

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1454

Pardee Rose Garden
150 Park Rd.
Hamden, CT 06517

February 17, 2021

Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Carl Babb, Georgia Miller, Hector Torres, Ernie Santiago, Kevin Walton; Matt Viens, Frank Cochran

Absent: Commissioner Ronnell Higgins

Staff: Deputy Director William Carone, Youth Director Gwen Busch, Youth Deputy Director William Dixon, Landscape Architect Katherine Jacobs, Thomas Verderame, Tariq Dasent

- I. **Minutes of Meeting #1453: Motion to approve Minutes of Meetings 1453, Motion Seconded, unanimously approved. Closed.**

- II. **Treasurer's Report:** Thomas Verderame clarified the issue with check number 1726. Check 1726 was not listed on the previous treasurer's report because there were older checks that had not been used and Tom wanted to use those up before proceeding with new checks. **Motion to approve Treasurer's Report, Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

- III. **Annual Election of Officers:** Commissioner Miller will be moving and will no longer be available to hold the office of Vice President. For the office of President, David Belowsky, office of Vice President, Carl Babb, Office of Treasurer, Hector Torres and the office of the Secretary, Kevin Walton. **Motioned to approve slate of officers, Motioned Seconded, unanimously approved. Closed.**

- IV. **Old Business:** The issue of baseball fields at Bowen Field was raised. The irrigation system at Bowen Field needs to be audited by the Board of Education.

When the weather permits Commissioner Bush Memorial Clock will be installed.

- V. **New Business:**
Urban Resources Initiative – Sign Installation: URI would like to update/ add new signs to the parks. Specifically, in an area of Sherman Parkway where the Parks Department has removed fencing that kept the Newhallville neighborhood separate from the park. URI would like a sign to be placed there designating it Sherman Woods at Beaver Pond, City of New Haven. The sign would be made of dibond material. It can be directly printed on; it is UV and graffiti resistant. On the back of the dibond signs trail maps, rules, and/or anything consumer friendly can be printed, unlike on the current signs where posting is hard due to the material. As of now all the park signs are blank on the back. The signs are less than \$500 each which is cheaper than the current signage which is over \$5,000 each. The post on the current signs can remain and the new signs can be slipped in, making installation easy. The changeover does not have to happen all at once but as signs become damaged or worn, they can be replaced with the new signs. Currently, URI is requesting only the sign for Sherman Woods at Beaver Pond. This is important because there is no signage there and URI would

like the public to know it is accessible and a city park since it has been cut off from Newhallville for years.

Commissioner Walton raised the question of why this section of Sherman Parkway was being renamed. URI explained this area is now open due to the fence removal and it has created a new area (destination) of Beaver Pond which they would like to name. The commission will review the procedure for naming areas of the park.

Katherine Jacobs, Landscape Architect for Parks & City Engineering Department proposed the use of the existing New Haven Parks & Rec logo for the newly joined departments of Parks & Public Works. Currently, the commission is happy with the logo and would like to keep it. If a change to the logo needs to be made the commission would like to review it first.

Motion to accept the new proposal, Motion Seconded. Voted to amend the motion. Commission would like to see the sign before it is installed. Unanimously approved amended motion. Closed.

West River Watershed - Trail Signs: The West River Watershed would like approval to install 3 informational signs. The first sign would be located at a section of the trail that begins behind the basketball courts on Ramsdell Street. The second sign would be at the bridge in the center and the third sign would be by Amrhyn Field. The trial signs were designed by Eric Epstein and funding for the signs would be through West Hills Community Management Team. The signs would be installed by volunteers and Fossil Industries will produce the signs. The signs are 24 X 34 inches, graffiti proof, have a 10-year warranty and match other signs already posted at Pond Lily Nature Preserve.

Motion to accept signage. Motion Seconded. Unanimously Approved. Closed.

Spring Permit Deposit: Deputy Director William Carone proposed creating a cleanup security deposit for pavilion rentals. This is due to the occasional mess that is left behind when a pavilion is rented. There is currently no policy in place. Deputy Dixon and Thomas Verderame raised the issue of holding deposits as there is currently no way to do that. Thomas Verderame also stated that the Board of Alders would have to vote before the Parks Commission could institute a cleanup security deposit. Director Busch suggested getting feedback from the Park Commission then presenting this information to the Board of Alders so they can vote. Commissioner's Miller and Santiago wanted clarification regarding the expectation from the renter who must dispose of their garbage when they rent a pavilion. Deputy Director Carone responded that the individual would be responsible for leaving their trash in a designated area in garbage bags. If the garbage is not left lying around there would be no reason to hold the deposit. Director Busch stated she would work with Carone to present language that would lay out rules for renting pavilions.

Alling Memorial Golf Course:

President Belowsky would like to raise the rates for next season due to the increase in usage. The rates cannot be raised this year; however, this is the last year of the current rate schedule before it goes to Board of Alders for review. Commissioner Santiago did remind everyone that there was an issue raised when the fees were adjusted last time, about changing rates for senior citizens and veterans.

There will be a new point of sale at the golf course. Players will be able to reserve tee time with their credit cards. Temporary improvements will be made to the buildings because they are in poor conditions. The women's facility is of major concern, new equipment is needed, and the irrigation needs to be updated.

Hockey: Bauer Hockey would like the City of New Haven to be a site to teach inner city kids how to play hockey. The Board of Education has been contacted and they will help with grants to buy equipment. The anticipated start date is September.

VI. Director's Report Parks & Public Works: Deputy Director Carone stated that the Parks Department has been assisting Public Works with snow and ice removal. Also, there is discussion downtown about traffic common projects for Farnam Drive. Looking into adding speed humps and signage to help drivers slow down.

Director's Report Youth & Recreation: Summer 2021 planning has begun. Senator Murphy and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro have a goal to get federal dollars for the youth. Their goal is to assure that the City of New Haven is covering the learning lost that is happening during this COVID period. Director Busch has been working with her department to develop summer programs that will incorporate both recreation and the learning gap. There are applications posted on the website for becoming a work site as well as applications for students.

Operationally, Lighthouse needs to be more efficient when it comes to electronic payments. Busch is in discussion with the Controller's Office and the Department of Accounting about using an existing POS system. Director Busch is hoping to have this in place before Memorial weekend. This system may also be useful in the holding cleanup deposits for pavilion rentals if approved by the Board of Alders.

Commissioner Walton raised two issues. One being the closure of parks and the second being how can we be proactive on signage and guidelines rather than shutting parks down. Commissioner Walton wonders if shutting the parks down is the reasoning behind the uptick in juvenile and youth crime. Commissioner Walton wants to know what the plan is for opening parks for recreation to the public.

Director Busch stated the shutting down of parks last March was due to instructions from the Health Department. As of now there is work being done to open parks and there has been community outreach as well. Director Carone will contact the Mayor to see if James Street can be reopened, he will also work with Busch to contact the Health Department to express concerns and work on reopening plans.

A question regarding cleaning the track was raised, and Deputy Director Carone explained the track cannot be cleaned by snow blowing because we do not have the proper equipment to clear it without causing damage or forfeiting the warranty. Also, ice melt cannot be used. Director Carone will look into pricing for the proper equipment to clear track and make sure it is compatible with our existing equipment.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:13 p.m.

Minutes Submitted By: Tariq Dasent Executive Administrative Assistant to Park & Public Works

Next Meeting: March 17th, 2021

Location: ZOOM