

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING  
Minutes of the September 16, 2015 Regular Meeting**

**DRAFT**

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A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on September 16, 2015, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

**In attendance were:**

Commissioners: Joe Andreana  
Dave Winston  
Lyda Ruijter  
Beth Cooper

Staff: Laurie Albano  
Ken Smith, Terry Conners Ice Rink

Guests: Representative Eileen Heaphy – Dog Park  
Briew Adams – Dog Park  
Geri Murawski – Dog Park  
Awa Aubrei – Dog Park  
Assist. Chief Jim Matheny – Blue Lights for Parks  
Carolyn Hanna – Health Fair  
Frank Bevilacaun – Health Fair  
Jeff Goodman – Kane Avenue Batting Cage  
Gavin Daly – Kane Avenue Batting Cage  
Diane Selditch – SoundWaters Presentation  
Peter Hansen – Sanctioning of Stamford Lacrosse Assoc.

**Call to Order**

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

Ms. Brown and Mr. Murray did not attend the meeting.

**Review of the August 19, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.**

- Ms. Ruijter requested that a typo be corrected at the bottom of page 3; the word should read “parameters” not “perimeters”.

Ms. Ruijter made a motion to approve the August 19, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes as corrected.

Seconded by Mr. Winston

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

Mrs. Cooper abstained because she did not attend the August 19, 2015 meeting.

**Discussion**

**Representative Eileen Heaphy – Friends of Stamford Dog Park Presentation.**

- The original group that put the Dog Park together has long since dispersed. Representative Heaphy is trying to build up another group that can keep the Dog Park going.
- Representative Heaphy stated that they have signed up for a charity, but have not received any money yet.
- When the D.S.S.D. had their Dogs and Cats display, they had the Dog Park as one of the beneficiaries and donated some money to them. There is about \$5,000 (or a little less) in their account.
- Last year was the 5 year anniversary of the Dog Park.
- New signage will be needed for the Dog Park. Representative Heaphy will come back for the Commission’s approval for the new signs. They would like to print the rules a little bigger and place them on the entry fences, one on each entry. They also would like to have signs stating where to deposit the dog waste and the

recyclables.

- There is an issue with the big dogs jumping the dog barrier to the small dog side of the park and scaring the smaller dogs.
- Representative Heaphy has asked the Animal Control Officer to send someone once in a while to check for Dog Licenses and rabies shots.
- Representative Heaphy stated that long term, the Parks Department should take over the Dog Park, this happened in New Canaan.
- Mr. Winston stated that the Commission's concept was that the Friends of Stamford Dog Park were going to take care of the park. The whole dynamic changes if it becomes a City responsibility, even when people start looking at future Dog Parks, this one would be used as a model and it could affect the second Dog Park.
- Ms. Ruijter agrees that the Friends of Groups need to have continuity and structure and asked that Representative Heaphy try to find more involvement in the neighborhood or from the users.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to add Assistant Chief Matheny to the Agenda to discuss the Blue Light Emergency Phone and Public Safety and Security Pilot Program.

Seconded by Mr. Winston

Unanimously Approved

**Assistant Chief Matheny – Blue Light Emergency Phone and Public Safety and Security Pilot Program.**

- Assistant Chief Matheny presented to the Commission the information regarding the Blue Light Emergency Phone and Public Safety and Security Pilot Program.
- In an effort to improve public safety and security in Stamford parks the Mayor's Office, the Office of Public Safety, Health and Welfare and the Stamford Police Department are proposing the installation of Blue Light Emergency Phones equipped with video camera security at park locations.
- Blue Light Phones will be connected directly to Stamford 911 Communications Center.
- The visibility of Blue Light Emergency Phones with cameras creates a sense of security.
- Five locations are recommended for the pilot program. The park location criteria is based on park usage, topography, the number of 911 emergency responses within the past twelve months and the experience provided by the City of Stamford Parks

and Recreation and the Stamford Police Department.

