

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1488

Commission Conference Meeting  
720 Edgewood Ave  
New Haven, CT 06515

July 17, 2024

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**Present:** President David Belowsky, Commissioners Carl Babb, Harvey Feinberg, Emily Sigman, Honda Smith, Hector Torres

**Absent:** Commissioners Kenya Adams

**Staff:** Deputy Director Stephen Hladun, Tariq Dasent

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I. **Minutes of Meetings #1487: Motion to approve Minutes of Meeting 1487. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**

II. **Treasurer's Report: No report. Tabled.**

**A moment of silence was held for Thomas Verderame**

1. **Trowbridge Square Improvements – Mark Wilson**

- The Engineering Department in conjunction with LCI and the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven are proposing to make improvements to Trowbridge Park.
- The Housing Authority has been awarded a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant. Part of this grant requires them to do community development. \$150,000 will be used to make improvements at Trowbridge Park.
- These improvements include regrading and rebuilding the stone dust paths around Trowbridge Park (making it a level surface), adding a plaque for the Trowbridge family in the middle of the park (the Trowbridge family were abolitionists), installing an articulated swing set rather than a traditional swing set due to limited space, and placing banners on the utility poles around the exterior of the park that are a testimony to the history of Trowbridge. Improvements will require minimal maintenance. President Belowsky is concerned about the theft of the plaque and would like that brought to Giovanni Zinn's attention.
- Nothing will be removed from the existing park. The project must be completed by December 31, 2024.
- The Barbell Club is being rehabilitated. The project is moving forward with an anticipated finish date of 2025.
- Commissioner Honda Smith fully supports these improvements for the park and thinks it will be good for the community.

**Motion to approve the Trowbridge Park improvements as recommended. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

2. **Monument at Wooster Square – Alder Sal DeCola**

- The Greater New Haven Italian American Heritage Committee along with other Italian American societies would like to form Friends of the Monument under the Parks Commission umbrella. They will maintain the grounds around it and raise private funds to keep it in pristine condition.

- Request to add two park benches facing the monument. Benches are currently there but they face the walkway. There will be no cost to the city.

**Motion to approve the maintenance of the landscape around the monument at Wooster Square Park with the accommodation of the benches. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

### **3. Geocaching – Katy Botta**

- Geocaching is an outdoor treasure hunt system. The boxes are hidden behind trees, beneath rocks, or under leaves. They must be at least 1/10 of a mile away from each other so there are not too many in one spot. When a box is found there is a logbook and a pencil so the person can initial that they were there.
- Digging is prohibited and the person who places the cache is responsible for maintaining them. It is a great way to get children and families out into nature.
- Consulted with a school in New Haven that was looking for an authentic project that kids could engage in while learning about the voting rights timeline evolution. Geocaching was thought to be a good way to allow students to share their research and help people learn about the richness of the city. The caches will have a QR code which will lead an individual to either the students research or register to vote. Some caches will also include students' artwork.
- Request to place caches around city parks. The geocache system requires approval from landowners.

**Motion to approve the installation of geocaching boxes as described by Katy in the parks. There will be no littering associated with these boxes as Katy and her crew will do the maintenance. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

### **4. Quarry Park Updates – Tracy Blanford**

- There is no project lead for the improvements at Quarry Park. Things have been divided amongst existing staff. There will be a delay as positions are filled.
- The trail sign installed on Russell Street has two mistakes: a smudge and Russell St is misspelled. The Engineering Department ordered the sign and Zinn has been informed of these issues and will work to resolve them.
- The preliminary survey of Quarry Park has been shared with the Engineering Department. It shows apparent encroachment. The next steps will be reviewed when Giovanni Zinn returns. The city must do its due diligence to avoid a lawsuit, this requires patience, and it will take time to complete. This is not something that will be fixed overnight.

### **5. Little Free Libraries – Lauren Anderson**

- Awarded the Read and Color Grant to receive 10 free libraries and free books for installation in areas deemed book deserts in New Haven. The books will be from authors of color who are typically underrepresented and reflect the community.
- Locations: Friends of Jocelyn Square Park requested a little library near their playscape, Goffe St by the basketball court, Edgewood Park to replace the one that was removed, and Dover Beach near Clinton Ave School. Each book box will have a youth steward and a neighborhood aunt or uncle. The youth will get community service credit.
- Committed to making sure they are vibrant and not abandoned. There have been no instances of vandalism or theft. Maintenance will be the responsibility of Lauren and the crew. No concrete is poured to install the little libraries.

**Motion to approve the installation of Little Free Libraries in a few parks. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

## **6. Golf Course – Kyle Lockery & Rebecca Bombero**

- The operator of the Golf Course has been with the city for 30 years and has decided to retire. An RFP was put out for a new operator and one response was received. The team is very similar to the existing team at the Golf Course with a new principal (Kyle Lockery).
- The new proposal includes the current superintendent of grounds of 30 years, a new golf pro, a diner manager, and youth programming.
- The terms of the agreement will have a revenue share split of 75 % up to the first million, 70 – 30 thereafter, and the renewal terms will move to the 1.1. The reasons for the split shift changes are due to inflation and the cost of doing business. The capital improvement threshold will increase from \$5,000 to \$10,000 to do more in-house small projects. Golf bays will be added for golf simulators. The revenue from this will be included in the split. The restaurant split will change from 10% of revenue to 8% because it will be open year-round, and the overhead is higher during the off-season.
- Youth and Seniors will receive discounted prices. Lockery is in favor of anyone under 12 being free and anyone 13- 17 should receive a discounted junior rate.
- Discussion of increasing prices at the golf course to meet the market.
- There is a three-part approval process. The Golf Advisory Committee has approved this proposal and is now seeking approval from the Parks Commission.

**Motion to approve the Golf Course Proposal from the operator. Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

7.) Adham Conaway, the homeowner of 240 Colony Road raised concerns about the tree outside his home. His issue was passed on to the Tree Warden Annie Mixsell.

## **III. Parks Director's Report: POSTED ON PARKS COMMISSION PAGE**

### **IV. Old Business – NONE**

### **V. New Business:**

#### **1. Parks Commission Foundation – Commissioner Harvey Feinberg**

A reminder that the Board of Parks Commission has a foundation called The Foundation for New Haven Parks Incorporated. The Parks Commission also has state status as a corporation. The Foundation has been in existence since June 2014. There is no money in the account as of now, but Commissioner Harvey Feinberg would like to raise or transfer money into the foundation account. The money from the foundation account can be used for community projects.

2.) A gift will be presented to former Deputy Director of Recreation William Dixon to thank him for his years of service.

### **Meeting Adjourned 7:55 P.M.**

Minutes submitted by: Tariq Dasent, Executive Administrative Assistant Dept of Public Works

Next Meeting: September 18, 2024

Location: 720 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06515