

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1455

Pardee Rose Garden  
150 Park Rd.  
Hamden, CT 06517

March 17, 2021

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Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Carl Babb, Ronnell Higgins, Georgia Miller, Hector Torres, Kevin Walton, Alder Sal DeCola; Elizabeth Bickley, Steve Britto, Colleen Dunning, Charlotte Eliscu, Steve Itkin, Marlene Pratt, Waldo Williams  
Absent: Commissioner Ernie Santiago, Director Gwen Busch  
Staff: Deputy Director William Carone, Director Jeff Pescosolido, Katherine Jacobs, Felicia Shashinka, Thomas Verderame, Tariq Dasent

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I. **Minutes of Meeting #1454: Motion to approve Minutes of Meetings 1454, Motion Seconded, unanimously approved. Closed.**

II. **Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve Treasurer's Report, Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

III. **Old Business:**

- **Bowen Field:** The issue of opening baseball fields at Bowen Field was raised. The irrigation system at Bowen Field needs to be audited by the Board of Education. Deputy Director Carone is working on the issue.
- **Commissioner Bush Memorial Clock:** President Belowsky inquired about an installation date for Commissioner Bush Memorial Clock. Deputy Director Carone stated the foundation has been poured but he needs an electrician. The electrician from the Parks Department is currently out. Deputy Director Carone will contact another department to see if he can use their electrician.

IV. **New Business:**

**Cherry Blossom Stencils – Charlotte Eliscu**

Charlotte from the Cherry Blossom Festival Committee proposed applying cherry blossom stencils to the entrances and intersections of Wooster Square Park. This is in lieu of the Cherry Blossom Festival that has been cancelled. Katherine Jacobs wanted to know if painting the stencils would interfere with the contractor, that is lined up to repaint the fences at Wooster Square. Katherine was informed the contractor can start any time after April.

**Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

**Batting Cages at Pope Smith Field – Steve Britto**

Steve and the Walter Pop Smith Little League are requesting to build up to 4 batting cages at Pop Smith Field. The league would like to build 2 batting cages at Jones Field and Bush Field. The cages would be built where the bleachers are currently located, and the bleachers would be moved farther out. The batting cages are 55 ft and will include a safe bullpen area. The estimated cost per cage is \$4,800. There is a pending question regarding utilities underground. If there are utilities, then the league may have to look at other locations which would push planning out. President Belowsky raised the issue of vandalism and was

informed an enclosure would be built to protect the cages along with locking the gate when the cages are not in use.

Commissioner Walton wanted information up front regarding utilities before moving forward with approving the batting cages. Katherine Jacobs stated she is working with Pop Smith Little League and she is looking through records to find utility information. Once those records are located it may be a matter of shifting a few feet one way or another to make sure the utilities are not impacted. Katherine Jacobs stated this is a solvable issue. The Parks Department will cover maintenance.

**Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously Approved. Closed.**

**Sherman Woods – Colleen Murphy-Dunning**

Colleen updated the board of commissioners on the Sherman Woods at Beaver Ponds sign. The sign will be installed in April and it is consistent with other park signs.

**Victims of Gun Violence Sign – Colleen Murphy Dunning**

The Botanical Garden of Healing Dedicated to Victims of Gun Violence is nearly complete. Colleen is requesting approval to install a sign at the entrance of the garden. The sign is nonconforming to other park signs. This sign is a new element that needs to be approved as it was not included in the initial proposal.

**Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously Approved. Closed**

**Murals in Plazas- Elizabeth Bickley**

Elizabeth and the Town Green District run the “Straight Up Art “program. They are requesting approval to paint murals in Pitkin and Temple Plazas. As the property owner the City of New Haven will provide the canvas (plazas) and work with the Town Green District to select the artist by having a city representative. As of now Adriane Jefferson, the Director of Art, Culture, and Tourism is actively involved in the process and if this is ok with the commission then she can continue to represent the City. The contribution of the Town Green District is to fund the mural, facilitate the artist selection process, be a liaison between the property owner (the City) and the artist, oversee the painting and installation, maintain the mural for 5 years, and hold the insurance and other legal components.

