

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024
REGULAR MEETING
VIA INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL
6:30 P.M.

ZOOM MEETING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87689487270>

Meeting ID: 876 8948 7270

Passcode: 122464

A Regular Meeting & Public Hearing of the Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 via the Internet on Zoom.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Melanie Hollas, Chair
Michael Tedder, Vice Chair
Angela Adetola (Left meeting at 8:40 p.m.)
Benjamin Pomerantz
Paul Newman

Staff: Kevin Murray, Director of Parks & Recreation (Arrived at 6:40 p.m.)
Lesley Capp, Assistant - Parks & Recreation Commission

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Hollas called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. and introduced the Commission members and staff present.

Ms. Hollas 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.

There was no one in attendance who wished to speak.

Ms. Hollas called for a motion to “Walk On” the Draft Minutes from the March 20, 2024 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing as this item was omitted from tonight's agenda.

Mr. Tedder made a motion to “Walk On” the March 20, 2024 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Draft Minutes.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved (5-0)

➤ Review of the March 20, 2024 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Draft Minutes. (*Tabled from the April 17, 2024 meeting - “Walked On”*)

Mr. Newman made a motion to approve the March 20, 2024 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Draft Minutes.

Seconded by Mr. Tedder

Unanimously Approved (4-0)

(Mr. Pomerantz was ineligible to vote as he was not a member of the Commission at the March 20, 2024 meeting.)

➤ Review of the April 17, 2024 Regular Meeting Draft Minutes.

Mr. Pomerantz made a motion to approve the April 17, 2024 Regular Meeting Draft Minutes.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved (3-0)

(Mr. Newman and Mr. Tedder were ineligible to vote as they were absent at the April 17, 2024 meeting.)

SPECIAL EVENTS:

➤ Sharmin Jahan, Stamford Health - *Little Steps for Hearth Health - Sunday, June 9 through Monday, September 30, 2024 at Latham Park and Scalzi Park* - Set-up Begins on Saturday, June 1, 2024 and Clean-up Ends on Monday, September 30, 2024 - 20,000 Total Participants.

Ms. Sharmin, along with Charlie Malekan and Catey Condit, made a presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

After considerable discussion, the Commission decided to **TABLE** this item to the June 12, 2024 meeting recommending the applicant speak with Michael Moore, Vice President Operations; Stamford Downtown Special Services District.

NEW BUSINESS:

➤ **Melanie Hollas - Pollinator Pathway Stamford:** Request for four (4) parking passes for the 2024 parks season to be provided to Master Gardner interns who volunteer to work in the Cove Island Park pollinator garden throughout the season.

Ms. Hollas recused herself from this item as she is a member of Pollinator Pathway Stamford and Mr. Tedder took over the meeting.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Adetola made a motion to approve the four (4) parking passes to Pollinator Pathway Stamford for the 2024 Parks Season.

Seconded by Mr. Newman

Unanimously Approved (4-0)

OLD BUSINESS:

➤ **Proposed Scofieldtown Park Dog Park:** Mike Tedder, Commissioner, will provide an update on the evaluation and design regarding the size of dog park.

Ms. Hollas made brief introductory comments and introduced Mr. Tedder.

Mr. Tedder made a presentation providing an update on the status of the dog park.

After some discussion, Mr. Tedder made a motion to approve the current plans for the Dog Park and send on to the Board of Representatives, Parks & Recreation Committee for final approval.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Approved (4-0-1)

(Adetola, Newman, Pomerantz & Tedder - In Favor / Hollas - Abstain)

➤ **2024-2025 Capital Budget Update:** Status of the Capital Budget process.

Ms. Hollas provided an overview of the final Capital Budget for Parks & Recreation after going through the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives.

➤ **Field Use Policy:** Update on League Surveys.

Ms. Hollas provided an update on the League Surveys and answered questions from the Commission.

Ms. Hollas called for a motion to bring forward the Review of the revised language for Pavilion Use and Balloons and Confetti in City parks from the *Discussion* items.

Mr. Tedder made a motion to bring forward Review of the revised language for Pavilion Use and Balloons and Confetti in City parks from the *Discussion* items.

