

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1476

Commission Conference Meeting  
720 Edgewood Ave  
New Haven, CT 06515

April 19, 2023

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**Present:** President Belowsky, Commissioners Carl Babb, Sal DeCola, Ernie Santiago, Hector Torres; David Shimchick, Tracy Blanford, Frank Cochran, Geri Mauhs, Laila Ali, Shannon Palmer, Sean Langberg, Edwin Labrador, Michelle Labrador

**Absent:** Commissioners Kenya Adams, Harvey Feinberg

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

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- I. **Minutes of Meetings #1475: Motion to approve Minutes of Meeting 1475. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**
- II. **Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve Treasurer's Report. Motion Seconded. President Belowsky requested to have written checks posted to the Excel spreadsheet. Unanimously approved. Closed.**
- III. **New Business:**

**Renaming of Sal Perto Skating Rink – Laila Thomas:**

Laila Thomas requested to rename the interior of the Sal Perto Skating Rink in honor of her late son Zayne Ali Thomas. Zayne Thomas grew up in the Annex and spent his whole life at East Shore Park. Laila Thomas and her family have started a foundation and are committed to raising funds to help with maintenance. The foundation would also like to be involved in programming. Commissioner Sal DeCola mentioned the city is in the process of converting the facility from a skating rink into a community center and now would be a suitable time to rename the interior. **Tabled.**

- David Shimchick (65 West Park Ave, New Haven, CT) leader of the Friends of East Rock Park invited Commissioners to an event on June 3 between 10 am – 2 pm to honor Roger Ibbotson. Ibbotson has donated \$110,000 throughout the years for improvements in East Rock Park.
- Tracy Blanford (245 Russell St, New Haven, CT) a member of Friends of Quarry Park requested identification of the park boundary for Quarry Park. Neighbors have encroached, illegally dumped, and cut down trees on the backside of the park. NO DUMPING signs would not be helpful as the neighbors are aware their property abuts the park. The owners would need to be notified of their property line to stop the encroachment. President Belowsky stated a surveyor would be hired. Blanford will be notified of the results by Deputy Director Stephen Hladun.
- Geri Mauhs (1953 Whiteny Ave) Friends of the Green requested additional trash receptacles with covers on the Green.  
Edwin and Michelle Labrador (40 Sheila Dr, Unit C, New Haven, CT) from Walter Pop Smith Little League shared their concerns regarding Munson field. They would like to have improvements made to the field to ensure children can safely play baseball. The baseball field is not currently playable, but the Parks Dept will be out to get it ready for opening weekend. Deputy Director Hladun is aware of the issues and will work with the Little League over time to correct them. Football is played here in the Fall and the Labradors

would like to see what can be done for the football season to not kill the fields. Commissioner Ernie Santiago requested quotes for both field and asphalt improvements. The roots of the trees have damaged the asphalt and pose a danger to children playing. Katherine Jacobs stated ARPA funds will be used for a city-wide asphalt renovation contract which is in an open bid now. The contractor will hit problem areas in the city, and this is one of them.

#### **IV. Old Business:**

##### **Draft Resolution – Commissioner Harvey Feinberg**

President Belowsky read Commissioner Harvey Feinberg's draft resolution in response to Patricia Wallace's Playground Policy Proposal. Patricia Wallace (66 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT) wanted clarification regarding the draft resolution presented. Wallace stated research was completed by URI and Trust for Public Land showing not every neighborhood has at least one fully equipped playground. Also, in this research it showed the city does not go after every dollar available for funding projects such as these. Wallace would like the city with the help of the Parks Commission to explore non-city funding sources and work with neighborhoods to identify what they would like to see in their parks.

Commission Santiago requested starting with one park rather than trying to cover the entire city. Commissioner Carl Babb requested prioritizing parks that are in immediate need rather than taking on the whole city and not accomplishing anything. Wallace stated there is a difference between adopting a policy and an implementation plan. An implantation plan can extend over time. Commissioner Santiago stated by adopting Wallace's policy the board is compromising itself as they have no way to fund this policy. Commissioner DeCola volunteered to work with Wallace and Deputy Director Hladun to designate areas of need. Commissioner DeCola stated the city has made an effort to improve city parks by increasing the budget. **Tabled.**

- Commissioner Babb stated umpires are not allowing baseball games to happen at Bowen Field because the dugouts are too small. Commissioner Babb also asked what happened to the bleachers at Bowen Field to which Deputy Director Hladun responded they were removed because they were in disrepair. Jacobs questioned how the dugouts were usable before. Commissioner Babb stated the CIAC (Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference) updated their rules and they must be followed in order for Hillhouse to play on the field. Jacobs stated the dugouts are old, concrete, massive structures which complicates getting rid of them as the cost will be exorbitant. Jacobs will think this through and find a way to bring the dugouts into compliance.

#### **V. Director's Report Parks & Public Works:**

Please see the attached report from Deputy Director Stephen Hladun.

#### **VI. Director's Report Youth & Recreation:**

- Moving into summer activities.
- Closed Youth@Work applications April 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Multiple events have taken place.
- Hoping to hire 400 children for Youth@Work and an additional 250 youth workers for the Recreation side (camps, Lighthouse Point, etc.) Will not be able to hire every youth that applies, there is not enough funding to do so.
- Events will be available through the Mayor Youth Guide.
- Continuing to work on the 8 Recreation Building.

- Working with the Board of Education on swimming programming in pools. Open swim is available. Hoping 3 out of 5 pools will be open.
- The throwing cage is paid for and just waiting on delivery and then will install the cage with the help of Jacobs.

**Meeting Adjourned: 6:47 PM**

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

Next Meeting: May 17, 2023

Location: 720 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06515