The two sites for the murals are the steps and walls at Temple Plaza specifically the risers and the ventilation towers at Pitkin Plaza. Elizabeth has been in contact with Katherine Jacobs and Giovanni Zinn. Katherine and Giovanni had concerns about the steps at Temple Plaza. They wanted to make sure the paint would not create any type of slippage or tripping hazard. In the riser portion of the steps, if the vertical section is painted it does not create any hazard or liability issue according to Elizabeth. Giovanni expressed concern about the brick on the ventilation towers at Pitkin Plaza. He wants to maintain the integrity of those towers and make sure no public artwork will impact the mortar of the brick. Elizabeth did research and has a method to preserve the integrity of the brick. The current timeline would be reviewing artist and their proposals in April, painting begins in May, and a celebration in June.

Commissioner Georgia Miller agrees with allowing artwork to be added to these two locations if it is in good taste. Elizabeth explained there are 4 main criteria that need to be adhered to for the work to be approved. They are 1) appropriate artwork for general audiences, 2) adds meaning, 3) artist understanding their audience, 4) artistic excellence.

**Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously Approved. Closed**

**Logo Change – Deputy Director William Carone**

Deputy Director Carone proposed examples of logo changes for the jointly formed department of Parks and Public Works. The new logo would only be used on letterheads, equipment, and business cards. It would not be used on parks signs. Director Jeff Pescosolido informed the commission that the current logo would not be completely changed. Instead, the presence of Public Works would be added. Director Pescosolido informed the commissioners this is solely for identification purposes.

Commissioner Miller asked why a logo cannot be created for Parks, Public Works, and Recreation. Director Pescosolido said he will research this idea. Commissioner Miller believes this will be a good idea to have one logo since the idea is to consolidate departments rather than separate them. Director Pescosolido informed the commission that the Department of Youth & Recreation has its own logo. President Belowsky asked why the logo for Youth & Recreation was not presented to the Board. Deputy Director Carone stated he will reach out to Director Busch of Youth and Recreation so she can present the logo to the commissioners. President Belowsky would like to have more options presented. President Belowsky sent the proposal back.

**Paving at Fort Hale Park Road – Director Jeff Pescosolido**

Director Pescosolido presented infrastructure improvements. One of these improvements would be paving Fort Hale Park Road. This is not a city street instead it is a park road. Fort Hale Park Road can be included in Public Works bid for paving. The estimated cost is \$53,000. Director Pescosolido is requesting permission to present this to the Resource Allocation Committee (RAC). President Belowsky said this would be ok to present to RAC.

- V. **Director's Report Parks & Public Works:** Deputy Director Carone stated that the Parks Department is busy reopening parks. The basketball rims are up and next to be installed will be new nets. Swings are being put up and they will be completed in a couple of days. Also, BOE starts soon so the fields are being prepped. The Department of Parks and Public Works is working on the new splash pad at DeGale Park. Waldo asked Deputy Director Carone about the backstop at Amryhn Field. Deputy Director Carone explained the fencing company he called did not show up to the meeting, so he has a new vendor Total Fence coming out to give a quote.

**Director's Report Youth & Recreation:** Felicia Shashinka presented the Director's Report as Direct Busch was not able to attend the meeting. The Health Department gave Youth & Recreation approval to run direct programming again. They will service the same number of children within COVID guidelines. Activity buses will be out again this summer in the parks from Monday to Friday from 4-8 for about 10 weeks. Felicia is asking for \$5,000 donation for the t-shirts for camp and \$5,000 for the activity bus. The total is \$10,000.

**Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously Approved. Closed**

Meeting Adjourned: 7:30 p.m.

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

Next Meeting: April 21st, 2021

Location: ZOOM