

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the November 18, 2015 Regular Meeting**

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A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on November 18, 2015, 10th Floor Operations Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Joe Andreana
Dave Winston
Lyda Ruijter
Althea Brown

Staff: Laurie Albano
Kevin Murray

Guests: Captain Beth Erickson – Blue Light – Lione Park
David Roberts – Friends of Mianus River Park
Erin McKenna – Friends of Mianus River Park
Veterans’ Park Master Plan
Rep. Eileen Heaphy – Dog Park Signs
Vincent O’Banner – Flag Football
Romano Orlando – Flag Football
Donnell Fludd – Flag Football

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Joe Andreana, Chair.

Mrs. Cooper did not attend the meeting.

Review of the October 21, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Discussion

Vision of Parks Through 2035.

- Ms. Ruijter stated that a Policy should be created emphasizing that the Commission is for the wellbeing of the parks, the future of the parks and the safety of the parks. The Policy will also state that the Commission finds it essential to maintain a separate role for the Park Police. The Commission should be the advocacy group for maintaining that role in the future, and if possible, finding opportunity to increase their role in the future.
- Parks Police should be separate from the Regular Police because their tasks are slightly different regardless of who they come under, Operations or Public Safety.
- Mr. Murray stated that is very valuable to have the Park Police in the parks at the current role. Mr. Murray would not want the park system to suffer and not have these resources in the park to enforce Park Regulations and Rules. Mr. Murray does not have jurisdiction in regards to who they fall under. Park Police should stay in the parks at all times to enforce the Regulations.
- Mr. Winston stated that the Commission should be informed by the Stamford Police Department of incidents occurring in the parks, a Summary Report was suggested. Captain Beth Erickson will forward the Commission's request to Assistant Chief Wuennemann. By looking at the Summary Report the Commission will be able to know how many incidents the Park Police have responded to and the incidents the Stamford Police Department have responded to.
- Mr. Winston stated that as a Policy for the Parks & Recreation Commission going forward, the Commission continues to support Stamford Park Police as a dedicated entity and supports their continued use and expansion for enforcement of Parks Regulations as a priority.
- Mr. Andreana agrees that the Commission continues to support the Park Police as a dedicated entity to enforcing the Parks Rules & Regulations.
- Ms. Ruijter requested that a separate document referring to the DRAFT Policies be created for easier access.

Mr. Winston made a motion to add into the Parks & Recreation Commission's DRAFT Vision/Policy Procedure Manual that the Parks & Recreation Commission continues to

support Stamford Park's Police as a dedicated entity and supports their continued use and expansion for enforcement of Parks Regulations as a priority.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

The Commission passed a Resolution based on the 1997 Parks Master Plan's 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.

- Mr. Winston stated that the Commission should start looking at setting up guidelines for the design of parks; Mr. Andreana feels that this should go under Policy.
- If requested information from the Stamford Police Department can be provided to the Commission, the Commission should make it a Policy that these reports are provided on a regular basis. Communication established last month between the Commission and the Stamford Police Department should continue.
- Part of the Policy would be to have an annual review meeting of the parks with the Stamford Police and Park Police. Meeting to take place in November of every year after the season is over.

Mr. Winston made a motion that on an annual basis the Parks & Recreation Commission will meet with representatives of the Stamford Police Department and Park Police to get summaries of the relevant issues in the parks and how the Commission might improve the safety of the parks.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

- Mr. Andreana stated that the next two issues to be discussed will be the Commission's Policy and Vision with the various Friends Groups in the parks and developing guidelines for design of future parks.

Mr. Winston made a motion to Suspend the Rules and take out of order to add request from Director Ted Jankowski to add Lione Park to the list of parks that will be getting a Blue Light Station.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

- Captain Beth Erickson presented for Director Jankowski.
- Captain Erickson stated that they would like to add Lione Park to the list of parks that will be getting a Blue Light Station.

Ms. Ruijter made a motion to approve the installation of a Blue Light Station at Lione Park.

David Roberts – Friends of Mianus River Park Presentation.

