

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1465

Zoom Conference Meeting

March 16, 2022

New Haven, CT 06513

Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Carl Babb, Harvey Feinberg, Ernie Santiago, Hector Torres, Kevin Walton; Alder Salvatore DeCola; Stephen Hicks, David Delwiche, Greg Chandler, Rocco Giampaolo, Barbara Lamb, Francesca Vignola
Staff: Director Jeff Pescosolido, Deputy Director William Carone, Director Gwen Williams, Tariq Dasent

- I. **Minutes of Meeting #1464: Motion to approve Minutes of Meeting 1464. Motion Seconded.** President Belowsky, Commissioners Carl Babb, and Harvey Feinberg voted to approve. (Commissioners Ernie Santiago, Hector Torres, and Kevin Walton had not yet joined.) **Closed.**
- II. **Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve Treasurer's Report. Motion Seconded.** President Belowsky, Commissioners Babb, and Feinberg voted to approve. (Commissioners Santiago, Torres, and Walton had not yet joined.) **Closed.**
- III. **New Business:**
- Barbara Lamb, former Director of Cultural Affairs for the City of New Haven invited the commissioners to an event being held on April 11th at Mitchell Library at 6 pm to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Donald Grant Mitchell's birth.
 - Commissioner Santiago and his Ward Committee will present park improvements in his ward at the next meeting.

Yearly Happy Hour at Temple Plaza – Francesca Vignola

Francesca Vignola from Town Green District requested permission to hold happy hour in Temple Plaza. This is a music, food, and game event running from June to August every Friday from 5-7:30 pm. There will be a live band, food and drinks will be provided by nearby restaurants, and lawn games are also put out. The music and games are free, and the food and drinks must be purchased. This event helps bring patrons to the downtown area.

Commissioner Harvey Feinberg asked how security is handled. Vignola responded the Town Green District has Safety Ambassadors that are on call, and they do safety patrols and cleanliness programs. Town Green District does not hire extra duty officers because if they were required it would double or triple the cost and they would not be able to host this event. They do partner with Lieutenant Borer, and he makes sure his bicycle routes are going through the Plaza during the events.

Motion to approve Happy Hour at Temple Plaza. Motion Seconded. Commissioners wanted to be sure they were being fair across the board for all parks events. Commissioner Santiago asked if the Parks Commission ever received a percentage from the proceeds. Commissioner Babb stated no. Commissioner Walton asked if they were going to take a permit out for each night as this is a huge moneymaker event. Deputy Director William Carone stated they will make sure to charge per event. **Commissioner Walton presented an amended motion to approve Happy Hour at Temple Plaza with the recommendations they have a permit for each event and an agreement with the downtown Sergeant that they will**

provide patrol. Seconded. Unanimously approved. Motion passes with the amendment. Closed.

IV. Old Business:

Historical Marker Installation – Greg Chandler & Rocco Giampaolo

Greg Chandler & Rocco Giampaolo returned to discuss the installation of a Historical Marker near 71 Shelton Ave on the Farmington Canal. President Belowsky asked how big the sign was. Chandler responded the sign meets the City Planning specs and matches the other signs along the Farmington Heritage Canal Trail. President Belowsky asked what the dimensions of the sign were. Giampaolo stated the sign is 34 inches by 22 inches and is 34 inches off the ground. Commissioner Torres questioned since there is a rule that there is no signage in the parks would this mean the rule would have to be amended or does this sign fall into a category. President Belowsky responded this is out of the category of rules. Commissioner Harvey asked what the construction material was. Giampaolo stated it is a steel frame with a clear plastic cover.

