

From: Sharon Larsen <snlarsen45@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2024 5:28 PM

To: Hollas, Melanie <MHollas@StamfordCT.gov>; Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>

Subject: Proposal to ban balloons and confetti in parks

To: Stamford Parks & Recreation Commission

RE: Proposal to Ban Balloons and Confetti in Stamford Public Parks

Statement in support of banning the use of confetti in Stamford Parks, March 2024

Dear Commission Members,

Based on The Stamford Garden Club's experience at maintaining Goodbody Garden at Fort Stamford for close to 50 years, we would encourage the City to ban the use of balloons, foil confetti and similar items such as fabric petals in the parks. Goodbody is host to many activities such as weddings, gender reveal parties, and picture shoots of all kinds. Increasingly we have seen the presence of confetti and balloon debris from gender reveal events, and fabric petals in some cases several inches thick inches thick, after weddings. This debris is not easily recovered since it gets in among the plants and shrubs, nor does it decompose. Our club finds ourselves frequently picking up such litter on our gardening days at the park.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Larsen, The Stamford Garden Club President, Goodbody Garden Co-Chair

March 18, 2024

Stamford Parks & Recreation Commission
RE: Proposal to Ban Balloons and Confetti in Stamford Public Parks

C/O: Lesley Capp, 888 Washington Blvd, 7th Floor, Stamford, CT

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important amendment to your Park Regulations.

The release of balloons with their attendant ribbons into the atmosphere has become a major wildlife hazard in Connecticut and elsewhere.

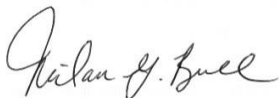
Often deflating over Long Island Sound, these balloons become attractive nuisances for wildlife, particularly Ospreys, who often pick them up and use them as nesting material.

Every year, Ospreys, both chicks and adults, become entangled in these materials and either strangle in their nests or become entangled, unable to free themselves, often hanging from the nest and perishing.

Therefore, we urgently request the Parks Department to immediately adopt Section 175-1-9A (NEW) new regulations concerning the Use or Possession of Balloons or confetti.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Milan J. Bull".

Milan Bull, Senior Director of Science and Conservation
Connecticut Audubon Society
2325 Burr Street
Fairfield, CT 06824
mbull@ctaudubon.org



Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary Stamford, Ct.

Parks & Recreation Commission
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford Ct. 06905

March 19, 2024

Commissioners:

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary, I would like to express our support for a complete ban on the use of helium filled balloons in Stamford's Parks.

We can see no useful purpose to continue to permit any item which can be released either intentionally or accidentally into the environment to never be recovered. Unfortunately, the only way we ever see a released helium balloon again is washed up on beaches, tangled in the tops of trees, tangled around the legs of waterfowl, ingested by fishes, or in way too many cases wrapped around and in bird nests, eventually entangling any adult or chick unfortunate enough to use that nest.

This novelty is just one of many vestigial forms of entertainment whose time has come to reside in the history books.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Winston, President

From: David Kooris <david@stamford-downtown.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 11:44 AM

To: Hollas, Melanie <MHollas@StamfordCT.gov>; Lynne Colatrella <lynne@stamford-downtown.com>; Michael Moore <moore@stamford-downtown.com>

Cc: Kate Cook <kate@stamford-downtown.com>; Tedder, Michael <MTedder@StamfordCT.gov>

Subject: Re: Possible Balloon and Confetti ban in Stamford Parks

Melanie,

I'm emailing to confirm Stamford Downtown's support for the proposed ban on balloons and confetti in city parks and recreation facilities.

We fully support the effort to limit organizations and individuals' impact on the environment and enhance the quality of our public spaces.

This regulation will not negatively impact Stamford Downtown's own events or operations.

Thanks,
David

From: Susan Halpern <suehrn1@optonline.net>
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 8:16 PM
To: Hollas, Melanie <MHollas@StamfordCT.gov>
Subject: Ban Balloons and confetti in City parks!

Good afternoon all,

Balloons can travel thousands of miles from their release point. Research has shown countless dolphins, whales and sea turtles have died due to ingesting deflated balloons. Confetti can be mistaken for food by fish and birds. The material can clog the intestines of the fish and cause death.