- Mr. David Roberts made a presentation to the Commission regarding Friends of Mianus River Park.
- Friends of Mianus River Park continue to grow. Their Friends e-mail list has 650 names.
- Friends of Mianus River Park continue to build funds; they currently have about \$25,000.
- Involved with Annual Fund Raising Drive thru Lord and Taylor, they raise around \$300 thru them. Trying to persuade the 650 people on their list to sign up for Amazon Smiles, where if you have an Amazon account you can designate a non for profit charity organization.
- Received an anonymous donation of \$10,000 last year.
- The Urban Oasis Project with Audubon of Greenwich brought about \$7,000 of funding and some additional funds came from Aquarion.
- Projects done by the Friends of Mianus River Park:
 - Completed blazing trails in park – now 8 miles of blazed trails.
 - Updated trail map on web-site – maps to be updated on kiosks in park.
 - Numerous maintenance and improvement projects – regular watering, including new installed plants at new Red Barn parking lot – additional daffodils planted, trails cleared, fences fixed, etc.
 - Updated and developed Friend’s website.
- Projects with partners:
 - More than doubled the planted area of the Urban Oasis with the help from Audubon of Greenwich and volunteers from Aquarion.
 - With City and Trout Unlimited added third hardened access to river with extensive riverbank restoration using recycled Christmas trees.
 - With New England Mountain Bike Association rerouted and made sustainable start of West River Trail.
 - With Boy Scouts added numerous wooden trail signs and installed boardwalk on muddy trail section.

- With the Appalachian Mountain organized regular hikes in the park.
 - With school groups carried out numerous tidy up projects in the park.
 - Ms. McKenna stated that a study is about to be done to re-organize the entrance.
 - There used to be a trail right along the riverbank, which causes a lot of erosion into the river, gradually they have been moving the trail away from the river. They will be putting in more fencing with the new one; type of fencing has not been decided yet.
- Waiting to see what happens with the bridge, a lot of planting and restoration will have to be done once the new bridge goes in. Currently the bridge is failing and the Engineering Department is in charge of that project. Mr. Andreana stated that the Commission would like to know about it when it's happening.
 - Planning to re-blaze the nature trail next year in a more visible color.
 - Mr. Andreana asked Margarita Arenas to contact Heather Bernatchez of the Wildlife Center of Fairfield County and ask her for an update on the status of their fundraising to create the center in the Red Barn in Mianus River Park.

Special Events

No Special Events.

Tournaments

No Tournaments.

Old Business

Erin McKenna – Review and Approval of the Master Plan for Veterans' Park.

- Erin McKenna explained that Veterans Memorial Park is not a completely City owned park, almost a half-acre of the park is owned by Reckson.
- The D.S.S.D. has been trying to get this park renovated for many years. The Veterans Memorial Park Ad-Hoc Committee has been created.
- Mayor Martin has allowed the Veterans Memorial Park Ad-Hoc Committee to manage the design process with the City's full supervision. The scale of this project would not be possible without their help and money.
- They have been working on the design since the beginning of February.

- The Veterans Memorial Park Ad-Hoc Committee consists of:
 - D.S.S.D. – In charge of organizing everything
 - Rick Redniss – Chairman
 - Representatives from Reckson
 - Representatives from Stamford Town Center (Mall)
 - Bank owners
 - Representatives from Brian Bill Memorial Fund
 - City Staff including Norman Cole, Kevin Murray, Burt Rosenberg, Urban Redevelopment Council, Erin McKenna and Commissioner David Winston
- The cost of the design has been shared equally by the City and the private property owners. The cost of the design was about \$100,000, the City paid \$50,000 and Reckson and the Mall split the other \$50,000.
- Started meeting on January 2015; Design Meetings take place every month.
- The name of the Design Company is BETA Group Inc.
- The BETA Group had a designated Design Meeting with the Veterans Groups in May before they did final design in June.
- A Public Information Meeting took place at the Ferguson Library in June to present the plans to the public.
- The goal of the design is to create a spectacular public space in downtown. At present time the park it is just a park to wait for the bus, to cut through to get to the buildings that surround it and attracts a lot of loitering and trouble. The park does not function the way it could function to be a great asset to the downtown. They would like to make this park very easily accessible by foot, by bike and by bus.
- The main features of the re-design are:
 - Monuments will be re-organized in a historical timeline with the first one being the Lincoln Memorial at the entrance.
 - An amphitheater will be built into the re-graded hillside and will be used for events.
 - There will be paths that will lead to main memorial features.
 - At the current time the entrance is blocked by a raised bed, so the entrance will be re-organized to connect to Old Town Hall. The raised crosswalk slows cars down and makes it more of a pedestrian space or shared space.

