

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021
REGULAR MEETING
VIA INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL
6:30 P.M.**

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85824494750>

Meeting ID: 858 2449 4750

Passcode: 547530

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/85824494750>*
- *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, February 17, 2021 via the Internet on Zoom.

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Althea Brown, Interim Chair
Paul Newman
Michael Tedder

Staff: Mark McGrath, Director of Operations
Jennifer Williams, Bureau Chief, Parks & Recreation
Laurie Albano, Superintendent of Recreation
Kevin Murray, Operations Manager, Parks & Facilities
Lesley Capp, Assistant - Parks & Recreation Commission

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Brown called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and introduced the Commission Members and staff present.

Ms. Brown introduced the first item on the agenda.

- Review of the January 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Draft Minutes.

Mr. Newman made a motion to approve the January 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

Seconded by Mr. Tedder

Unanimously Approved

Ms. Brown introduced Mr. Petise.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Transportation Improvement to Access Jackie Robinson Park**¹ - Frank Petise, Traffic Engineer; Transportation, Traffic & Parking Department: To present preliminary conceptual plans for transportation improvements to the intersections of West Main Street at Richmond Hill Avenue and Fairfield Avenue (all of which are immediately adjacent and provide access to Jackie Robinson Park).

Mr. Petise introduced James Travers, former Transportation Bureau Chief. Mr. Travers gave a detailed presentation providing background on the project and details on the improvements/changes proposed to the area. (*PowerPoint presentation submitted*)

- **Online Beach Permit**² - Julie Giglio, Special Assistant to the Mayor and Kevin Murray, Operations Manager Parks & Facilities: Provide highlights on the implementation and outcome of on-line beach permitting. Although this technology is to increase efficiencies and be more cost effective, there is alternative considerations for all Stamford residents and ease of use.

Ms. Giglio made a presentation about obtaining Beach Permits online with a focus on Stamford's senior citizens and answered questions from the Commission. (*PowerPoint presentation submitted*)

- **Request for Sanctioning - Stamford Bombers Youth Baseball Club (SBYBC)**³ - Chris Berlingo; Brenda DeGruttola, President; Carlton Thompson, Board Member; John Leydon, Esq.: SBYBC is requesting to become a sanctioned youth organization from the City of Stamford in order to use City fields from mid-March to the end of October.

Mr. Berlingo, Ms. DeGruttola and Mr. Thompson made a presentation and answered questions from the Commission. (*Informational Documents submitted*)

After considerable discussion, the Commission decided to ***Table*** this item to a future meeting in order to schedule a Special Meeting with the already sanctioned teams (i.e. Legion, all the Little League Teams) and the representatives from SBYBC for further discussion and to perform further due diligence on youth baseball in Stamford.

- **Request for Sanctioning - Stamford Star's Competitive Cheerleader Team** - Donna Watkin, Cheer Coach: Stamford Star's Competitive Cheerleader Team is requesting to become a sanctioned youth organization from the City of Stamford in order to use City parks for practice sessions.

Ms. Albano announced she had spoken with Ms. Watkin earlier in the day and Stamford Star's Competitive Cheerleader Team withdrew their request from the agenda tonight to apply to the Board of Education for field use.

¹ Video Time Stamp - 00:01:30

² Video Time Stamp - 00:21:37

³ Video Time Stamp - 00:40:00

- **Request for Sanctioning - Stamford Flag Football**⁴ - Tom Duddie, President; Chris Donofrio, Vice President; Tom Dougherty, Secretary; Steve Bedosky, Director; Joe Claps, Director; Donny Panapada Director - First Down Club: Request to bring Flag Football back to Stamford and take over the Stamford Youth Foundation.

Mr. Duddie, Mr. Donofrio, Mr. Bedosky, Mr. Panapada and Mr. Claps made a presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Newman made a motion to sanction the First Down Club to take over the Stamford Youth Foundation and move forward with Flag Football.

Seconded by Mr. Tedder

Unanimously Approved

- **Cove Island Park - Trash in Woodland/Wetland Areas**⁵ - Kevin Murray, Operations Manager - Parks & Facilities: Action plan to address years of trash dumping in Cove Island Park's woodland/wetland directly behind the tennis courts, between the tennis courts and Euclid Avenue by residents.

Mr. Murray made a presentation to the Commission providing details about the current condition of the property, recent actions to clean-up the area and future plans to rectify the situation.

Mr. Tedder made a motion to accept Mr. Murray's action plan to clean-up the area behind the tennis courts at Cove Island Park.

