

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1484

Commission Conference Meeting
720 Edgewood Ave
New Haven, CT 06515

February 21, 2024

Present: Commissioners Kenya Adams, Carl Babb, Harvey Feinberg, Emily Sigman, Honda Smith, Hector Torres

Absent: President David Belowsky

Staff: Director Gwen Williams, Deputy CAO Rebecca Bombero, Deputy Director Stephen Hladun, Deputy Director William Dixon, Deputy Director Felicia Shashinka, Tariq Dasent

- I. **Minutes of Meetings #1482 and 1483: Motion to approve Minutes of Meeting 1482 and 1483. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**
- II. **Treasurer's Report: No report.**

Election of Officers: Motion to approve Slate of Officers. Motion Seconded. President David Belowsky, Vice President Carl Babb, Treasurer Hector Torres, Secretary Harvey Feinberg. **Unanimously approved. Closed.**

Common Ground/New Haven Ecology Project – Deborah Greig

Common Ground is a charter high school and educational non-profit located in West Rock. Common Ground is partially funded by the state for educational seats and self-funded through the nonprofit through grants and educational programs such as summer camps. Deborah Greig is seeking approval for two projects. There are major infrastructure improvements that need to happen at the Common Ground site due to erosion. Both projects will be funded through grants.

- 1.) The first project is to replace the current propagation greenhouse structure. The current structure was built about 20 years ago and it is not permanent (no footings). Common Ground is applying for a Farm Agriculture Enhancement Grant through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture to install a foundation. Seeking permission due to the permanent footings. The greenhouse will have plastic rather than glass as it is significantly cheaper and safer for children. The greenhouse is a kit that in-house staff will put together and independent contractors will install the foundation. The site director can do the regular maintenance at the greenhouse. Commissioner Emily Sigman suggested funding for maintenance be incorporated into the grant as she had experience with a similar project and believes this would be a good addition. If the grant is not awarded Common Ground will do cheap quick fixes to insulate for another season until the grant opens again.
- 2.) The poultry coops are located on the side of the hill and are experiencing erosion damage as well. Proposing to knock down the old structure which is 15 X 15 and with a grant build a new coop (12 X 18) higher up on the site. The new coop does not need footing or foundation. Part of this project is to remove 3 kiddie pools and install one semi-permanent duck pond. The current duck ponds are kiddie pools that are dumped daily which erodes the yard. Would like to install piping that would direct the water to a culvert that exists to prevent erosion. Rats also burrow underneath so it would be nice to set a small pool in gravel. Greig

needs different letters of landlord consent to apply for multiple grants to complete this project.

Commissioner Honda Smith publicly thanked Deborah Greig and Common Ground for their contributions to the community, especially during the pandemic. **Motion to approve modifications to both structures. Motion seconded. Unanimously approved.**

Shubert Theme Mural – Town Green District

Tara von Schmidt, the Manager of public programs and community partnerships for Town Green District proposed a mural in the Temple Plaza staging area in partnership with the Shubert Theater. The Shubert Theater is celebrating its 110th anniversary in December 2024 and wants to commemorate that with a public art component. Town Green will maintain the mural for five years, provide insurance for the painting and the artist, and fund the mural along with Shubert Theater.

This would go through the same selection process as their other murals. There is a committee of Town Green and Shubert employees, local artists, and residents (Parks Commissioners are invited as well.) who will select the artist and their painting. The mural will be painted in the fall so it is completed for the winter anniversary. After five years the mural will be removed using a light chemical dissolvent and then power washed into a decommissioned fountain that connects to the sewer system. The paint is nontoxic. Commissioner Sigman asked if the mural would be able to stay longer than 5 years. Tara von Schmidt was unsure if this was possible as it would depend on the available maintenance funds. Town Green Ambassadors will check the mural daily for any maintenance issues. **Motion to approve the selection process with a follow-up on artist design. Motion seconded. Unanimously approved.**

Quarry Park Trail Sign – Stephen Hladun

Deputy Director Stephen Hladun requested the installation of 2 trail signs at Quarry Park. Quarry Park is in the Fair Haven Heights neighborhood. Two signs would be installed along Russell St. One sign would be at the southern trailhead and another at the northern trailhead existing park sign. Commissioner Sigman suggested adding information about the indigenous history of the land on future signs. **Motion to approve signage for Quarry Park trails. Motion seconded. Unanimously approved.**

East Rock Summit – Letter from David Agosta

Motion to table. Seconded. Unanimously approved. After the motion was approved and closed a discussion was had on the topic. Commissioner Harvey Feinberg suggested there be a meeting with Corp Counsel to discuss David Agosta's letter. Rebecca Bombero will set up a meeting. Commissioner Smith has great concern about the road being closed to certain residents. Bombero stated in March a recommendation would be available.

III. Director's Report:

Parks & Public Works:

Please see the attached report from Deputy Director Stephen Hladun. (Below are comments made by Rebecca Bombero)

- Interviews are scheduled to fill 3 caretaker positions.
- Budget goes to print on Friday and new positions have been added. There has been a substantial initial increase in the park's budget. Bombero will send the budget on March 1st to commissioners.

Director's Report: Youth & Recreation

- Youth employment process has begun.
- Seasonal employment is open.
- 2 grants are on the Bonfire system (Expansion and Sports Grants).
- March 28th is the deadline for youth to apply for summer employment. Everything is digital nothing is paper.
- The number of youth that will be hired is contingent on funding received. This information will not be available until mid-May.

IV. Old Business

- Bowen Field – The equipment has been delivered and will be installed when the weather breaks.

V. New Business

- There are monthly financial reports published with explanations of ARPA funds. Bombero will provide this update at the next meeting.
- Commissioner Feinberg requested to have information from presenters before the meeting to review it. Tariq Dasent explained not all materials are ready before a meeting so she cannot guarantee materials can be provided before a meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 6:43 P.M.

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

Next Meeting: March 20, 2024

Location: 720 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06515