbor**
Through site upgrades, new teaching materials, additional teaching staff, expanded schedule and the relocation of the Schooner SoundWaters, they will infuse the Harbor with learning and hands-on environmental activity for both the students and residents of our city.
- **Restore the Cove Island Site – Final Sandy Recovery**
In cooperation with the City of Stamford, they have acquired Federal Funds to raise the Coastal Center and restore the historic boat house that was damaged in Super Storm Sandy.
- **Create New Terrapin Exhibit**
Over the past year our rescued diamondback terrapin hatchlings have grown and flourished. They will now create a permanent habitat to house and display them to teach the science of this unique species.
- **Reach over 30,000 Students**
SoundWaters will reach this ambitious goal with the addition of five weeks of the Young Mariner STEM Academy and by conducting new educational programming at Boccuzzi Park.

➤ **Growth**

- 2015 Was a year of tremendous growth, reaching and teaching a record 28,000 students. With the Young Mariners merger, the stage is set for SoundWaters to break through to a new level in 2016.

- SoundWaters/Young Mariners protect Long Island Sound through education in partnership with the City of Stamford. This partnership includes many City agencies. The Department of Parks and Recreation plays a special role as the steward of the great spaces where their students learn, explore and develop as the next generation stewards.

Tournaments

No Tournaments.

Old Business

David Brown – Stamford National Little League – Final Approval for Dugout and Batting Cage at West Beach.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve plans from Stamford National Little League for Dugout and Batting Cage at West Beach pending receipt of stamped plans.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

New Business

Leigh Shemitz – Merging of Young Mariners into SoundWaters.

- Leigh Shemitz informed the Commission that Young Mariners merged with SoundWaters, it was official on January 29, 2016. SoundWaters will now be running the programs at Boccuzzi Park. They will be working in the park; they are also working a lot with the team at Waterside.

Leigh Shemitz – Placement of Trailer at Boccuzzi Park.

- Ms. Shemitz requested permission to temporarily add one more trailer to left side of the current trailers at Boccuzzi Park and also a tent canopy to create more teaching space. They will be able to serve as many more students and bring in more learning material. There is currently not enough teaching and gathering space. Their plan is to ultimately move out from trailers and build a building that serves the students and the neighborhood.
- Part of the plan is to replace the existing fence with a more esthetically pleasing one.
- Ms. Shemitz stated that they will be cleaning out the existing trailers to make them look better.
- Mr. Winston requested a copy of the plot plan that shows exactly the space that SoundWaters/Young Mariners is entitled to use.
- Mr. Andreana suggested placing the new trailer closer to the existing trailers. Ms. Shemitz explained that by having the trailer in the position requested and the tent in between, it will give them an outdoor classroom. In addition, the area (trailers and canopy) will be fenced in with an attractive fence. There will be a more solid fence on the neighbor's side, so they do not have to look at the trailers, and possibly on

the west side as well.

- Mr. Andreana stated that before the Commission approves the request, they would have to see all the details of the proposal, what kind of fence and what is going to look like. The fence needs to be professionally installed and approved by Engineering and the Building Department.
- The trailer will not be in the way of the walkway.
- Ms. Shemitz needs to submit prior to the April meeting the exact details of where the trailer is going to be, what the plans are for cleaning the existing trailers and everything else.

Mr. Winston made a motion to defer request to the April 2016 Commission Meeting pending more detailed information.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Walker Holmes – Adding Adult Fitness Equipment in the General Area of the Playground at Cove Island Park.