Seconded by Mr. Newman

Unanimously Approved (5-0)

DISCUSSION:

- Review of revised proposed language for Pavilion Use Policy.
- Review of revised proposed language on the ban of balloons and confetti in City parks.

Ms. Hollas presented an update on the proposed language and provided the comments from the Legal Department. Ms. Hollas then introduced Mr. Gould.

Peter Gould, Park Police, made a presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

After considerable discussion on both sets of proposed language, Mr. Tedder made a motion to strike Letter (c) from Section 175-1-5: Damaging Park Property and Letter (b) from Section 175-1-9a: Use or Possession of Balloons or Confetti as recommended by Corporate Counsel and to adjust numbering of the items and send on to the Board of Representatives for final approval.

Seconded by Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved (5-0)

Ms. Hollas called for a motion to return to the Regular Meeting agenda.

Mr. Tedder made a motion to return to the Regular Meeting agenda.

Seconded Ms. Adetola

Unanimously Approved (5-0)

NOTE: Ms. Adetola left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

TOURNAMENTS:

- No Tournaments.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Jonathan Lach, President, Wallack's Point Association:** Mr. Lach sent the Commission a letter with comments regarding Stamford Stars softball games at Cove Island Park with a complaint of loud music and announcements.

Ms. Hollas made note of an error in the agenda where it is stated in the item description "Stamford Bombers" where it should be "Stamford Stars."

Ms. Hollas read Mr. Lach's letter into the record as follows:

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to you in my capacity as President of the Wallacks Point Association. Our community recognizes the importance of and supports the opportunity for young residents to participate in team sports. However, we were surprised this past weekend with constant blaring announcements and loud music coming from the softball field at Cove Island Park.

We understand there is a new softball team, Stamford Stars, using that field for their home games. We would appreciate it if the Parks & Recreation Commission could let this group know that the PA system is not to be used other than for game announcements during tournaments. Amplified music and constant booming chatter are disruptive to the surrounding neighborhoods and, as we understand it, against Park rules.

Thanks so much for your attention to this matter.

*Sincerely,
Jonathan Lach*

Mr. Murray stated he spoke to a representative of the Stamford Stars.

Ms. Hollas asked to “Walk On” the revisions to the Inland Wetland and Watercourses Regulations of the City of Stamford submitted today from the Environmental Protection Board (EPB).

Ms. Hollas made a presentation providing details of EPB’s request and stated she would forward all documentation received to the Commission for review and discussion at the June 12, 2024 meeting.

STAFF REPORTS:

➤ Kevin Murray, Director of Parks & Recreation: Parks & Recreation Update.

The following Staff Report was submitted and discussed by Mr. Murray:

[Begin Report]

- Terry Conner Rink (TCR) Revenue Report. (**Attached**)
- Parks & Recreation Revenue Report. (**Attached**)
- Danny Boy, LLC will be managing the beach/park concession once again as this is the last year for an extension. Contract will be going out to bid this fall.
- Site meeting with Stamford DAR to discuss alternative location for the approved 250th Anniversary Plaque which needs to stand alone.
- Cummings Park pavilion and beach promenade project is scheduled to be completed early June. Staff to meet to discuss alternative lifeguard locations and amenities to accommodate residents.
- TCR meeting with Office of Policy & Management and the Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor to discuss capital for purchase of new Zamboni and building upgrades which include upgrades to tall rink glass/supports, water heater/bleacher heater, cooling tower head pump, arena seating/capping.
- Site Visit at Susan Nable at Chestnut Hill Park on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 to discuss the location of the donated Seward Johnson statue.
- Park surveillance camera meeting on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 with Public Safety Director and Operations to discuss the procedure and approval review to see what can be done to start implementing.

