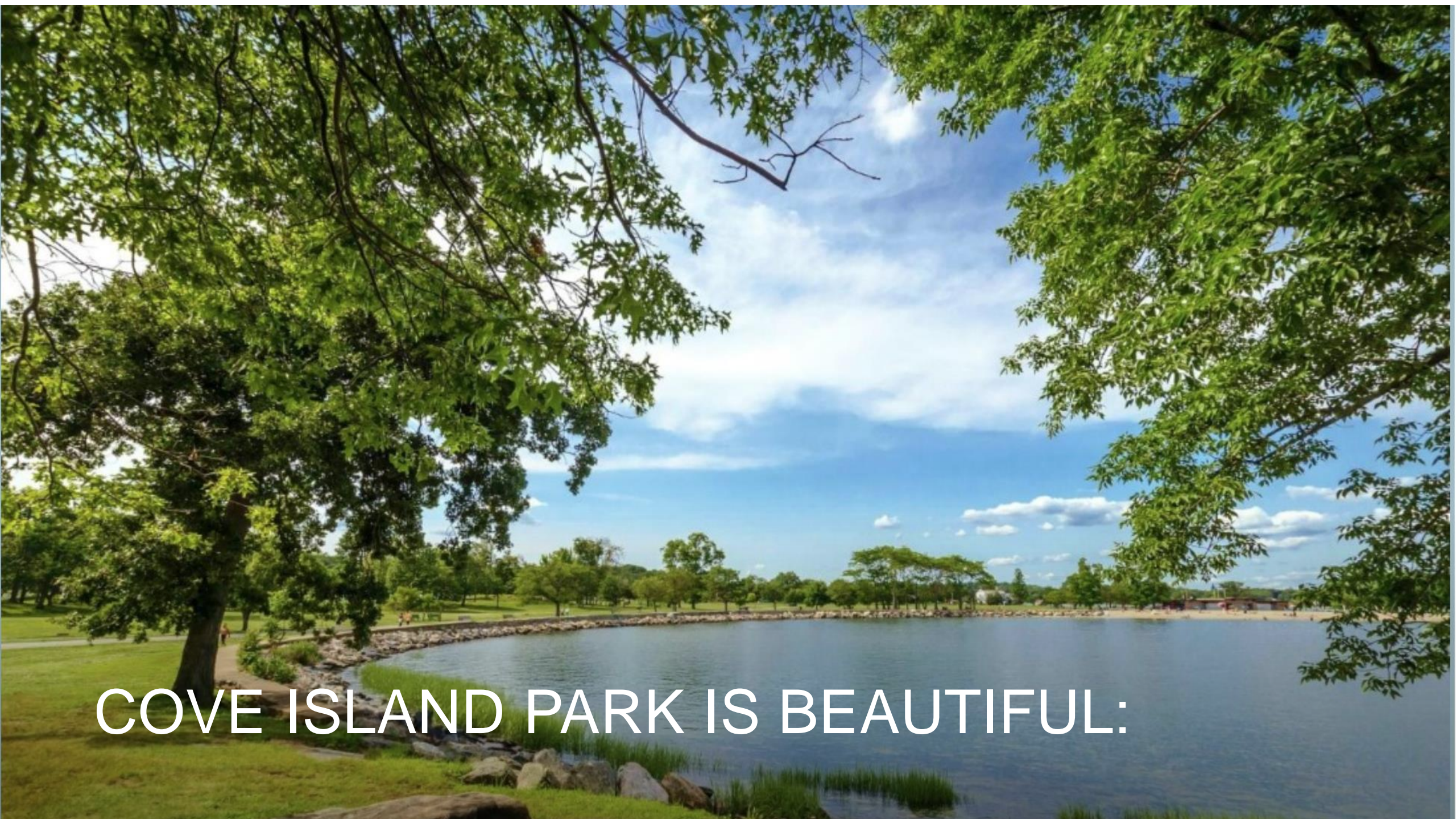

PERMIT REQUEST:

**TO PAINT
COVE ISLAND
PARK'S
PARKING LOT
BRIDGE**



THE TEAM:

- **Laurie Newkirk**, Project Founder & Project Organizer
- **James Gerelli**, Co-Project Organizer
- **Christina Crain**, Executive Director of the Stamford Senior Center
- **Rene Soto**, Art Director of the Stamford Senior Center & Award-winning Artist



COVE ISLAND PARK IS BEAUTIFUL:

THE BRIDGE IS NOT:



THE PLAN IS TO
CHANGE THE
BRIDGE FROM
DIRTY TO
WELCOMING!