- Alicia Sullivan presented for Walker Holmes.
- The Trust for Public Land has a Fitness Zone Program that helps put durable outdoor gyms in existing parks.
- The Trust for Public Land has installed over 77 Fitness Zones in other cities.
- The Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation would like to fund a Fitness Zone for the City of Stamford at Cove Island Park. Originally the Fitness Zone was planned to be installed in the general area of the Playground but a better location was found at the green space between two walking paths adjacent to the Marina. Mr. Murray agrees that this would be the perfect location for the equipment to be placed.
- The Fitness Zone comes with a small stewardship fund (\$4,500) that helps pay for the additional inspection fee each year for five years. After the five years, it becomes the City's responsibility to have the equipment inspected. Mr. Murray stated that the City already has all the playgrounds inspected every year and that the Fitness Zone will be included going forth as of the fifth year.
- Mrs. Cooper asked Ms. Sullivan to get the information regarding what would the cost of the equipment and/or replacement would be. Mr. Murray stated that we have had very good success with the exercise equipment at Scalzi Park.
- Ms. Ruijter stated that even though she likes the idea, she does not believe that Cove Island is the right place for this equipment and suggested that the Fitness

Zone be placed in a neighborhood park that is not heavily used.

- Erin McKenna stated that if this Fitness Zone is successful, there might be the possibility of offering more. Mr. Andreana stated that this will be a Pilot Program.
- Gift needs to go to the Board of Representatives for approval.

Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the Fitness Zone, at the revised location, at Cove Island Park.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

YES: Ms. Brown
YES: Mrs. Cooper
YES: Mr. Andreana
NO: Ms. Ruijter
ABSTAINED: Mr. Winston

Moises Torres – Eagles of Stamford – Start New Soccer League – Use of Lione Park – Saturday, April 30, 2016 to Saturday, August 13, 2016 – 4:00 p.m. to Sunset.

- Graciela Hernandez presenting for Moises Torres.
- Mr. Andreana stated that the Eagles Stamford is a contractor with the City's Recreation Department and they have been very successful and very capable. Mr. Andreana understands that this is an expansion, not of the contracted part of it, but as a recreational league.
- Ms. Hernandez requested permission to use Lione Park for Soccer from Saturday, April 30, 2016 to Saturday, August 13, 2016 from 4:00 p.m. to sunset.
- Ms. Hernandez's brother, Moises Torres, runs Soccer Tournaments for their community. The tournaments are for adults 18 and older, including women.
- Mr. Murray relayed a message from Ms. Albano to the Commission in which Ms. Albano informs that the field is available at the requested time. It will not interfere with Cricket or the Central American Soccer League.
- Ms. Hernandez stated that they have been successfully using the DOMUS location for indoor soccer since 2010. References can be provided.
- Mr. Andreana stated that it can potentially be tried this year.
- Teams will be comprised of 75% Stamford residents.
- Fee needs to be discussed with Ms. Albano.

Ms. Ruijter made a motion to approve the use of Lione Park field by the Eagles of Stamford, mixed recreational league for one year, pending repercussion from the neighbors.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

YES: Ms. Brown
YES: Mrs. Cooper
YES: Mr. Andreana
YES: Ms. Ruijter
NO: Mr. Winston

Mr. Andreana:

- **Central American Soccer League:** Mr. Andreana reported to the Commission that last month a group of men came to the Commission regarding the Central American Soccer League and claiming a number of problems and issues. The Commission did not vote on anything at the time and deferred back to the league. Apparently the league came back with new officers and By-Laws. Mr. Daniel Rivas stated that Central American Soccer League is an ownership league and he is the owner. Mr. Rivas threaten to bring legal action to the various people involved, not the Commission. Mr. Rivas contacted the Mayor and the Office of Operations, Mr. Rivas is back into the business of running the Central American Soccer League.
- Mr. Rivas' Attorney has asked to be placed on the April 2016 Commission Agenda.
- **Rippowam Park:** Mr. Andreana is very upset with the condition of Rippowam Park. RMS Construction was given the opportunity to reimburse the City for the use of the park for staging area when they applied. The park is now under disrepair and they should be panelized.
- There has to be a mandated Planting Plan approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Mr. Winston made a motion to recommend a fine for RMS Construction of up to \$250 a day for the misuse of Rippowam Park.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Staff Reports

Kevin Murray – Parks.

