

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**APPROVED MINIUTES - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2023**  
**REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING**  
**VIA INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL**  
**6:30 P.M.**

**ZOOM WEBINAR**  
*Webinar ID: 886 0925 4908*  
*Passcode: 367188*

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A Regular Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, October 18, 2023 via the Internet on Zoom.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Paul Newman, Chair  
Melanie Hollas, Vice Chair  
Angela Adetola  
Jessica Katz  
Michael Tedder

Staff: Kevin Murray, Director of Parks & Recreation  
Erin McKenna, Senior Planner, Land Use Bureau  
Lesley Capp, Assistant - Parks & Recreation Commission

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Newman called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and introduced the Commission Members and staff present.

Mr. Newman introduced the first item on the agenda.

➤ **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:** Each individual requesting to speak shall send a Chat Message to the Chair stating their name and address for the record. Public participation comments shall be limited to 3 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

There was no one in attendance who wished to speak.

➤ Review of the September 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Draft Minutes.<sup>2</sup>

Ms. Hollas made a motion to approve the September 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Draft Minutes.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola  
(Mr. Tedder was ineligible to vote as he was absent at the September 20, 2023 meeting.)

Unanimously Approved

Mr. Newman suspended the Regular Meeting and opened the Public Hearing.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp - 00:01:07

<sup>2</sup> Video Time Stamp - 00:02:00

<sup>3</sup> Video Time Stamp - 00:05:00

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK**

- *Speakers from the public will have 5 minutes each to speak.*
- *Any public speaker wishing to submit a written statement prior to the meeting can send it to Lesley Capp, Assistant to the Parks & Recreation Commission at [lcapp@stamfordct.gov](mailto:lcapp@stamfordct.gov) or to Paul Newman, Parks & Recreation Commission Chair at [pnewman@stamfordct.gov](mailto:pnewman@stamfordct.gov) or submit the request through a Chat message to the Chair during the meeting.*
- *During the meeting, please do not send Chat messages to “Everyone” as it is distracting for all attendees.*
- *Public Speakers calling in will be allowed to speak first. Callers will push “\*9” to use the raise hand feature to indicate they would like to speak. Each speaker will clearly state their name and address for the record prior to making any comments.*
- *Speakers attending online will be allowed to speak second. Those online participants who wish to speak must send a Chat Message to the Moderator and the Parks & Recreation Chair with their name and address to sign-up to speak. Speakers will be taken in the order the Chat Messages are received.*
- *All public speakers shall announce their name and address clearly for the record prior to speaking.*

Mr. Newman read the item scheduled for discussion into the record as follows:

- **SCOFIELDTOWN PARK DOG PARK:** The Parks & Recreation Commission will consider the installation of a Dog Park at Scofieldtown Park located at Scofieldtown Road and Rock Rimmon Road, Stamford, Connecticut.

Mr. Newman asked Ms. Capp to read the legal notice into the record as follows:

**LEGAL NOTICE  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
THE CITY OF STAMFORD**

*Notice is hereby given that the Parks & Recreation Commission of the City of Stamford will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. via internet video conference and phone to consider the installation of a Dog Park at Scofieldtown Park located at Scofieldtown Road and Rock Rimmon Road, Stamford, Connecticut.*

**ATTEST: PAUL NEWMAN, CHAIR  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

*Dated at the City of Stamford this 11th day of October 2023.*

Ms. Capp also stated that several emails were received in opposition to the dog park and will be made part of the public record.

Mr. Newman provided details on the rules and procedure for the Public Hearing.

Mr. Newman introduced Ms. McKenna.

Erin McKenna, Senior Planner, Land Use Bureau, made brief introductory comments then introduced Aris Stalis, Aris Land Studio, to make the presentation on the Scofieldtown Park Dog Park.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Video Time Stamp - 00:09:30

Ms. McKenna read into the record an email from Scott Clayton, Principal, Scofield Magnet Middle School as follows:

*Thanks for including me. Not sure how I can weigh in on this or even if my opinion is appropriate. As the principal at Scofield Middle School, we get a significant amount of dog walker traffic on school grounds during the regular school day. A dog park across the street may reduce the disruption due to the high frequency of dog walkers can cause us during school hours. Staff members have actually been attacked and bitten by loose dogs. On another occasion a loose dog actually got into the building. Happy to talk next week if it helps.*

*Regards,*

*Scott Clayton, Principal*

The Commission then had considerable discussion about the dog park.