THE IDEA:

- The concrete bridge going from the parking lot to the park at Cove Island Park is not in keeping with the rich, natural beauty of the park! The bridge is drab and almost depressing. By creating a positive "Welcome" mural, we can give people an uplifting boost as they walk into the park.
 - There is clear research evidence that public art developed and installed in community spaces can impact community health. Stamford has done a wonderful job of embracing this concept with the art projects that have been installed around the town over the years.
-

WHERE THE IDEA ORIGINATED:

- Walking across the bridge, Laurie Newkirk, an award-winning writer and speaker on the topic of anxiety was struck by how the dirty bridge elicited a feeling of sadness. She knew by painting the bridge, it could be transformed into a subtle message of welcoming and help people feel better.
 - Her friend accompanying her, James Gerelli, a corporate executive, said, “Well then, don’t just talk about, do something about it and I’ll help.”
 - And the Welcome Bridge Project was born.
-

WHO SHOULD PAINT IT?

Based on the research that seniors are a vulnerable population for loneliness, suicide and ageism, the answer seemed clear, the **Stamford Senior Center!**



Amazingly, the Executive Director of the Stamford Center, Christina Crain, had recently hired a talented new Art Director, Rene Soto, and they were looking for a place for the seniors to paint a mural!

BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY & PURPOSE:

- By having the bridge painted by seniors we can have a direct positive impact on them. According to Harvard Medical School:

"Studies have shown that expressing themselves through art can help people with depression, anxiety, or cancer, too. And doing so has been linked to improved memory, reasoning, and resilience in older people."
 - One of highest risk groups for anxiety and depression are senior citizens. By utilizing their talents to paint the bridge, it's a message to both them, and the community, of the value of our older neighbors. The bridge is low, so no ladders are needed, again making it an ideal place for senior involvement.
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IS IT FUNDED?

- Yes! The Senior Center has received a 2022 Micro Grant from the City of Stamford through the Mayor's office to paint the bridge.



PAINTING PROCESS

- Power wash the bridge
 - Prime the walls
 - Paint the mural
 - Cover with protective coating
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- **NOTE:** The bridge has two pathways so it can be painted "one side" at a time allowing it to remain usable for people/vehicles to cross the entire time.

TIMING

- 1 day to power wash
- 1 week to prime and paint
- 1 afternoon to celebrate

- Painting to take place either the week of July 11 or July 18 depending on the weather.

NOTE: Everything will be done on weekdays to avoid high traffic days.

MURAL DESIGNER – RENE SOTO

- Rene is the Art Director of the Stamford Senior Center.
- He is the recipient of many awards including the Art Hero Award given by the State of CT in 2018
- Born in 1986, in La Libertad Peten, Guatemala Rene left in 2011 to pursue a career as an artist. He successfully ran Rene Soto Gallery in Norwalk until the pandemic.
- Rene created the citywide project, “Guatemala Everywhere,” which opened the door for other artists from Guatemala to exhibit their art throughout Stamford.

DESIGN

- The design is a welcoming water theme.
- The design will flow over the tops of the walls.
- The front and back sides of the bridge will not have the full design (since there is no access due to the water beneath) but will be painted with rollers and have a similar color scheme.
- The ends of the bridge will be refreshed with a new coat of approved safety yellow.

THE DESIGN



Artist rendering: for illustration detail purposes only



Rene
5/0
9/0

CELEBRATE

- Once the painting process is complete, the plan is to have a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Friday, July 29th at 2-3pm to officially “announce” the bridge to the community.
- The invitees would include: all the members of the Permit Approval Committee, Stamford Senior Center staff and seniors, everyone who helped with the project, local media, and state and local politicians. (The Mayor has it on her calendar pending permit approval.)

WIN-WIN

This welcome bridge painting project is a win for Cove Island Park, a win for the community and a win for our seniors!

We look forward to hopefully getting your approval.

Thank you for you time and consideration!