

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021
REGULAR MEETING
VIA INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL
6:30 P.M.**

JOIN ZOOM MEETING
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85138480703>

Meeting ID: 851 3848 0703
Passcode: 833623

Web & Phone Meeting Instructions:

- *If your computer/smartphone has mic and speaker then:
Type in, paste or click the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85138480703>.
If not, then **Call-in** using the **phone number, Meeting ID & Passcode** provided above.*
- *Sign-up for Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting updates by emailing
lcapp@stamfordct.gov.*

Web Meeting Ground Rules:

- *The meeting shall be recorded and the video shall be posted on the City of Stamford website
http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=9*
- *The Parks & Recreation Commission shall moderate the audio for attendees.*
- *Attendees shall be on mute and will be unmuted when called to speak by the Commission members.*
- *Attendees will have 20 minutes to make their presentation or address the Commission.*
- *Any Attendee wishing to submit materials or a written statement can send it prior to the meeting to lcapp@stamfordct.gov or submit through a Chat message to the Commission Chair during the meeting.*

A Regular Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 via the Internet on Zoom.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Paul Newman, Interim Chair
Angela Adetola
Melanie Hollas

Staff: Laurie Albano, Superintendent of Recreation
Kevin Murray, Operations Manager, Parks & Facilities
Lesley Capp, Assistant - Parks & Recreation Commission

Absent: Michael Tedder, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Newman called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. and introduced the Commission Members and staff present.

Mr. Newman introduced the first item on the agenda.

CALL TO ORDER:

- Review of the November 17, 2021 Regular Meeting Draft Minutes.

Ms. Hollas made a motion to approve the November 17, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- No Special Events or as may properly be introduced before the Commission.

Mr. Newman and Ms. Albano both made note that Matthew Quinones (formerly with the Board of Representatives) will be the new Director of Operations beginning January 2022.

Mr. Newman introduced Mr. Noto.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Michael Noto, President Stamford American Little League:** Mr. Noto will discuss the merger of the Stamford American Little League and the Stamford National Little League.¹

Mr. Noto made a presentation to the Commission providing details on the merger and future plans for the new league and answered questions from the Commission.

Mr. Newman called for a motion to sanction the Stamford National American Little League for the City of Stamford.

Ms. Hollas made a motion to sanction the Stamford National American Little League for the City of Stamford.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved

Mr. Newman introduced Mr. Sarafino.

- **James Sarafino, Babe Ruth Baseball:** Mr. Sarafino will give an update of the 2021 Fall season and provide details of the upcoming 2022 season.²

Mr. Sarafino made a presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

Mr. Newman called for a motion to sanction Stamford Babe Ruth to continue with a 50/70 and/or Travel Program under Cal Ripkin for the 2022 Season.

Ms. Hollas made a motion motion to sanction Stamford Babe Ruth to continue with a 50/70 and/or Travel Program under Cal Ripkin for the 2022 Season.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved

¹ Video Time Stamp - 00:04:17

² Video Time Stamp - 00:10:38

OLD BUSINESS:

- No Old Business or as may properly be introduced before the Commission.

TOURNAMENTS:

- No Tournaments.

CORRESPONDENCE:³

- Mr. Newman noted an email from Stamford resident, Bela Liptak, requesting a change to the leash laws in Stamford for Mianus River Park. (Mr. Liptak's email and Mr. Newman's response attached)

STAFF REPORTS:

- Laurie Albano, Superintendent of Recreation: Recreation Update.

The following Staff Report was submitted and discussed by Ms. Albano:⁴

[Begin Report]

RECREATION

- Winter program registration began on December 7, 2021 with strong first day numbers and ongoing.
- Fall WHS pool Recreation swim lessons done. New sessions begin January 3, 2022.
- Winter Adult Leagues in Volleyball, Basketball and Dodgeball begin in January.
- The new Winter brochure of programs can be found on our website at www.stamfordrecreation.com.
- The sold out Cove Island Park Hayride with Santa went well with great weather December 5 & 6, 2021.
- Recreation Supervisor replacement selected. Promoting current Recreation Leader, Bert Oubida and will now require Human Resources to post for that vacancy. Hopefully soon.
- Baseball Study under Springfield College began week on September 8, 2021. I spoke again with the Coordinator/Professor on Friday, December 3, 2021. Much progress has been made and they will be surveying all sanctioned organizations' coaches next. Looking both at programming structure, best practices and facility needs.
- We have started on the extension of the Star Center lease with financial modeling assistance from Laura Burwick, Special Assistant to the Mayor and Burt Rosenberg in Legal. It will be presented to the new Mayor for approval to move it forward. Current lease expires in June 2022. Update: Burt submitted a first DRAFT lease and Scott and I made some edits and sent it back to him.
- I presented at the Connecticut Parks & Recreation Association Convention on Aquatics and Lifeguard recruitment and retention. Went very well.
- Beginning outreach to all summer of 2021 staff counselors, directors and lifeguards regarding their availability for employment in the summer of 2022.
- Requesting information from the Board of Education Facilities Department on summer construction so we may firm up camp and program sites ASAP.
- Beginning preparation and discussions on spring and summer programming and brochure.
- Film process/policy in the works. I am advising on recreational use and space.
- Met with FDC Flag Football and Vincent O'Banner. They will continue discussions on working together. However there is no park field space available for an expansion of the FDC Football and definitely not for an entire new league.
- Working with Stamford Police Department and Stamford Fire Department to supply summer beach and pool lifeguards with radios. Stamford Fire Department has some to give us.