- The entrance to the mall will remain and will have better signage.
- They will be enhancing/expanding the bus shelter.
- There will be a Service Garden with 5 service trees; will eventually coordinate with someone from the Veteran's group to determine what species each branch should be represented by.
- The Homer Wise statue will be part of the park.
- All of the features will be handicap accessible.
- Freedom Shrine/display case will not be part of the park. The Veterans will be in charge of all the monuments and their placement.
- Mr. Andreana suggested the Police Department reviews the plans and incorporates their input into the design.
- Mr. Andreana recommended that the Commission holds a Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m. at the December 16th Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to get any additional input from the public and various groups regarding the design.
- Some of the items to be reviewed at the Public Hearing will be:
 - The Homer Wise Statue
 - The Freedom Shrine
 - Review of plan by Police Department
 - Full Handicap Access within ADA guidelines
 - Type of events in the park

Ms. Brown made a motion to hold a Public Hearing on December 16, 2015 to discuss the design of Veterans Memorial Park.

Seconded by Ms. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

New Business

Representative Eileen Heaphy – Signs for Dog Park.

- Representative Eileen Heaphy discussed the signage needed for the Dog Park:
 - Rules: They need either a bigger and clearer sign to replace the one that is already there along the entry path or two smaller signs on the entry gates to the small and large dog sections.

- Trash reminders: Reminders need to be posted at the exits of the small and large dog sections reminding users to deposit dog waste in the tan bins and water bottles/recyclables in the green bins.
- Do not let big dogs jump into the small dog section. They need 5 to 6 signs along the fence dividing the two sections, on the large dog side, asking owners of large dogs not to let their dogs jump into the small dog section. This is a recurring problem can pose a risk for small dogs.

Mr. Winston made a motion to approve request for new refreshed signage at the Dog Park.

Seconded by Mr. Ruijter

Unanimously Approved

Vincent O'Banner – Flag Football.

- Mr. Donnell Fludd along with Mr. Vincent O'Banner and Mr. Orlando Romano presented their request to start a Flag Football Program in Stamford.
- Ms. Albano stated that there is an existing Flag Football Program in Stamford that is sanctioned by the Commission. This program is run by the Stamford Youth Foundation for kids between the ages of 7 and 12 and they play during the months of March, April and May.
- Ms. Albano feels that the existing Flag Football Program may need some assistance especially since they do not offer a fall program and suggested that it may be possible that the two groups work together on some level. Ms. Albano suggested that Mr. O'Banner contact the Stamford Youth Foundation, Ms. Albano offered to facilitate a meeting with them. Mr. Andreana agrees that they should pursue Ms. Albano's suggestion.

Staff Reports

Laurie Albano – Recreation.

- Busy with new Community Pass Rec Management software training.
- Winter Brochure is on line and in print.
- Rec Winter Registration begins on December 8th on line and December 9th walk in.
- Santa Ride at Cove Island Park – December 5 & 6/tickets selling well.
- Rec Fall programs and leagues are done and went well.

