

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1475

Zoom Conference Meeting
720 Edgewood Ave
New Haven, CT 06515

March 15, 2023

Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Kenya Adams, Carl Babb, Sal DeCola, Harvey Feinberg; Amari Jones, Nana Afriyie, Matthew Griswold, Francesca Vignola, Frank Cochran, Karen Gubbins, Nan Bartow, Barbara Sivigny

Absent: Commissioners Ernie Santiago, Hector Torres

Staff: Deputy Director Stephen Hladun, Director Gwen Williams, Tariq Dasent

- I. **Minutes of Meetings #1474: Motion to approve Minutes of Meeting 1474. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**
- II. **Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve Treasurer's Report. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**
- III. **New Business:**

Clean Ups – WeLoveU Foundation:

The International WeLoveU Foundation would like to work with the Department of Parks & Public Works and the Board of Park Commissioners to beautify the city of New Haven. The International WeLoveU Foundation is a global network of 300,000 volunteers in 67 countries. It is a non-profit organization that is associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications. They have six major initiatives, which include the clean WORLD movement, community well-being, education, emergency relief, health, and international aid. From 2017 to 2021 they cleaned up over 73,000 tons of garbage across the east coast. Previously they did a clean-up at Nathan Hale Park with 40 volunteers.

They would like to host another clean-up within the city during the Clean World Movement which runs from mid-April through mid-May. A list of parks that need to be cleaned up can be emailed to the WeLoveU Foundation then they will decide which parks are in greatest need. Commissioner Sal DeCola believes smaller parks would be a great place to start.

A long-term goal of the International WeLoveU Foundation is to have a WeLoveU park in every state, funded through grants.

Pitkin Plaza – Matthew Griswold – Town Green District:

Matthew Griswold is requesting to remove 4 planters in Pitkin Plaza. Due to their size and location, the planters are currently taking up valuable space. Removing 4 planters would increase the pedestrian flow and increase usability. Events, such as movie nights, are hosted at the plaza, and the current setup limits seating.

There would be no cost to the city. Town Green will fund this and work with the Department of Parks & Public Works and Engineering to ensure the work is being done properly by the contractor so as not to damage the membrane underneath. The current planters will not be saved but they will be replaced with drought-proof movable planters. There will be no heavy machinery and the contractors will be watched closely. The city will not lose anything but will gain space.

If permission is granted, Town Green would like to start in April.

Temple Plaza – Francesca Vignola – Town Green District:

Seeking approval to host Happy Hour in Temple Plaza. This has occurred in years past. The event includes lawn games, food & drinks, and live music. Food is showcased by local restaurants. As a business improvement district, the incentive is to keep people downtown after work to support local businesses. It will run every Friday from June 2 until September 1, skipping the week of July 4th. There will be parking available in garages and on the street.

Motion to approve proposals – removing planters and happy hour at Temple Plaza. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.

IV. Old Business:

- 1.) Commissioner Harvey Feinberg presented a draft resolution regarding the park policy presented by Patricia Wallace and Friends of Kensington Park at previous meetings. Commissioner DeCola stated the city receives money in the form of grants, but it does not budget for maintenance. This makes it difficult to commit to the proposal presented by Wallace as maintenance is the issue and not the upfront cost. If Wallace and Friends of Kensington Park can find a way to fund and support their proposal, then Commissioner DeCola would be happy to support it. Commissioner DeCola supports the draft resolution to start a discussion on the topic. **Tabled.**
- 2.) Fitlot would like to set up exercise equipment in a park in New Haven. This would be at no cost to the city and it is low maintenance. This will be added to next month's meeting for a vote.

V. Director's Report Parks & Public Works:

- St. Patrick's Day went well for Parks & Public Works.
 - Spring clean-ups are in full effect.
 - Field prep has been tricky as the land is wet and not much maintenance has been done.
 - Inspecting playgrounds for any issues.
 - Equipment assessments for repair and maintenance.
 - Parking lot renovations happening at the golf course by Public Works.
 - Stump grinding and tree removal will be done in-house. The tree division is currently working on a grant to secure funding for additional help.
1. All hiring and retainment questions regarding Park Rangers should be referred to Director Gwen Williams.
 2. Questions on updates to the playground at Lighthouse should be directed to Katherine Jacobs.
 3. Giovanni Zinn and the Engineering Department will host community meetings regarding updates in the park. Commissioner Feinberg would like a schedule for those meetings.
 4. Individuals interested in working as a seasonal for the Department of Parks & Public Works can go through New Haven Works for an application or stop in the office for a paper application. Individuals looking for seasonal work through Youth & Recreation can apply on the city's website.

VI. Director's Report Youth & Recreation: No report this month

Meeting Adjourned: 6:39 PM

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

Next Meeting: April 19, 2023

Location: 720 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06515