³ Video Time Stamp - 00:31:30

⁴ Video Time Stamp - 00:33:05

TERRY CONNER RINK

- New fire alarm system installation still in process (parts supply chain issues) and will tie into the new Ammonia system.
- Rink prime season in full swing. Busy and booked.
- High school hockey scheduling in process. Some schools changed dismissal times causing issues with our schedule. Working on it.
- Olympia brand ice re-surfacing machine sale. Waiting on process for sale from Office of Policy & Management and Purchasing.
- Rink Operator Position No. 2 started Monday, December 6, 2021. Finally up to full staff with three (3) full time Operators, giving Ken more time to manage and not be an Operator, as well.
- Mask wearing continues to be a difficult and constant job to enforce.
- Received information from Engineering that the new Administration wants to bond much of the remaining rink capex now. More to follow when I learn more.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Anticipate budget for FY 2022-2023 instructions soon, if not already in by meeting date.
- New financial software Citywide in process. Big comprehensive project, with staff involvement, but very much needed. Jury still out on the interface with Recreation and Rink software.
- Masks for vaccinated players no longer required after December 23, 2021 per the State Department of Public Health; however in Recreation, we are keeping them as a requirement for all adult leagues and youth sports programs we run directly. For outside agencies we will allow unmasked vaccinated players if such organization wants to allow with a signed off statement/waiver from them that those not wearing masks are vaccinated.
- Had an initial meeting on big picture items with our new Director of Operations. Went well.
- Assisting Kevin Murray, Operations Manager - Parks & Facilities, in the capex partnership with the NY Rangers on the renovation of the Scalzi Park roller hockey rink.
- Working with Legal to revise waivers, registration forms, etc. and records retention laws on the many documents that my three departments generate.

[End Report]

➤ Kevin Murray, Operations Manager - Parks & Facilities: Parks Update.

The following Staff Report was submitted by Mr. Murray:⁵

[Begin Report]

- New administration preliminary meeting and New Director Matthew Quinones to begin January 3, 2022.
- House Bonding request with New Administration submitted which includes several of our capital projects for Playgrounds, game courts and Turf fields at Lione Park and West Beach.
- Winter Projects with Staff: ADA Bathroom upgrades at Courtland Avenue Park, John Boccuzzi Park and Kosciuszko Park.
- Scalzi Park/Courtland Avenue Park/Jackie Robinson Park Covid-19 Vaccine Sites are open 7 days a week.
- Permanent Trailer structure to be installed at Courtland Avenue and Jackie Robison Parks on January 1, 2022.
- Monday, December 7, 2021 Pearl Harbor ceremony was held at Veterans Memorial Park.
- Citywide Playground annual inspections to be scheduled per winter project.
- Lione Park and West beach turf preventive maintenance proposal to be reviewed and scheduled out for monthly inspections/cleaning in the 2022 season.

⁵ Video Time Stamp - 00:55:18

- Turf Blankets are all installed at Cubeta/Barrett/Scalzi LL/Chestnut/Northrop/Vine and Springdale.
- Park snow routes and responsibilities reviewed with staff for 2021- 2022.
- Employee vacancies to be filled. Working with Human Resources Department and New Administration. Two maintenance workers, Tree Climber and an Electrician.
- Hired long-standing seasonal employee Roberto Hidalgo to Parks Maintenance staff fulltime.
- New York Ranger project for Scalzi Park Roller Hockey Rink Upgrade update meeting December 20, 2021 with New Director.
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding has been approved by all City boards for the below park projects (100% ARP funded) - Winter planning:
 - **Kosciuszko Park Parking Lot:** \$100K request to relevel/re-gravel parking lot and access road, which will upgrade sheet drainage.
 - **West Beach Parking Lot:** \$200K request for the design and installation of scour protection wall along beachfront that divides the shore and parking lot to be upgraded which will protect erosion and heaving due to storm surges and extreme tidal flooding.
 - **Courtland Avenue Park - Dog Park:** \$150k request for underground drainage and installation of retention basin to Dog Park area, which will assist with erosion and washout, small retention wall to be installed.
 - **426 Shippan Avenue Park Department:** \$100 K request for regrading and repaving Parks Department Shop parking areas to assist with flood prone areas, which will get connected to all storm drains properly.
- FY 22/23-Operating Budget instructions distributed.