- Beach and park kick-off meetings are in progress. Operations team has met for the third time to discuss transparent information on openings. This meeting includes Operation teams, Stamford Police Dept./ Park police and the startup of the Park Ambassadors.
- Domus Work Group will once again assist Parks Department with monitoring and maintenance of twenty-eight (28) park locations (islands and medians) and illegal dumping locations weekly.
- Parks & Recreation took a building tour of the YMCA location last week with Administration. Idea would be to run a Recreation Center within this location to run programs and exclusive rights to the swimming pool. Negotiations TBD.
- Veterans Memorial Park upgrades to the Lincoln Statue, addition of a natural drain located in the back of the park slope which created major washout after heavy rains and tree installations and relocation of trees within the park. Special thanks to Patricia Perry and the Veterans for the assistance on the relocation of the trees and plantings.
- Veterans Memorial Park annual power washing was done on Sunday, May 7, 2024.
- West Beach Boat Ramp Ribbon Cutting was held on Thursday, May 2, 2024 with Administration.
- Excalibur Fence Company has repositioned the entry gate at Drotar Park for access to the field. Upgraded gates and repaired fence at Cubeta Stadium and now working on Cove Island Park playground fence with repair of perimeter fence near Connex container for the Youth Bureau watercraft program.
- Arbor Day was held at Cove Island Park on Friday, May 26, 2024. Special thanks to the City Forestry Department, Elm Landscaping and Davy Tree. Three (3) trees have been planted within the playground area.
- Scofieldtown Park access ramp has been paved by the City Highway Department for ADA access.
- Parks Seasonal Staff Hiring: In the last phase prior to Memorial Day with thirty-five (35) seasonal employees.
- Cove Island Park loop (left side) within the great lawn was paved and signs and lines are now marking the three (3) Trails. Walk trail/run trail and the inner loop for wheels.
- Barret Park playground looks amazing and will be close to being open for Memorial Day. Ribbon cutting TBA.
- Recreation Camps: Seven (7) are completely filled; 315 kids on the wait list.
- Recreation Lifeguards: Forty (40) lifeguards are hired and all certified for the 2024 Season.
- Recreation Softball startups on April 24, 2024 and Kickball on April 25, 2024
- Beach volleyball startups on Monday, June 3, 2024.
- Park Event Coordinator (part-time position) posted.
- Park police/Park Ranger positions posted.

[End Report]

DISCUSSION (Con't):

- **Scalzi Park Hockey/Pickleball Court:** Discuss possible designated time slot on Sundays (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) for hockey only.

After some discussion, Mr. Pomerantz made a motion to approve the designated time slot of 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for hockey on Sundays only at the Scalzi Park Hockey/Pickleball Court.

Seconded by Mr. Tedder

Unanimously Approved (4-0)

➤ **Friends Groups Beach/Parking Permits:**

1. Friends/Volunteer Group must be an established Non-profit 501c3 or Community Group that has submitted the “*Volunteer Community Group Services Application and Agreement*” to the City of Stamford Parks & Recreation Department and received approval.

2. Groups in existence for three (3) years minimum do not need to attend a Parks & Recreation Commission meeting for approval of free beach/parking permit passes.
3. Groups under three (3) years minimum are required to attend a Parks & Recreation Commission meeting for approval of free beach/parking passes.
4. A maximum of fifteen (15) passes may be requested.

After some discussion, Mr. Newman made a motion to approve the language as proposed above for the Friends Groups' parking permits.

Seconded by Mr. Pomerantz

Unanimously Approved (4-0)

➤ 2023-2025 Strategic Goals Review.

Ms. Hollas provided an update on the Strategic Goals.

➤ Angela Adetola, Commissioner: Update on Transition Committee.

Ms. Hollas provided a brief update in Ms. Adetola's absence.

➤ Paul Newman, Commissioner: Parks not zoned as parks.

This item was discussed under the 2023-2025 Strategic Goals.

➤ Paul Newman & Mike Tedder: Commissioners: Update on Policy & Procedure revisions.

Mr. Newman and Mr. Tedder stated nothing new to report at this time.

Ms. Hollas mentioned the Invasive Species Initiative and asked the Commission if they would like to invite the Consultant to a future meeting to provide a brief overview of the report they provided to the City and any significant findings. All Commissioners agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pomerantz made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Newman and the vote was carried unanimously.

Ms. Hollas adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lesley Capp
Assistant to the Parks & Recreation Commission
May 23, 2024

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