Seconded by Mr. Newman

Unanimously Approved

- **Veterans Park - Rule Signage**⁶ - Kevin Murray, Operations Manager - Parks & Facilities: Proposal to place Rule Signage in Veterans Park.

Mr. Murray explained there has been some concerns about skate boarding, scooters, etc. in the park. Signage has been designed to be posted at all entry points. (*Sample signage submitted*)

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tedder made a motion to accept the signage to be posted in Veterans Park.

Seconded by Mr. Newman

Unanimously Approved

OLD BUSINESS:

No Old Business

SPECIAL EVENTS:

No Special Events.

TOURNAMENTS:

No Tournaments.

⁴ Video Time Stamp - 01:24:05

⁵ Video Time Stamp - 01:40:52

⁶ Video Time Stamp - 01:52:55

CORRESPONDENCE:

No Correspondence.

STAFF REPORTS:

- Jennifer Williams, Parks & Recreation Bureau Chief: Monthly Status Report.⁷

Ms. Williams stated Ms. Albano and Mr. Murray covered all of the issues with the Parks and that with her impending departure from the City, the focus has been on Facility issues.

- Laurie Albano, Superintendent of Recreation: Recreation Update.
 - COVID Team Sports Resume Rules
 - Recreation Budget Overview

The following Staff Report was submitted and discussed by Ms. Albano:⁸

[Begin Report]

- No new Positive COVID cases staff wise.
- Budget hearing with the Board of Finance is April 5, 2021 for Recreation and Terry Conner's Rink. One page information sheet highlighting any significant budget issues and Capital funding is to be presented before the hearing. It is due with the Mayor's presentation by March 9, 2021.
- Mayor's budget presentation/questions. (At this time, it has not been distributed.)
- Recreation and Rink staff listening in on new City ERP Financial software presentations by vendors. This will be a full Enterprise Resource Planning system to replace current HTE software. Transition just starting with these vendor presentations to full implementation, which will be up to on average 2 years away. TBD if Recreation and Rink current management software will be integrated. This most likely will factor into the City's goal of one central cashiering location. I have reservations on how that will work for Recreation and Rink programming and customer service.

RECREATION:

- Management Report by Jim Huerta. I will answer any questions (*Management Report submitted*).
- Spring/Summer brochure of programs is out on-line and in hard copy.
- State allowed a reopen on January 19, 2021 for practices and games in February. Adult Volleyball leagues could have, but was not recommended by the City's Health Director to commence in February at Lathon Wider gym.
- Outdoor permits at West Beach could commence, but due to snow cover will not. Lione Park may remain closed?
- E-Sports leagues for youth and adults in collaboration with the Towns of Darien and Fairfield have not taken off so far. We may try again at a later date.
- Sport activities at Lathon Wider with a max of four kids and one coach continue.
- Winter Star Center programs pre- and after school are going well. We did have a potential COVID exposure at our Stay and Play Pre-School. All reported and monitored by the Health Department. As a precaution, we closed for a week and deep cleaned. No further exposure or positive cases in this program.

⁷ Video Time Stamp - 01:59:20

⁸ Video Time Stamp - 02:04:12

- Still planning spring routine seasonal preparation and potential adjustments as virus dictates; i.e. Camp registration, sites, etc.
- Working around summer construction at schools for campsites. Possible issue at the Westover School site with summer school and the Principal not wanting both camp and summer school, but due to Stillmeadow School under full construction, it is critical we have a campsite on that side of the City.
- No decision yet on the reopening of the Heroy Park pool due to COVID. Offering a camp there this year with a notation to registrants that if you register for this camp, the pool may not be available.
- Softball and kickball spring adult leagues are in preparation mode.
- Ad Banner sales approved by the Board of Representatives will begin advertising for sale of such through our leagues and website marketing, etc.
- It has been determined that annual sports pass stickers will continue for all beach parking field use.
- Sanctioned sports league permit meeting for spring and summer was held on February 11, 2021. All guidelines were discussed regarding application, rules and policies. Great attendance.
- Revenues down in Recreation due to COVID (See report).