- The five proposed locations for the pilot programs are:
  - Carwin Park
  - Cummings Park
  - Mill River Park
  - Scalzi Park
  - Veterans' Park
- The Stamford Police Department is very supportive of this program. Even if the cameras are not approved they are still supportive of just the phones.
- The program is not part of the Police Department Budget. It will be up to Finance and the Board of Representatives to get the funding.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve the request to go ahead with the Blue Light Emergency Phone and Public Safety and Security Pilot Program.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

### **Vision of Parks Through 2035.**

- Ms. Ruijter proposed the following Vision Statements:
  - Vision: This plan aims to describe the anticipated major changes in City through the next twenty years as they pertain to the role of PROG (Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Green Space) in the City, and to develop strategies and policies to ensure and safeguard the role that PROG (Parks, Recreation Open Space and Green Space) play for the quality of life of the residents.
  - Vision: The future City will contain an integrated comprehensive PROG system that is accessible and attractive for all segments of the population, with optimal safe connections by means of intermodal transportation, to promote health, clean air, human interaction and vibrancy.
- Commissioners will review the two Vision Statements by Ms. Ruijter and incorporate the one by Ms. Brown given at a previous meeting. Commissioners will reach a consensus at the next meeting.

### **Review of Agenda for October 2016 Enforcement Meeting.**

- Commissioners reviewed the DRAFT Agenda for the October 2016 Enforcement Meeting.

- A couple of corrections were made to the Agenda.
- Chief Matheny suggested inviting Assistant Chief Wuennemann to the meeting.
- Parks Police Officers do not report to the Police Department. Mr. Andreana suggested that it be discussed at next month's meeting the possibility of the Parks Police being part of the Police Department.
- Mr. Murray should be ready to answer how many hours a week do we have Parks Police enforcement during the summer time season and off season.
- Mr. Andreana stated that if the Blue Light Phone Program works it may become part of the requirements of the design work for a park, and it should be included as part of the budget.

### **Special Events**

**Carolyn Hanna – North Stamford Seventh Day Adventist Church – Fall Into Better Health Habits – Free Health Screenings, Health Counseling, Health Assessment – Saturday, September 26, 2015 or Sunday, September 27, 2015 or Saturday, October 3, 2015 or Sunday, October 4, 2015 (Preferably on a Saturday) from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 10:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 7:00 p.m.**

- Ms. Albano stated that Director Orgera suggested that Latham Park would be a better venue for this event and Saturday, October 3, 2015 the best date.
- Stamford Hospital and the Health Department work in conjunction with them.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve request to use Latham Park on Saturday, October 3, 2015 from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for North Stamford Seventh Day Adventist Church Health Fair.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

### **Old Business**

**Jeff Goodman and Gavin Daly – Stamford American Little League (SALL) – Use of Batting Cage at Kane Avenue Field.**

- Mr. Jeff Goodman requested permission to use the Batting Cage at Kane Avenue Field.
- In August 2014, Stamford American Little League (SALL) had permission from the Parks & Recreation Commission to use the Batting Cage on a trial basis during the fall season. SALL and Kevin Murray met with Mr. Ottaviano and they have not heard any complaints from him regarding the use of the Batting Cage. Mr. Ottaviano

still complaining about balls going into his yard and to help remedy the situation, SALL has spent \$3,500 to put netting up at Kane Avenue to help the problem.

- Mr. Goodman was told that SALL will not be allowed to use the Batting Cage this fall. Mr. Goodman explained to the Commission the need for the batting cage for the kids and the fact that they cannot use Vine Road because of the work being done there. Mr. Goodman asked the Commission that they be allowed to use the Batting Cage this fall.
- Mrs. Cooper stated for the Record that she was a past Stamford American Little League President, when she finished with her position she became a Commissioner. Mrs. Cooper is still involved with the league, so she will not be able to vote on this issue.
- Mrs. Cooper gave the Commission some history, which she thinks will help with this issue. Mr. Ottaviano and/or some of the neighbors have historically been very vocal and passionate; Mrs. Cooper had to deal with them on a daily basis. Each President has been more than accommodating to the neighbors and very respectful. The ball field has been in this location for many years and it is not going away. Mrs. Cooper stated that Stamford American Little League has done everything the Commission has asked them to do. Mrs. Cooper stated that the Commission does not have the same requirements for other leagues.
- Mr. Andreana stated that for years the Commission has been receiving complaints about the constant noise with the Batting Cage and batting practice. By eliminating the L Screen and the Cage, Mr. Andreana assumes it has helped the situation according to what Mr. Murray has reported. Because of the complaints received, the Commission voted to eliminate the use of the Batting Cage at Kane Avenue after the season and they will use the Vine Road Batting Cage instead.
- Mr. Goodman explained that wooden bats are very expensive and they are not needed if using a soft ball. With the use of composite bats and even metal bats you will not hear the ping sound. Mr. Goodman requested to be allowed to use their own bats with soft balls.
- Ms. Albano contacted Mr. Murray and he informed her that Mr. Ottaviano is only complaining about balls going into his yard, not about the Batting Cage. The City will be installing a 4 ft. high netting to the existing perimeter fence that separates the field from the neighbor's property.
- Mr. Andreana would be willing to allow the use of the Batting Cage thru November for practices during the week, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, and will review again in March 2016. If there are no complaints, the Commission will consider then a Blanket Permit. Wooden or composite bats will be used with soft balls. Mrs. Cooper stated that in order to be consistent with all leagues she would