[End Report]

- Parks & Recreation Internal Committee Action Report - No Meeting in December.

DISCUSSION: ⁶

- Ms. Albano noted she had received emails from Jennifer Matheny, President and Daniel Sandford, Vice President of the Parks & Recreation Committee for the Board of Representatives regarding pickleball.
- Mr. Newman stated he would continue to try to meet with the new administration and with Mr. Quinones to go over issues going forward.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Newman adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Lesley Capp
 December 21, 2021

These proceedings were recorded on video and are available for review on the City of Stamford website at:
http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_is=9

⁶ Video Time Stamp - 01:11:15

From: Bela Liptak <liptakbela@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 12, 2021 5:43 PM
To: Newman, Paul <PNewman@StamfordCT.gov>
Cc: Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>; Albano, Laurie <LAlbano@StamfordCT.gov>; Murray, Kevin <KMurray@StamfordCT.gov>; aadetola@yahoo.com; Hollas, Melanie <MHollas@StamfordCT.gov>; Tedder, Michael <MTedder@StamfordCT.gov>; Gray, Taylor <TGray@StamfordCT.gov>; marthaliptak@aol.com

Subject: Dog off-leash request for Mianus River Park

Dear Mr. Newman,

Thank you very much for considering possible improvements in the present situation.

It would seem that the noted City Ordinance should be re-reviewed with the goal of making the same code applied to both the Stamford and Greenwich sections of the park. This is desirable, because the present situation, when people from Stamford have to either drive to the Greenwich entrance or use unsafe (particularly in the winter) trails to get to the Greenwich side, must not have been the goal of the Ordinance.

Best regards, Béla,Lipták

Sent from [AOL Desktop](#)

Béla Lipták, Automation and Safety Consultant
Lifetime Achievement award of International Society of Automation
84 Old North Stamford Rd., Stamford CT,
T: 203 357 7614, E: liptakbela@aol.com
https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/141707.B_la_G_Lipt_k

In a message dated 12/12/2021 12:58:27 PM Eastern Standard Time, PNewman@StamfordCT.gov writes:

Mr. Liptak -

I am responding to your request for consideration of relaxing the leash laws for dogs in Mianus River Park.

Chapter 111, Section 111-6B of the City of Stamford Code of Ordinances states that “(1) No owner/keeper of any dog shall permit such dog on any public street or sidewalk or other public place unless such dog is on a leash held securely by such person.” Additionally, it goes on to say that “(3) Notwithstanding the above, dogs may be unleashed in public places in areas which are securely enclosed by fencing, provided that such enclosed areas are posted that such use is allowed, such as the Stamford Dog Park.”

The Parks & Recreation Commission does not have authority to change City Ordinances; that lies with the Board of Representatives. However, we can participate in establishing enclosed areas for unleashed dogs such as has been done in Courtland Park at 53 Courtland Avenue.

I recognize that Mianus River Park is heavily used by dog walkers, as I bring my dog there as well. But one of the most heard complaints from users of the park relates to dogs off-leash. The park also has an active Friends of Mianus River Park organization that would absolutely have input to creating an enclosed area for off-leash dogs.

While I am not promising the creation of an off-leash, enclosed dog park area for Mianus River Park, I will at least open a discussion with the Parks & Recreation Commission as to your request and include the Friends group in that discussion.

Sincerely,

Paul Newman, Chairperson
Stamford Parks & Recreation Commission
pnewman@StamfordCT.gov

From: city.webmaster@stamfordct.gov <city.webmaster@stamfordct.gov>

Sent: Thursday, December 9, 2021 6:45 PM

To: City Webmaster <City.Webmaster@StamfordCT.gov>

Subject: Feedback for Stamford, CT

You have received this feedback from Bela Liptak <liptakbela@aol.com> for the following page:

<https://www.stamfordct.gov/government/boards-commissions/parks-and-recreation-commission/-sortn-SDepts/-folder-1139/-sortd-desc>

Dear Commissioner, In Mianus Park (map below) leash law is enforced in the Stamford side of the park, while there is no leash law on the Greenwich side. For older people like my wife (83) it is unsafe to climb up to the Greenwich side to let our dog freely run around. Would it be possible to either make the leash regulations the same on both parts of the park or to assign an area (such as one side of the spring), where dogs can play? It would truly be appreciated if you could act on this. Respectfully, Béla Lipták Béla Lipták, Automation and Safety Consultant Lifetime Achievement award of International Society of Automation 84 Old North Stamford Rd., Stamford CT, T: 203 357 7614, E:

liptakbela@aol.com https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/141707.B_la_G_Lipt_k