TERRY CONNER'S RINK:

- New ammonia & ventilation system still on for install ASAP. Bids extended one week from February 4, 2021. Ice up with all programming under way including youth hockey games/practices, skating lessons, synchronized and ice rentals. High school hockey began over the weekend.
- Remainder of Capital projects for compressor and control panel replacement to take place in June, which will require another ice take down, but will be completed before summer ice camps begin. This will put the rink mechanicals in a very good place finally.
- New security system has been installed by the City's contract bid-winning vendor. It is being fine-tuned and a new less sensitive sensor will be added.
- Fire alarm system installed as well.
- Rink still hosting the CHC testing site that is under contract with the City and taking place in the lot outside the rink.
- Third operator vacancy to be held until the new fiscal year begins on July 1, 2021. Not easy, especially on Ken, but using seasonal staff as much as possible to fill the gaps.
- Funding models all projecting new fees to cover all the rink expenses with increases expected on a timeline consistent with future Capital expenditures. (See Rink Revenue Report).
- City has hired a Rink Consultant to review all rink operations. Ken and I will be working closely with him.

[End Report]

- Kevin Murray, Operations Manager - Parks & Facilities: Parks Update.
- Park Budget Overview

The following Staff Report was submitted and discussed by Mr. Murray:⁹

[Begin Report]

- **Veterans Memorial Park:** Rule Signage/discussion and approval. Language/rendering to be sent prior to meeting.

⁹ Video Time Stamp - 02:19:50

- **Cove Island Park:** Trash in woodland/wetland areas. Discussion/action plan.
- Parks & Recreation Committee invited to February 16, 2021 meeting to discuss Summer Beach Access Strategy and Planning PRC30.062 and Budget & Potential Impacts PRC30.063.
- **East Beach Bathroom Pavilion at Cove Island Park:** Update
- **Heavy Snow impacting operations:** Park access/routes.
- **Landscape Specialist/Athletic Field Supervisor:** Update.
- Maintenance position exam to be posted. Execute current list for hiring as we expect movement.
- ORCA (Ocean Recovery Community Alliance) rescheduled cleanup of West beach to February 19, 2021. (See attached flyer.)
- **Dorothy Heroy Pool:** Water/well startup in process. We are meeting with the State when yield test will be performed and water samples will be documented prior to opening.
- Attended sanctioned adult and youth league winter meeting February 11, 2021 and discussed 2021 plans and procedure. Offered site meeting with leagues at sites to discuss prior to startup.
- 2021 Playground repairs. (*List of Playground Repairs submitted*)
- 2021 Operational Parks Planning has begun with staff. Understanding the impact of Executive Orders to follow.
- Coordinating Storm Isaias damage/repair to be coordinated with funding as follows:
 1. Fence repair - \$1,450 - for the fence at Chestnut Hill Park in the outfield.
 2. Fence repair - \$1,100 - for the fence at Michael Drotar Park.
 3. Fence repair - \$4,750 - for the tennis court fence at Scalzi Park.
 4. KYK Construction - \$6,500 - for repair to the roof at Cove Island Park - Quigley Beach Pavilion.
 5. KYK Construction - \$3,000 - for roof repair at West Beach.
 6. Carrot Top Industries - \$1,758.56 - for the flagpole in Liberty Garden.
 7. AAA Advantage Carting & Demolition - \$2,150 - for the installation of the new flagpole at Liberty Garden.

[End Report]

➤ Parks & Recreation Internal Committee Action Report - February 9, 2021. (Posted on Website.)

DISCUSSION:

➤ **Parks & Recreation Commission Policy & Procedures**¹⁰

- Status
- Topic: Grant from Non-profit Groups
- Addition: Parks & Recreation Internal Committee
 - Permit Parking
 - Stamford Friends Agreement and Volunteer Application

Ms. Brown stated she spoke to the Mayor and he mentioned he still does want to come and speak to the Commission about his ideas for the Policy & Procedures and the Bylaws. Ms. Brown said she will continue to reach out every month until he will be able to attend a meeting.

Ms. Brown also stated the Mayor said there was a candidate to fill one of the vacancies but they decided to relocate to another state. He will keep the Commission posted on further developments.

¹⁰ Video Time Stamp - 02:

Ms. Brown provided an update on the grant presented by Melanie Hollas, Co-Founder, Pollinator Pathway Stamford at the January 20, 2021 meeting. Ms. Brown stated she spoke with Karen Cammarota, Grant Officer, City of Stamford, about this grant and since the grant is under \$10,000.00 Ms. Hollas does not need to go before the Parks & Recreation Committee or the Board of Representatives.

Ms. Brown briefly went over the proposed additional language she drafted for the Policy & Procedures and said it would be discussed at the March 17, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Newman asked about the Special Meeting discussed earlier regarding the Stamford Bombers Youth Baseball Club.

Ms. Brown stated she would work on getting it setup with assistance from Ms. Albano and Ms. Capp.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lesley Capp
March 3, 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