- Maintenance Administration/Parks/Facilities/Marina/ Government Center/Leased Facilities/Beach Enforcement Budget Presentation to Mayor was today 3/16.
- **Operating Budget Presentations-** Board of Finance Monday, March 28th, Board of Representatives Tuesday, April 5th.

- **ADA Survey** – Team from the *Institute for Human Centered Design* will be visiting Scalzi Park, Cove Island, West Beach, Cummings Park and Terry Conners this week 3/14 to 3/19.
- **Park Seasonal Employees** – 6 Employees started on Monday 3/14 to assist with Athletic Field opening.
- Parks Department Hired Full-time Maintenance worker which started on 3/14.
- Costa Food Beach/TCR Concession Vendor Terminated - Bid waiver to be performed to assign new vendor for May 1st start date.
- St Patrick's Day Parade held on Saturday March 5th.
- Cubeta Stadium Light Tower repaired scheduled to be done next week.
- Lione Park Sports Lights Design Meeting – met with Engineering Department detailing scope that Shock Electric will be installing Musco Sport Lights – no startup date announced.
- Cove Island Point Project – Point to open this coming season as rocks will be repositioned and all hazardous areas will be leveled off – Operations Team from Highway Department and Parks Department will plan on having this open for the 2016 season – work will begin this week.
- Cove Island Bird Sanctuary – Annual Mowing has been completed.
- Beach Parking Contractor Laz Parking – Increasing hours for the 2016 season, which will give more flexibility of point of sales at our beach locations and presence.
- Grant Opportunities – Meeting with the Grants Department on the following areas- GIS Grants/Park Improvements/Tree Upgrades/Athletic Field Upgrades/Playground Upgrades.
- Czescik Park – Friends of Czescik Park had another volunteer clean-up of the estuary on Sunday 3/13 – 20 bags of debris was collected and removed.
- List of events approved by the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee at the March 9, 2016 meeting:

Consent Agenda

Eden Huang and Ronald Miller – City of Stamford Department of Health & Social Services – 16th Annual Family Day – Jackie Robinson Park – Saturday, May 21, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 5:00 p.m.

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Gloria Montoya

Unanimously Approved

Davette Stephens – Josh & Tayler Stephens Memorial Fund – J & T Fund Memorial Walk-a-Thon – Kosciuszko Park – Saturday, May 7, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 4:00 p.m.

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

Davette Stephens – J & T Memorial Fund – Use of Cummings 1 & 2 for Co-ed Tournament – Saturday, May 14, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

Davette Stephens – J & T Memorial Fund – Use of Cummings 1 & 2 for Men's Tournament – Saturday, July 16, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

Nikhil Jain and Sahul Sharma – Stamford Cricket Club – Charity Cricket Tournament at Lione Park – Saturday, June 4, 2016 and Sunday, June 5, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Laurie Albano made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

Unanimously Approved

Special Events

Maciej Mazurhiewicz – Bikes 4 Kids CT – First Annual Community Biking – Cove Island Park – Sunday, June 5, 2016 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 9:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 5:00 p.m. – 100 – 150 People Attending.

Laurie Albano made a motion to deny request.

Seconded by Gloria Montoya

Unanimously Approved

Patricia Feruil – Stamford Family YMCA – Y Without Walls – Latham Park – Zumba, Yoga Free to All Stamford Residents for 6 Weeks – Saturdays June 18, 25,

July 2, 9, 16, & 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 9:30 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 12:15 p.m.

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

Tournaments

Tracy Nichols – Trinity Catholic High School – Use of Cummings 4 & 5 for High School Boys Lacrosse Practices – Saturday, March 19, 2016 to Sunday, May 15, 2016 (Schedule Attached) – 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Gloria Montoya made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

Unanimously Approved

Correspondence

No Correspondence.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 20, 2016.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mrs. Cooper

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Margarita Arenas
March 22, 2016