like all of the leagues to be invited to the meeting in March to discuss this issue.

- Mr. Murray should meet with Mr. Ottaviano in November to make sure there are no complaints.

Mr. Winston made a motion to allow Stamford American Little League to use the Batting Cage at Kane Avenue Field thru November 1<sup>st</sup>, using wooden/composite bats (non-aluminum bats) and softballs during the week and on weekends from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., to be revisited on March 2016, the input to take it off trial basis.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

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

### **New Business**

#### **Dianne Selditch – SoundWaters Presentation.**

- Ms. Dianne Selditch started by expressing SoundWaters' gratitude for all the support they have gotten from the Commission, Parks Department and all of the Staff in the City. They have been very successful over the years, and it has been because of this partnership.
- SoundWaters has taught more than 50,000 students in the past two years.
- SoundWaters is imbedded in the district's science curriculum in Stamford from Pre-K all the way thru High School. All of these kids get to experience the Sound, either at Cove Island Park or on their ship.
- SoundWaters uses the Sound as a way to teach science, and use science as a way to learn about the Sound.
- This year they are trying to get more kids out in the water. The kids are sailing in small boats on Holly Pond; they also go canoeing both at the school based programs and at their Summer Camp, they also go on the schooner. This year they purchase small Blue Dragon Sail Boats and they have kids as young as 7 going sailing.
- 1/3 of the kids are on scholarship, usually full scholarship, either individually or through the schools. Soundwaters raise a lot of money in order to make this happen.
- There is a Science & Sailing Program afterschool. Middle School kids come and learn how to sail. Schools are not charged for this service.

- In the last couple of years SoundWaters has been running a program called STEM Academy. This program is for raising 5<sup>th</sup> Graders, it starts the summer before the kids start 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. For a month 30 kids come from the schools from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A classroom is set up in the main room at the Holly House; they work on science, reading and math. This year they hired a Certified Math Teacher, along with a couple of SoundWaters' educators who have degrees in Math and Biology, plus High School and College interns. At the end of the program the kids stated that they were not afraid of going into 5<sup>th</sup> Grade.

For this year's program they added another week for kids going into 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, about 15 kids from last year's program attended. Next year they will be going another level, so they will have the 4 week program for new kids plus two extra weeks as they go up until they get into 9<sup>th</sup> Grade. In 9<sup>th</sup> Grade SoundWaters has a great internship program for the students, they learn job skills, how to work on the aquarium, leadership, team building and then they organize events for their peers.

- Ms. Selditch stated that SoundWaters had problems with Storm Sandy. SoundWaters repaired the porch and fixed the basement at their own expense. After that, they had applied to the State Historical Preservation Office in order to be reimbursed for the money, which they have received in the last couple of months.
- SoundWaters is very committed to maintaining the building. They have their own Maintenance Committee as well as volunteers who help with smaller jobs, like painting.
- SoundWaters has been in conversation with Young Mariners to see if they can work more closely together, possibly merge together. All conversations are confidential and Ms. Selditch does not have any more information for the Commission. Once the two organizations figure out what they want to do, they will come back and inform the Commission and answer any questions the Commission may have.
- SoundWaters is focused on Boccuzzi Park and would love to have a dock there for their schooner.
- Down the line, SoundWaters might consider a Harbor Education Center at Boccuzzi Park.
- SoundWaters has discussed with the Commission previously and also the Harbor Commission about a seasonal dock at Holly Pond for their Small Boat Sailing Program. SoundWaters needs to get permitting from the CT DEEP and they are preparing for that.
- SoundWaters is concerned about another storm. They have done a lot of work after the past storms, including raising 6" to the entry to their basement, installation of new bilco doors and eliminating any kind of storage from the basement to prevent

the loss they had before.