Mr. Newman opened the public portion of the Hearing.<sup>5</sup>

Ms. Capp stated there were comments posted in the Q&A and were read into the record as follows:

*The dog park on Courtland Avenue is quite a mess. There does not seem to be any upkeep. This all looks nice but how will it be maintained? There are dead trees in the park for years. They have never been replaced. Suppose these trees die? Do we just have to look at them too? As it is, there are doggy bags provided and many do not use them. I wonder if people will be more concerned in a park?*

*Natural grass will become a mud pit. It will never stay grass with dogs running around.*

*Why not put \$150,000 on a shelter? Our shelter is a disgrace to this city!*

*People who walk the trails at the Arboretum are not looking for a dog park to take the place of a hike with their dog.*

The following citizens spoke:

- Dr. Leigh Shemitz (President, SoundWaters & Environmental Protection Board member) - 135 Hannahs Road - In favor.
- Gabriel Silver - In favor.
- Glenn & Ann Zorn - 29 Alexander Drive - In favor.
- Tom Lombardo - 65 Hickory Road - Opposed.
- Vicki Wray - 89 Haviland Road - Opposed.
- Geraldine Nuzzo - 759 Scofieldtown Road - Opposed.

Mr. Newman closed the public portion of the Hearing.

The Commission had some final discussion and decided to **TABLE** making a decision so the Commission could review all the information provided and make arrangements for David Winston, Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary, come to a future meeting to make a presentation on bird habitat and the possible effects the dog park could have on birds and other wildlife.

Mr. Newman closed the Public Hearing.

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<sup>5</sup> Video Time Stamp - 00:58:10

## ***REGULAR MEETING CONTINUED AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING.***

### **SPECIAL EVENTS:**

- Mags Conroy - Southern Connecticut Synchronized Skating - **22nd Annual Terry Conners Synchronized Skating Open - Saturday, December 2, 2023 & Sunday, December 3, 2023 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Terry Conners Rink** - Set-up Begins at 10:30 a.m. and Clean-up Ends at 5:00 p.m. - 700 Total Participants.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Tedder made a motion to approve the Southern Connecticut Synchronized Skating 22nd Annual Terry Conners Synchronized Skating Open on Saturday, December 2, 2023 & Sunday, December 3, 2023 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Terry Conners Rink.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Publicly Accessible Amenity Spaces (PAAS) - Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief:** Mr. Blessing will provide information on Publicly Accessible Amenity Spaces in the City of Stamford.<sup>7</sup>

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

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Cummings Park & Scalzi Park - Pickleball Courts - Doug Edwards, Ambassador, USA Pickleball Association:** Mr. Edwards will make a presentation on proposed work at the Cummings Park and Scalzi Park pickleball courts.<sup>8</sup>

Ms. Adetola made a motion to approve the temporary painting of pickleball lines with temporary nets, installation of signage and paddle racks on the two (2) tennis courts at Cummings Park to be completed by USA Pickleball Association.

Seconded by Ms. Hollas

Unanimously Approved

- **Policy, Rules, Guidelines & Vision for Stamford Parks** (*Tabled from the July 19, 2023, August 16, 2023 & September 20, 2023 Meetings*): Review of the proposed edits discussed at the July 19, 2023 meeting.

This item was **TABLED** to the November 15, 2023 meeting.

### **TOURNAMENTS:**

- No Tournaments.

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**<sup>9</sup>

- **Robert Pepe, Executive Director, Stamford Youth Soccer League:** Mr. Newman introduced an email received by Mr. Pepe expressing a serious problem with non-permitted users on the soccer fields at West Beach.

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<sup>6</sup> Video Time Stamp - 01:37:50

<sup>7</sup> Video Time Stamp - 01:44:18

<sup>8</sup> Video Time Stamp - 02:19:05

<sup>9</sup> Video Time Stamp - 02:37:40

## **STAFF REPORTS:**

➤ Kevin Murray, Director of Parks & Recreation: Parks & Recreation Update.  
The following Staff Report was submitted and discussed by Mr. Murray:<sup>10</sup>

