

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1478

Commission Conference Meeting
720 Edgewood Ave
New Haven, CT 06515

June 21, 2023

Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Kenya Adams, Carl Babb, Ernie Santiago, Hector Torres; Elizabeth Nowlin, Deborah Greig, Barbara Sivigny, Stephanie FitzGerald, Michelle Labrador, Mia Cortes Castro, Sawyer Christmann, Lewis Calle, Dennis Serfalippi

Absent: Commissioner Sal DeCola, Harvey Feinberg,

Staff: Acting Director Rebecca Bombero, Deputy Director Stephen Hladun, Director Gwen Busch, Giovanni Zinn, Katherine Jacobs, Tariq Dasent

- I. **Minutes of Meetings #1477: Motion to approve Minutes of Meeting 1477. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. (Commissioner Ernie Santiago was not present during the vote). Closed.**
- II. **Treasurer's Report: No report. Tabled.**
- III. **New Business:**

Hannah's Dream – Sawyer Christmann & Lewis Calle

Sawyer Christmann of 45 Quinnipiac Ave and Lewis Calle of 35 Pierpont St raised concerns about the maintenance of Hannah's Dream.

- Sand pit issues – tried to sweep the sand back to the pit and out of the playground.
- Missing equipment (seesaw and two swing sets)
- The park is very dirty (trash in the sand pit itself and inside the park)
- Graffiti
- The lines are not visible in the parking lot.
- Boarded storage shed.
- Fences closer to the tennis court are locked and there is a hole present.
- Weeds along the fence line
- The playground was created for people with disabilities, and it is currently not providing the best accessibility (for example someone on crutches would have a hard time in large part due to the sand.)

The park has so much to offer but it seems to be neglected and needs dire attention. Commissioner Carl Babb stated it is very important to act on these requests as it has been documented and brought to the commissioner's attention.

Goffe St Park Chess Table – Katherine Jacobs

Katherine Jacobs requested to add two chess tables to Goffe St Park. These tables were requested by Friends of Goffe St Park with the intention to invite people to play chess or checkers and develop a sense of community and fellowship. The chess tables will be durable, graffiti-resistant, and ADA-accessible. Proposing to install tables near the corner of County and Goffe St (near existing BBQ area). This is an ideal area in terms of crime prevention as it is on PD's route, and they cruise frequently. This will be funded through ARPA and at no cost to the Parks Commission. Projected timeline: If approved Jacobs can begin the procurement process which can take 2-3 weeks, manufacturing lead time is 6-8 weeks, and then installation with a

local contractor. If all goes well then it can be completed by fall. **Motion to approve chess tables. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

Kimberly Field Wildlife Camera – Elizabeth Nowlin

Elizabeth Nowlin of 128 Mansfield St requested to install wildlife cameras at Kimberly Field for a research project called the New Haven Urban Mammal Study. The locations were randomly chosen, and 18 cameras have been installed on private property throughout New Haven. The cameras will be installed to capture footage for approximately 4 weeks. The camera would be attached to a permanent structure such as a tree or a metal post, the camera is battery-operated and stores photos internally on an SD card. There is flexibility to point it away from human activity as this research is strictly for wildlife information. The camera will be along the fence line and labeled with the intention of the study.

If there were illegal activities captured the footage would be turned over to the authorities. Nowlin works closely with Colleen Murphy-Dunning and URI and can share images with commissioners. **Motion to approve cameras at Kimberly Field. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

Common Ground School – Deborah Greig

Impact of erosion at Common Ground both human impact and climate change. Water flows at high rates throughout the site and dumps sediment around structures and the building. There have been improvements made throughout the years but there is still more work that needs to be done. Requesting to add drainage ditches that will divert water away from animal shelters and install underground outlets. The cost will be partially covered by NRCS and fundraising. There will be no cost to the Parks Commission. Hoping to have the work done within a 3-year span. Per NRCS adding plants will not be a suitable solution as there are heavily wood-chipped and graveled areas. NRCS recommended these improvements: gutters, an underground outlet, access control, and a subsurface drain. The goal is to stop the water from getting to the road to stop the freezing. The external structures are being most affected. BOE does not have a say as the school is a charter and on parks land. **Motion to approve improvements. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

- The yellow house on Townsend Ave needs to be painted. Deputy Director Stephen Hladun will provide President Belowsky with pricing.