President Belowsky would like a copy of the bylaws as he does not believe the sign requested will adhere to the no signs in the parks rule. Commissioner Babb believes the commissioners should verify before deciding that there are no signs in other parks. Carone stated he would check the city ordinances or with Corp Counsel regarding the bylaws. President Belowsky stated the commissioners of the Parks Dept. came up with their own verbiage. Carone stated the sign is like one approved by the commissioners at the top of East Rock Park at the summit. Commissioners Santiago and Babb believe if there are similar signs that means they are allowed. Carone will send a picture of the signs to commissioners for their review. Commissioners Torres stated although there may be signs at the summit at East Rock that doesn't mean that those signs are right either. Commissioner Walton agrees with Commissioner Torres and would like to see the bylaws and any amendments before deciding. Carone will put together a packet of other signs the commissioners have approved in other parks and present it. Commissioner Feinberg asked who requested the construction of the sign. Tariq Dasent stated the Mayor, the people who cleaned up the property, and the Historical District want the sign installed. **Tabled until bylaws are reviewed.**

- 1.) President Belowsky wanted to know if there has been any movement at the Golf Course as it is set to open Friday. Carone stated the Parks Dept was asked to post trees in the parking lot to make room for construction. The construction fence should be delivered this week.
- 2.) Commissioner Babb wanted an update on the parking issue at the skating rink. People who are showing up for events at the skating rink must park on the street because people who are not supposed to be parking there are taking up spots. Director Gwen Busch stated she is working with Wonderland of Ice (the operators of the skating rink) and they have posted no parking signs at the skating rink for those who are not there to use the facility. Another conversation will be had to start towing the cars.
- 3.) Commissioner Babb wanted an update on the baseball field and to discuss the condition of the locker rooms at Bowen Field. Katherine Jacobs who is overseeing the project was not at the meeting to give an update on the baseball field. Carone stated the BOE maintains the locker rooms. The Parks Dept. does not have access. The Parks Dept. is responsible for the football field, but Parks does not staff the bathrooms. Commissioner Walton believes the biggest challenge to keeping student-athletes in New Haven is our facilities. The upkeep of the facilities is a major problem. Busch agrees with Commissioner Walton. Busch stated there are wonderful

ideas for building new establishments, but we failed to put maintenance in the budget. Busch will investigate to find out who is responsible for the locker rooms at Bowen.

- 4.) Commissioner Santiago invited all the commissioners to the April 30th softball game. Mayor Elicker and President Belowsky will throw the first pitch. The Puerto Rico league will be back this year in July. President Belowsky asked how much this will cost the Parks Commission. Commissioner Santiago said it would cost them nothing.

Director's Report Parks & Public Works:

- Switched gears from Winter maintenance to Spring maintenance. Parks Dept. will be out prepping fields. Carone has started playground inspections. A lot of permits are coming in.
- 2 more weeks of trimming Elm & Oak trees; Stump grinding will begin in 2 weeks.
- Looking for seasonals.
- 3 vacant caretaker positions.
- Annie Mixsell the Tree System Coordinator and Carone are working on a grant from the State of Connecticut for a new tree work order inventory program.
- Engineering Dept. has been doing work at Lighthouse on the new maintenance garage. Parks & Public Works are supporting that activity and the foundation work is in.
- Restoration will be done on the backside of the skating rink.
- Both Parks & Public Works will be patching roads and providing street sweeping in and out of the park system.
- President Belowsky asked about the status of the guardrails at the new fishing dock. Director Jeff Pescosolido will look into this and provide an update next month.

Director's Report Youth & Recreation:

- In the middle of the Youth@Work application campaign.
- Receiving applications for summer recreation programs taking place in the parks.
- Completed the test for Park Rangers and hopefully will hire soon.
- An RFP will be coming out specifically for different organizations to do some programming on the properties of Parks & Recreation. It is not to give them a place for a home base it is only for programming. This will allow for more activities. This is a non-revenue contract on both sides.
- Seasonal positions are available.
- Carone and Busch will have a meeting with those applying for field permits to explain availability and sharing the fields when necessary.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:00 PM

Minutes submitted by: Tariq Dasent, Executive Administrative Assistant to Parks & Public Works

Next Meeting: April 20, 2022

Location: Zoom