*[Begin Report]*

- Barret Park walk through for Potential bidders was held on Tuesday, October 10, 2023. Five (5) Companies attended. Bids are due October 21, 2023. Equipment is ordered.
- Parks Strategic Plan Retreat held Wednesday, October 18, 2023.
- 2023 Beach Parking Report. (Attached)
- Parks & Recreation Revenue Report. (Attached)
- Terry Conners Ice Rink September Revenue. (Attached)
- Terry Conners Roof Project is complete and wrapping up ladder addition for roof access.
- Fall Leagues are in progress for Volleyball, Kickball, pickleball and softball.
- Synchronized Open Event is in the approval que for December 2 & 3, 2023 at Terry Conner's Rink.
- Scalzi Park Bocce Court scope and estimated cost proposal documents have been sent to City for review.
- Parks seasonal employees end of season was on Sunday, October 15, 2023. Will be keeping (7) employees for field maintenance/organic turf treatment until Friday, November 3, 2023 and (5) employees for bathroom maintenance until Sunday, November 19, 2023 for West Beach, Cummings Beach, Cove Island Park red brick building, Scalzi Park maintenance building, Courtland Avenue, Barrett Park and Lione Park. Hours of operation 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily.
- Sleepy Hollow swing installation has been completed and awaiting ribbon cutting ceremony with the Administration.
- FY 2024-2025 Capital submissions have been submitted and will be meeting with the Planning Board for pre-Planning meeting on Wednesday, October 18, 2023. Projects will be reported to this Commission with next month's update. On October 24, 2023 projects will be in front of the Planning Board.
- Phil J. Giordano Nemotin Park Playground sign unveiling was held on Thursday, September 28, 2023.
- Cove Marina pilings investigation was done on Wednesday, October 11, 2023. Awaiting results and will have game plan once findings received.
- Cubeta Stadium perimeter fence damaged from fallen tree removed and getting price proposals for repair via Risk Management.
- Productive Field Assessment Data meeting with Gabby Silver and Melanie Hollas was held on Thursday, October 5, 2023 with Recreation staff. (Notes Attached)
- Attending Parks & Recreation Committee meeting on Thursday, October 19, 2023.
  1. Barrett Park Capital Improvements.
  2. Scalzi Park Bocce Court Reconstruction Plan.
  3. Possibility of installing lights at the West Beach soccer and baseball fields.
  4. Arrangements with the Town of Greenwich for shared parks, covering maintenance, pesticide use, invasive species removal and Capital improvements.

*[End Report]*

## **DISCUSSION:**<sup>11</sup>

- **Citywide Parks Strategic Plan Update.**
- **Parks & Recreation Commission Strategic Goals for 2023/2024.**

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<sup>10</sup> Video Time Stamp - 02:50:00

<sup>11</sup> Video Time Stamp - 03:05:04

➤ **Update of Parks & Recreation Commission Strategic Goals for 2022/2023 as follows:**

- Mr. Newman and Ms. Hollas: Friends Groups.

Ms. Hollas provided an update stating she was still working with Legal on the agreements.

- Ms. Hollas: Invasive Species initiative & RFP Update.

Ms. Hollas stated she has asked Erin McKenna, Senior Planner, Land Use Bureau to have BCS Group come and present to the Commission at a future meeting.

- Mr. Tedder and Ms. Katz: Foundation and the City website.

The Commission had some discussion regarding who would be responsible for the Foundation and whether it should remain as part of the meeting agenda going forward.

➤ **Application and Waiver Agreement for volunteer groups to work in the City parks.**

***NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION OFFICERS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS (Tabled from the September 20, 2023 Meeting).***<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Newman stated the rules and procedure for nominations and elections.

Mr. Newman opened the floor to nominations and elections.

➤ Nominations from the floor for Parks & Recreation Commission Chairperson.

Mr. Tedder nominated Ms. Hollas for Chairperson.

There were no other nominations.

➤ Nominations from the floor for Parks & Recreation Commission Vice-Chairperson.

Ms. Hollas nominated Mr. Tedder for Vice Chairperson.

There were no other nominations.

➤ Election of Parks & Recreation Commission Chairperson.

Mr. Newman called for a vote to elect Ms. Hollas for Chairperson.

All Commissioners Unanimously Approved to elect Melanie Hollas as Chairperson.

➤ Election of Parks & Recreation Commission Chairperson.

Mr. Newman called for a vote to elect Mr. Tedder for Vice-Chairperson.

All Commissioners Unanimously Approved to elect Michael Tedder as Vice-Chairperson.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Newman adjourned the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Capp

Assistant to the Parks & Recreation Commission

October 30, 2023

*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](http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_is=9)

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<sup>12</sup> Video Time Stamp - 03:14:37