- A couple of years ago SoundWaters submitted an application for a Grant to the State Historic Preservation Office to see if they could lift the building. First they were told that there was no interest in lifting the building, but a couple of weeks ago they heard that maybe they will consider it and the application have been re-submitted.
- Still waiting on Grant from State Historic Preservation Office to repair the shed.
- SoundWaters has a very broad support within the community, they reach more than 7,000 in on-line mailing distribution. They usually have 400 attendees at their annual fund raiser. In terms of their regular fundraising they have probably 350 annual individual supporters.

There are other groups and corporations that they interact with starting with the City, Stamford Public Schools K-12, and the Bartlett Arboretum/Master Gardener Program. SoundWaters also partners with the Child Care Learning Centers throughout the City, Young Mariners, Stamford Museum and Nature Center and various corporations in town such as: UBS, Nestle Water, Tronox, the Excel Group, Harbor Point, Perdu Pharma, People's Bank, BLT and the Stamford Historical Preservation Group.

**Peter Hansen – Stamford Lacrosse Association – Stamford Youth Lacrosse – Request to Become a Sanctioned Youth Organization to be Able to Use Park Fields.**

- Mr. Peter Hansen from Stamford Youth Lacrosse would like to start to permit fields for Lacrosse. The program started about 8 years ago; they service about 400 children from 1<sup>st</sup> Grade thru 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. The program started with about 100 children.
- Ms. Albano stated that there is not a complete Moratorium, sanctioning new community based leagues is taken on a case by case basis, and the fields are still very tight.
- At the moment Stamford Lacrosse Association uses two school fields at Westhill and Stamford High Schools.
- Stamford Lacrosse Association does not run a league in the fall. Ms. Albano has allocated them some field time at Sacred Heart Academy to run five weeks' worth of clinics. The main season will be in the spring.
- This year they gave out scholarships to 15 kids.
- In the future they would like to have field time where the inner city kids are, they are thinking of Lione Park.

- At present, they are just asking for permission to use Sacred Heart Academy for the 5 weeks to run 90 minute clinics. Ms. Albano stated that Stamford Lacrosse Association already has the approval for the use of Sacred Heart Academy Field; it is not a park field, so it does not need the approval of the Commission. The field is available up to September/October before construction starts. This field will eventually become a Board of Education field.
- Mr. Hansen stated that Stamford Lacrosse Association is willing to line the fields at their expense.
- Ms. Albano stated that in terms of sanctioning, Stamford Lacrosse Association has every right to be sanctioned like any of our other youth sports organizations. Mr. Hansen stated that they are the only Lacrosse group in town.
- Mr. Andreana is concerned that if Stamford Lacrosse Association is sanctioned, where are they going to play? Mr. Hansen responded that they are not looking for field use tonight, at the present time they are looking at using Sacred Heart Academy.

Mr. Winston made a motion to allow the sanctioning of the Stamford Lacrosse Association as a provider for Lacrosse in Stamford.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

## **Staff Reports**

### **Ken Smith – Report on Terry Connors Ice Rink.**

- The Rink had a great summer with their Summer Camps. The camps were extended as a result of the popularity last year, they went up 50% and then another 50% this year. They brought in an all-time high of \$84,000 with 363 participants.
- Ms. Albano and Mr. Smith are trying to get thru some rate increases to cover the Rink's operating expenses. The electric bill has gone up 6.2% in the last four years, the minimum wage has gone up. Mr. Smith did a cost analysis and it takes about \$284.00 an hour to run the Rink from September 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Smith also did a cost analysis with the other surrounding rinks. There is no other rink that charges less than \$400 an hour, we charge \$280. The other rinks have the same expenses and overhead that we do.
- The rink now has a Wi-Fi tower. The Wi-Fi tower points to SoundWaters to help them out.
- The rink's mansard is rusted, 18 roof mansard panels were lost during Hurricane Sandy, and repairs will be done next May. This will be an Engineering Capital

## Project.

- The new door and door frame project is scheduled to start within the next three weeks. This will help with the heating and cooling of the rink. A little vestibule will be installed in the middle doors where people leave them open.
- For the future, they are requesting funds for improving the infrastructure, the compressor and dehumidifier; some of the controls need to be modernized. This will be an improvement we will get 2016/2017 FY.
- Mr. Smith mentioned some big events that will be happening at the rink (the Big Assist Charity Game and the Northeast Synchronized Skating Competition).
- There will be a Public Hearing on October 1, 2015 to discuss the proposed rink fee increases, then it will go to the full Board.