- Maccabi Games Stamford 2016 on going meeting.
- Terry Conners Ice Rink Door Project has yet to start/this put us in our busy season.
- Terry Conners Ice Rink New Roof Project is scheduled for mi-April to mid-June 2016 – Bids open December 9.
- Two big events coming up at Terry Conners Ice Rink/Synchro Skating Camp & FCIAC Hockey Jamboree.
- Fall lessons at Terry Conners Ice Rink went well.
- Ms. Albano distributed handouts with Recreation and Terry Conners Ice Rink updates.
- List of events approved by the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee at the October 6, 2015 meeting:
- List of events approved by the Parks & Recreation Internal Committee at the November 3, 2015 meeting:

Consent Agenda

Barbara Preli – Rogers International School – RIS Turtle Trot – Use of Cove Island Park – Wednesday, June 8, 2016 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. – 825 Children and 100 Adults.

Frank Fedeli made a motion to approve request from Barbara Preli – Rogers International School for the use of Cove Island Park for RIS Turtle Trot on Wednesday, June 8, 2016 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Rain Date Thursday, June 9, 2016, with the condition that they send out a notice to the parents stating that they will need passes to avoid ticketing.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

Unanimously Approved

Brittany Salvatore – Rogers International School – SPS Middle School Cross Country Meet – Use of Cove Island Park – Thursday, November 3, 2016 from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 1:00 p.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 5:00 p.m.

Frank Fedeli made a motion to approve request from Brittany Salvatore – Rogers International School for the use of Cove Island Park for SPS Middle School Cross Country Meet on Thursday, November 3, 2016 from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Seconded by Kim Gerbert

Unanimously Approved

Rabbi Moshe Shemtov – Chabad House of Stamford Chanukah Menorah Lighting – Use of Latham Park – Tuesday, December 8, 2015 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – 75 People in Attendance.

Frank Fedeli made a motion to approve request from Rabbi Moshe Shemtov for the use of Latham Park for Chabad House of Stamford Chanukah Menorah Lighting on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Seconded by Kevin Murray

Unanimously Approved

Special Events

Marge Pavlov – Czescik Marina & Park Conservancy – Use of Czescik Marina and Park – Gazebo for Visit with Santa – Saturday, December 12, 2015 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Set-Up Starts at 10:00 a.m. and Clean-Up Ends at 4:00 p.m. – 40 Adults and 30 Children.

Kevin Murray made a motion to approve request from Marge Pavlov – Czescik Marina & Park Conservancy for the use of Czescik Marina and Park/Gazebo for visit with Santa on Saturday, December 12, 2015 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. with the condition that the event is open to the public.

Seconded by Laurie Albano

Unanimously Approved

Tournaments

No Tournaments.

Kevin Murray – Parks.

- **Vets Park Committee (VPAC):** Met on November 12, 2015 – on the Agenda: Overview of design contract from BETA Group/City contract status/financial status (short-term fundraising and long-term fundraising).
- **Tour of Mianus River Park with Friends of Mianus Park on November 5, 2015:** Copy of Trail Map given to the Commission.
- **Czescik Park Estuary Cleanup:** Scheduled for Saturday, December 5, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Copy of flyer was given to the Commission.
- **Planning Board Capital Projects:** Attended Planning Board meeting on November 10, 2015 and highlighted 17 park projects.
- **Parks Department:** Currently tag teaming parks for fall cleanups.
- **Restrooms/Sprinklers:** Have been winterized at all sites.

- **Kaboom Playground Possibility at Courland Avenue:** Same management team that assisted the McKeithen Park build.
- **Banners on Fields:** Per request of Commissioner Dave Winston – per work order sent out November 12, 2015 all field sites were checked during the week and by Friday, November 6th and removed per Landscape Specialist. Every league complied except Chestnut Hill which banners were removed by City workers and took 1 hour of time. Banners were stored in concession stand.
- **City Marina Closing:** Official closing is Sunday after Thanksgiving.
- Mr. Andreana stated that Katchko's advertisement still on the scoreboard at Stamford American Little League as of today, it has to be covered ASAP.

Correspondence

Commission acknowledged receiving correspondence from Ellen Manzo regarding Cove Park Signage.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 16, 2015.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Ms. Ruijter

Seconded by Ms. Brown

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Margarita Arenas
November 25, 2015