

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1457

Pardee Rose Garden
150 Park Rd.
Hamden, CT 06517

May 19, 2021

Present: Commissioners Carl Babb, Ronnell Higgins, Georgia Miller, Ernie Santiago;
Deborah Greig, Carlos Eyzaguirre, Ethan, Max

Absent: President Belowsky, Commissioners Hector Torres, Kevin Walton; Thomas Verderame
Staff: Deputy Director William Carone, Director Gwen Busch, Giovanni Zinn, Katherine Jacobs,
Tariq Dasent

I. Minutes of Meeting #1456: Motion to approve Minutes of Meetings 1456. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.

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

III. Old Business:

- President Belowsky and Commissioner Ernie Santiago will join Deputy Director William Carone and the RWA on the walkthrough of Lake Whitney Dam. The walkthrough will be on June 22, 2021.
- Bowen Field Update: Currently, working with the plumber to investigate the irrigation system. Waiting on RWA to drop the meter once that is done, they will run the system to identify what needs to be fixed. Also, a public bid has been posted for a contractor to do renovations to the turf. Commissioner Carl Babb asked what the timeline was to complete improvements. Katherine Jacobs stated the timeline is dependent on irrigation repairs, but the aim is to get the turf reseeded this fall.
- Katherine Jacobs will touch base with Rebecca Bombero regarding fencing at Criscuolo Park and give an update at the next meeting.
- Waiting on the final construction phase to be completed at the skating rink before a gate can be installed.
- Installed the clock tower in front of Hillhouse. Deputy Director William Carone proposed a dedication date of June 19, 2021. Deputy Director Carone will reach out to the commissioners who are not present to see if that date works for them.

IV. New Business:

Pedestrian Button – Carlos Eyzaguirre

The State is doing construction on Route 10 and has reached the tri-corner section located on Ella T. Grasso. This includes Columbus Ave, Davenport Ave, Congress Ave, and Orange Ave. Due to this piece of land being part of the West River Park, Carlos Eyzaguirre is requesting approval to install a pedestrian signal. The State is responsible for traffic improvements and will install a pedestrian signal, new ramps, and upgrade traffic signals. This will improve pedestrian safety. Commissioner Babb questioned if the signal would be better served on the other side of the street as there is more traffic. Commissioner Ernie Santiago questioned if there would be 4 signals installed at the intersection. They were both informed by Giovanni Zinn there will be walk signals at all 4 corners. Commissioner Ronnell Higgins wanted to know if this was part of a larger project to improve Route 10. Commissioner Higgins was informed this is simply to install a signal replacement and install pedestrian signalization.

Commissioner Higgins also questioned whether the signals will be audible beacons or only flashing lights. Giovanni Zinn informed Commissioner Higgins that he believes due to ADA they will have to be audible. Commissioner Babb questioned how soon they needed approval for the signal. He was informed approval was needed tonight if possible. **Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

Common Ground Improvement – Deborah Greig

Deborah Greig wants approval to make improvements to compost area at Common Ground. Funding will be through Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the New Haven Food System Policy Division. Improvements include adding a rainwater collection area, expanding concrete pads, improving area where tractor is driven and creating shelter using concrete blocks to better store raw material. In addition to approval Deborah Greig needs a signature on a document from NRCS to secure funding. **Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

Diorama Boxes - Ethan & Max

Ethan and Max of Escape New Haven are seeking approval to install an outdoor educational game that includes public art. The game would focus on the Farmington Canal and be based in the century from 1825-1925. The diorama boxes would function as public art and as an outdoor escape game. As public art anyone from the public could scan the QR code which allows them to access historical information. As an outdoor escape game people playing the game would be able to interact with the dioramas using a special tool given to them. The game would focus on 5 historical dioramas along the canal trail. The five locations for the dioramas would be Phelps Triangle, Scantlebury Park, Canal Street, Science Park and Koffee?. Escape New Haven has been given a qualified blessing from the New Haven Garden Club to place a diorama box at Phelps Triangle. The Garden Club would like to test it for 6 months prior to permanent installation to see if the plantings would be damaged. Commissioner Santiago asked what will happen to the diorama box if the planting is disturbed at Phelps Triangle. Ethan explained the diorama will be moved if there is an issue.

Commissioner Babb questioned who will monitor and how frequently will the dioramas be stocked. Ethan explained Escape New Haven will monitor and maintain the boxes. Since there will be a QR code there will be no physical restocking. Commissioner Higgins questioned what other lenses have been applied for this time. His concern is there may be scrutiny as to why other topics in this time frame have not been explored. Ethan explained this timeframe was chosen because it touches different aspects of New Haven life. Commissioner Carl Babb questioned if other cultures will be represented. Ethan explained there will be information on people of different cultures who contributed to the historical context of the time however they will not be touching current times. Commissioner Babb believes people will want to see things about their culture represented in these dioramas. Max explained that due to the website's flexibility other historical context can be featured. Ethan would like to start the project as soon as possible. **Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

Prime 16/ Temple Plaza – Bob Potter

Bob Potter will join the June meeting.

Wayfinding Sign – Katherine Jacobs

Katherine Jacobs would like to install a sign on the existing metal storage container at Fairmont Park. Currently, there is no sign, and it is hard for people to find field # 2 from the parking lot. The sign is weather resistant and can be moved if necessary. **Motion to approve. Motion Seconded. Unanimously Approved. Closed.**

V. Director's Report Parks & Public Works:

- Commissioners are invited to the June 12 Victim of Gun Violence Dedication at 11am on Valley Street.
- Slowly getting seasonal workers. Currently, there are 10 on board and Deputy Director Carone is still in the process of hiring more.
- There are 3 vacant caretaker positions and testing will be done soon.
- HR is working on the supervisor test in the Parks Department.
- Parks is supporting many events such as Yale graduation.
- Parks Department is working with the Health Department to host vaccine clinics.

Director's Report Youth & Recreation:

- Director Gwen Busch informed the commissioners Lighthouse Park will open this weekend. There are operational changes being made internally such as moving away from cash and using the same system that Vital Statics and the Tax Office use for payments.
- Beach passes are now available and can be obtained at Edgewood Ave and at the gate of Lighthouse Park.
- Signage will be going up regarding COVID safety.
- A Park Ranger will be leaving, and Director Busch would like to have position posted as soon as possible.
- Camps are moving forward; regular recreation camps will open June 28th and public camps will open July 6th. Looking to extend recreation camps until the third week of August if funding is approved.
- Lifeguards are available.
- Pools are planned to be open across the city, however, there are issues with 2 BOE pools. Currently, working with the BOE to fix these issues as the two pools (located at Martinez and Career) are two main community pools.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:40 PM

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

Next Meeting: June 16th, 2021

Location: Zoom