## **Laurie Albano – Recreation.**

- Fall Registration began on September 8 & 9 – going well with a good number of participants in all programs.
- New software is waiting for the Mayor's signature – transition and training to follow.
- Mayor's Presentation FY 14/15 Highlights and 15/16 Outlook will take place on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Sanctioned Fall Field Permit User's meeting was held. Schedules, rosters, insurance all in or almost in.
- Applied for Federal Water Safety Grant of approximately \$7,000.
- Maccabi Games Stamford 2016 – working on assisting and a meeting schedule has been set.
- Fall Softball has begun with 42 teams.
- Adult Volleyball, Kickball and Flag Football all began or will begin this week.
- BOE Custodian Overtime rate has gone up from \$48.50 an hour to \$55.00 an hour – this means approximately an additional \$7,000 to \$8,000 per year from our budget.
- Concussion link on website – CDC Head Up Awareness Program will be put on our website most likely with new web based software.
- Internal Capital budget meeting was held – wish list discussion has begun.

- List of events approved by the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee at the September 4, 2015 meeting:

### **Consent Agenda**

**Michael Battinelli – UNICO/Sacred Heart Church – Columbus Day Parade and Ceremony – Use of Columbus Park – Sunday, October 11, 2015 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 4:00 p.m. – 250 Adults and 50 Children.**

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano Unanimously Approved

**Penny Mazzucco – Patriotic & Special Events Commission – Veterans’ Day Parade – Sunday, November 8, 2015 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 9:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 2:00 p.m.**

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano Unanimously Approved

**Michelle Ramppen – Caring Hands 4 Huntington’s Disease Walk – Use of Cove Island Park – Sunday, October 11, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 7:30 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 2:00 p.m. – 75 Adults and 25 Children.**

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano Unanimously Approved

### **Special Events**

**Kyle Rothschild/Jon Stellwagen – St. Jude’s 5K – Harbor Point Area and Kosciuszko Park – Saturday, September 26, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 2:00 p.m. – 200 Adults and 50 Children.**

Laurie Albano made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kevin Murray Unanimously Approved

**Adam Terr – Boy Scouts of America – Connecticut Yankee Council – STAMJAM-Boy Scout Recruiting Event – Cove Island Park – Saturday, October 17, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 8:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 6:00 p.m. – 25 Adults and 75 Children.**

- Not allowed to use Dutch Ovens.

Laurie Albano made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

Unanimously Approved

**Ellen Laichtman – Julia A. Stark PFO – Welcome Back Dinner – Northrop Field/Playground and Grass Area – Friday, September 11, 2015 – Rain Date Friday, September 25, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 5:00 p.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 8:15 p.m. – 250 People will be attending.**

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

**Ben Draper/Bobby Luna – New York Yankee Fan Appreciation – Veterans' Park, Scalzi Park and Latham Park – Hand Out Free Prepackaged Fruit Popsicles to Pedestrians – Saturday, September 12, 2015 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Kevin Murray made a motion to deny the request.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

**At a later date (Tuesday, September 8, 2015) request was approved by Ernie Orgera, Director of Operations.**

**Carolyn Hanna – North Stamford Seventh Day Adventist Church – Fall Into Better Health Habits – Free Health Screenings, Health Counseling, Health Assessment – Saturday, September 26, 2015 or Sunday, September 27, 2015 or Saturday, October 3, 2015 or Sunday, October 4, 2015 (Preferably on a Saturday) from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 10:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 7:00 p.m.**

Kevin Murray made a motion to deny the request, decision can be appealed to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

**Emily Lamotta – Wedding Ceremony – Fort Stamford – Saturday, October 10, 2015 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. – Set-Up Stars at 4:00 p.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 5:30 p.m. – 48 Adults and 2 Children.**

Laurie Albano made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

Unanimously Approved

## **Tournaments**

**Peter Hansen – Stamford Lacrosse Association – Lacrosse Fundamental Clinics – Sacred Heart Academy or Lione Park – Sunday’s from September 20, 2015 thru October 25, 2015 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

## **Kevin Murray – Parks.**

➤ Mr. Murray did not attend the meeting.

## **Correspondence**

No Correspondence.

**The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 21, 2015.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Winston

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Margarita Arenas  
September 28, 2015