Even paper confetti can contain harmful chemicals and dyes that can contaminate the environment and poison wildlife.

Wildflower seeds or birdseed may be an option to confetti! 😊

Please ban harmful balloons and plastic and metallic confetti in city parks!

Thank you very much.

Sue Halpern RN
South End NRZ



Stamford Parks & Recreation Commission

March 20, 2024, Public Hearing

Testimony submitted by Friends of Animals, 777 Post Road, Suite 205, Darien, CT 06820

RE: Section 175-1-9a [NEW]: Use or Possession of Balloons or Confetti in Stamford Public Parks

We at Friends of Animals, an international animal advocacy organization based in Darien, voice our support for legislation that would ban the use or possession of balloons and confetti in Stamford parks.

While meant to be symbols of celebration and joy, latex and mylar (mylar is the brand so I would say foil) balloons and most forms of confetti are widespread sources of litter that pollute the environment and pose serious risks to wildlife, including birds, turtles, whales, porpoises, and other animals, on both land and sea.

Neither metallic nor plastic confetti are biodegradable, and plastic confetti breaks down into microplastics, which are insidiously harmful to human and animal health. Because many kinds of confetti are shiny, birds, turtles, fish and other animals mistakenly think it is food. And while it is considered biodegradable after a few months, biodegradable does not mean harmless. Three months is plenty of time for confetti to harm and kill wildlife. Not to mention, tossed paper confetti becomes litter, which is illegal, for somebody else to pick up.

The hazardous impacts of balloon litter are even more clear:

- Balloons are ranked third after fishing gear and plastic bags & utensils as litter items that pose the greatest entanglement and ingestion risk to wildlife.
- A 2019 study found that balloons are the highest-risk plastic debris item for seabirds-32 times more likely to kill them than ingesting hard plastics. In the water, these balloons can resemble squid and jellyfish, posing life-threatening risks to turtles and cetaceans.

Banning the possession of balloons at an outdoor park is an appropriate precaution, as it's just too risky to have them in hand or tethered by a string. Intentional releases or even "oops!" accidents are all too common. There are many perfectly acceptable alternatives to both balloons and confetti used in celebration or in memoriam. Among them: blowing bubbles, ribbon wands and glow sticks, paper streamers, and confetti made of dried flowers or bird seed.

The proposed ban on bringing balloons and confetti into public parks comes at an opportune time as it represents an opportunity for Stamford Parks & Rec to show leadership on this important environmental issue and inspire statewide elected officials to consider enacting similar legislation.

The Environment Committee has raised SB No. 291, "*An Act Concerning the Sale of Certain Balloons.*" This proposed legislation represents progress in calling for such balloons to be made of biodegradable latex rather than mylar, a type of nylon coated with aluminum foil.

However, given that so-called "biodegradable" balloons take two years to break down by even 90 percent, at best, how does doing nothing to ban their release help save marine wildlife from choking on them in the meantime? Two years is a long time for turtles and dolphins to mistake the floating balloons for jellyfish or for seabirds to get fatally entangled in their strings. And who wants *any* kind of hazardous trash to litter our waters and land? In fact, thinking a balloon labeled as "biodegradable" is somehow *not* trash and will soon disappear may lead to more intentional releases, not fewer.

The use or possession of balloons and, worse, their release, is the issue. This is particularly true in Stamford, as many of the most-used parks are located right on Long Island Sound.

Friends of Animals has asked the CGA Environment Committee to include language, from last year's bill, that would ban the intentional release of lighter-than-air balloons. While not as far-reaching or effective as Stamford's proposed ban of their use in public parks, a statewide ban on their release is the most achievable way to protect marine animals and other wildlife, as well as to reduce both short- and long-term pollution.

The proposal being considered by the Stamford Parks & Recreation Commission has it just right: No person, whether acting individually or as a member of an event being held pursuant to a permit, shall possess, use as decoration, discard, or release into the atmosphere balloons, confetti, or glitter within the limits of a park or recreational facility.

Speaking on behalf of its many members and supporters who live in Stamford, Friends of Animals urges the Commission to approve Section 175-1-9a: Use or Possession of Balloons or Confetti within the limits of a park.



Scott Smith
Communications Director Friends of Animals
777 Post Road, Suite 205
Darien, CT 06820