

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1472

Zoom Conference Meeting

November 16, 2022

New Haven, CT 06513

Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Kenya Adams, Harvey Feinberg, Hector Torres; Sean Duffy, Tom Lehtonen, Frank Cochran, George Jones, Eliza Valk

Absent: Commissioners Carl Babb, Ernie Santiago, Kevin Walton

Staff: Director Jeff Pescosolido, Director Gwen Williams, Gary Dickinson, Katherine Jacobs, Tariq Dasent, Martin Torresquintero, Tom Verderame

- I. **Minutes of Meetings #1471: Motion to approve minutes of meeting 1471. Motion Seconded. Commissioner Harvey Feinberg moved to approve minutes with corrections noted by him and Patricia Wallace. Unanimously approved. Closed.**
- II. **Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve Treasurer's report. Motion Seconded. Three checks were questioned. The check on 8/29/22 was for improvements at Hannah Dream which will be covered by a donation made by Goodwill Industries. The check on 10/17/2022 covered food expenses for the Christmas Party at Lighthouse for Park's employees. The third check was to cover planting done at Edgewood Park. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

III. **New Business:**

Martin Torresquintero expressed his gratitude to all commissioners current and former for their support throughout the years. After 24 wonderful years, Torresquintero is retiring. Thomas Verderame thanked Torresquintero for his magnificent contributions to the New Haven Park System and to the many children he has impacted.

President Belowsky had one concern regarding the charging of electric bikes and the fire hazard posed by lithium batteries. Torresquintero stated the concern should not only be for electric bikes but all micro-mobility devices. Most fires that have occurred have involved knock off and inexpensive micro-mobility devices. It is important to get good quality equipment.

Commissioner Feinberg asked if DEEP will be providing any guidelines that may be useful regarding micro-mobility devices. Torresquintero stated they are not currently regulated but he thinks in the future they will be.

Alling Memorial Golf Course – Thomas Verderame: Verderame is requesting approval to increase the fees at Alling Memorial Golf Course for the 2023 season. Current fees are well below surrounding area courses and the fee increase keeps New Haven competitive. No categories have been eliminated and there are no changes to the fee structure.

Commissioner Feinberg, asked if there has been an increase in the fee for seasonal passes. Verderame stated resident seasonal passes increased by \$100 and nonresident seasonal passes have increased by \$200, but other courses do not offer season passes as they are not economical for the course. There were no changes to senior and junior rates.

Commissioner Feinberg asked if the vendor or the parks department was recommending the price increase. Verderame explained the city and the vendor work together to assess the rates to

make sure the course is generating enough money to pay expenses and continue to maintain the course. The golf course is an enterprise fund which means all revenue generated at the golf course stays in the golf course. It is not intermingled with the general fund.

Motion to approve rate increases. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.

West River Dedication Sign – Katherine Jacobs: Katherine Jacobs presented a proposed dedication sign for Peter Davis on the bridge near the substation on Valley St. The cast metal plaque is 3” tall and 14” wide. Davis is a long-time active volunteer of the West River Watershed Coalition. Davis has been a tremendous help to keeping the waterways in New Haven clean. His energy and enthusiasm have been unmatched. **Motion to approve the naming of the bridge. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

Wooster Memorial Dedication Sign – Katherine Jacobs: Commissioners discussed and approved a donation from Dalio Philanthropies at last month’s meeting. In addition to donating fitness equipment, they would like to name that equipment Devon’s Home. This is in memory of Devon Dalio. The dedication sign is the same color, material, and similar shape as a standard park sign. The sign is smaller as the area being named is smaller than a whole park. The text on the sign would read “**Devon’s Home. Keep fit so you can cherish the ones you love for a long time.**” **Motion to approve Wooster Memorial Dedication Sign. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

IV. Old Business:

Invasive Plants Edgerton Park: George Jones and Eliza Valk requested the commissioners reconsider their decision concerning spraying invasive species at Edgerton Park. The chemicals being used do not cause harm to children or animals. The chemicals are thick substances that would stick to the leaves, and it is not airborne. The process can start right away once it is approved, however, the process itself will take a long time to complete.

Belowsky asked Valk if a vinegar solution could be used. Valk stated the concentration needed for the vinegar solution to be successful would be so high that it would actually be more toxic than the application All Habitat would use. Also, vinegar is not targeted to particular plants, and it actually kills everything. It would create an inhospitable environment for microorganisms and all the things the Conservancy wishes to retain.

Commissioner Feinberg believes this is a good time and wise for the conservancy to act on removing invasive species. Commissioner Feinberg believes it would be a risk not to take action as invasive species along with the changes in the landscape (canopy in particular) can cause a horrendous mess.

Valk stated this is one tool among many. They would like to move forward with an integrated management plan. There are many other steps for replanting disturbed sites in order to create better conditions so native plants can survive. This will be at no cost to the city, the conservancy has set aside funds to pursue this. **Motion to approve a plan to deal with invasive species at Edgerton Park. Motion Seconded. Approved. Closed.**

V. Director’s Report Parks & Public Works:

- Park staff are busy within the parks concentrating on leaf removal and some areas of mulching.
- Preparing for the winter season
- Completing training for employees
- No major changes so far in the budget process

- Moving along in the process of finding a Deputy Director.

VI. Director's Report Youth & Recreation:

- Youth & Rec is in the middle of its signature programming. Hosting a turkey giveaway at John S. Martinez School. This is in collaboration with several organizations, the main partner is Yale Police Dept.
- In the final planning stage for Friends of Rudolph with Southern Connecticut State University.
- Position of Park Ranger has been posted.
- Working on improvements at 8 primary facilities to have them open to the community.
- Finished working with the first cohort of RFPs to get into park facilities.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:43 PM

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

Next Meeting: January 18, 2023

Location: Zoom