IV. Old Business:

State Project 0173-0519 – Giovanni Zinn

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is undertaking a project at the intersection of Middletown Ave and Bernhard Rd which is adjacent to Middletown Ave Park. There will be improvements to the signals and the pedestrian crossing infrastructure. They will remove and replace the walk signal, add a new ADA ramp landing pad, a 5 X 8 concrete pad for the bus stop, and will construct a sidewalk that will go from the crosswalk to the existing walking path. This will require 2 easements by the city of New Haven. One is a permanent easement for landing and the second will be a temporary easement for the concrete path. Requesting a favorable recommendation to the Board of Alders regarding these improvements. **Motion to approve improvements. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

Updates on Alling Golf Course: Roof is complete, siding needs to be completed, waiting on high-strength steel bolts (supply chain issue – due July), foundation will be poured in once bolts are received. Electrical work is being done and an excavation for utility will be scheduled. The clock is currently off.

Pardee Sea Wall Guardrail – Stephen Hladun

Over twenty-five percent of the guard rail is in disrepair. Request to remove and install areas of the guard rail that are in disrepair and use the Pardee Land Trust Account to fund. **Motion to approve improvements and use Pardee Land Trust funds. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

Summit at East Rock Park

Request to open the summit for everyone to visit the top. Commissioner Babb would like to have the access road inspected to make sure the road is in good condition. The road is closed from both New Haven and Hamden sides. The Davis Street side (Hamden side) is open on Sundays. There has been a significant decrease in illegal dumping. Commissioner Santiago is supportive of it being open. **Tabled.**

Public Comment:

Dennis Serfilippi of 223 Alden Ave expressed concerns about the cleanliness of the outside of Edgewood Park (the inside is clean, but the perimeter is dirty), eliminating parking spaces as he views the number to be available excessive, and adding more trash cans along the outside of the park. Signage and garbage cans may be the answer to the daily litter. Two new cans have been installed at the corner of Edgewood and on the trailhead. Rebecca Bombero stated additional trash cans can be installed. However, the challenges with adding more cans mean more stops need to be added to the route which reduces the frequency of collection.

V. Director's Report: Parks & Public Works:

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

- BOA authorized 3 new positions for the Parks Dept.
- Seasonal applications are posted on the website.

VI. Director's Report: Youth & Recreation:

- Summer activities begin on June 26th. Summer camps were merged due to low enrollment. There may be many reasons for low enrollment.
- Summer employment runs from July 3 to August 7. Not all children in the community will be hired through summer employment. Youth@Work is a program that correlates with grant dollars (there is not enough funding). Most money comes from the Dept of Labor not the city of New Haven. This program is not identified as a training program by the Dept of Labor so employees must receive minimum wage. The increase in minimum wage means fewer children can be hired. To hire all children, it would require over two million dollars in funding. Records of who was hired from each ward are kept for review by the Board of Alders.
- Movie nights will begin the second week of July and run for 6 weeks.
- Looking forward to a successful summer.
- The community is aware of programming through the summer youth guide which is distributed to school-aged children (excluding high school). Information is available in May as Youth & Rec must work in conjunction with BOE. BOE knows what schools will be available for camp in May.

- Every Saturday, running Skills in the park (basketball) for all ages 5 and up.
- Developing monument tours at East Rock Summit on Sundays from 10 am – 3 pm.
- Repainted Coogan with youth artists from New Haven who are a part of the skate community.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:12 PM

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

Next Meeting: September 20, 2023

Location: 720 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06515