

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1453

Pardee Rose Garden
150 Park Rd.
Hamden, CT 06517

January 20, 2021

Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Carl Babb, Georgia Miller, Ernie Santiago, Kevin Walton, Alder Sal DeCola, Roxanne Condon

Absent: Commissioner Ronnell Higgins, Hector Torres

Staff: Director Jeff Pescosolido, Deputy Director William Carone, Youth Director Gwen Busch, Landscape Architect Katherine Jacobs, City Engineer Giovanni Zinn, Tariq Dasent

- I. **Minutes of Meeting #1452: Motion to approve Minutes of Meetings 1452, Motion Seconded, unanimously approved. Closed.**
- II. **Treasurer's Report:** President Belowsky requested Deputy Director Carone find out what happened to check number 1726 as there is no mention of check on Treasurer's Report. **Motion to approve Treasurer's Report, Motion Seconded. Unanimously approved. Closed.**
- III. **Old Business:** The issue of baseball fields at Bowen Field was raised. Deputy Director Carone stated he will do his best to have this completed.
- IV. **New Business:**
Improvements to 180 Park Road: Giovanni Zinn, City Engineer shared with the commissioners detailed plans of improvements to East Rock Workshop (Maintenance Area) at 180 Park Road. The City of New Haven has a 10-million-dollar bond authorization from the State of Connecticut and the Board of Alders has allocated an additional 5 million dollars towards improvements at both 180 Park Road and 34 Middletown Ave.
- Site plans not only include improvements to the backend of the area such as the maintenance garages but also to the public facing side of 180 Park Road. A natural themed playscape has been proposed for the front area near the greenhouse.
- The Town of Hamden will have to give permission for construction due to the parks' location. Giovanni provided a timeline which is to apply in February to the Town of Hamden for inland/wetlands permits. Also, Giovanni will apply to the Town of Hamden for a special permit and site plan. Review for the site in March. Then finalize all design documents and get out to bid. Construction will start in 2021 and be completed in 2022.
- President Belowsky asked Giovanni what the overall cost would be for doing these improvements to both 180 Park Road and 34 Middletown Ave. Giovanni Zinn replied the estimated cost for 180 Park Road is in the 8–10-million-dollar range. Commissioner Walton inquired about what impacts this will have on the projects Katherine Jacobs brought forth in the October meeting. Giovanni informed Commissioner Walton there will be no impact on other projects as this money is separate and solely for the use of improving 180 Park Road and demolishing the garage structure at 34 Middletown Ave.

Motion to approve permission for Giovanni to apply to the Town of Hamden. Motion Seconded, unanimously approved. Closed.

Introduction of Director of Youth & Recreation Gwendolyn Busch: Director Gwen Busch stated the Department of Youth & Rec have begun planning summer 2021 events and programs. They will continue to plan within COVID restrictions as they have in the past. President Belowsky inquired about the First Tee program at the golf course to teach the children of New Haven how to play. Director Busch will work with her interns to put together a program.

Director Busch raised a few questions. Director Busch wanted to know if the Youth & Rec Department could purchase an ATV. It would be used to work on trails especially those that are narrower. Commissioner Walton raised the issue of use of ATVs by park rangers as the city has cracked down on public use of dirt bikes and ATV's. Deputy Director Carone suggested use of a different vehicle such as a smaller all-purpose tractor.

Director Busch wanted to know what the Park Commissions role in housing park rangers is. Director Busch also wanted to know if there was an actual leasing agreement with the tenants. President Belowsky went over the procedure of housing park rangers.

Director Busch raised the question of raising the permit rates for the incoming fiscal year. President Belowsky stated they would have to go to the Board of Alders to see if they would agree with raising rates. Currently, Director Busch, is working with the Controller and the Accounting Department to set up an electronic system to accept parking payments at Lighthouse Point.

Director Busch will send any findings to the topics raised to President Belowsky prior to the next meeting.

Introduction of Parks & Public Works Executive Administrative Assistant: Tariq Dasent was introduced as the new Executive Administrative Assistant to Parks & Public Works. Tariq is currently at the Public Works location (34 Middletown Ave). Commissioner Miller raised the question of who will be located at 720 Edgewood Ave. Director Busch informed Commissioner Miller the Recreation staff will remain at 720 Edgewood Ave.

Park Improvements/ Upgrade Request: Katherine Jacobs, Landscape Architect for Parks Department & City Engineering Department, shared with commissioners' details of improvements at West River bank and Edgewood & Wilbur Cross tennis courts. Both tennis courts are badly cracked. They both had their cracks repaired at the surface multiple times in the past. Geotechnical analysis have been done at both sites and it is believed the cracking is due to problems with the underlying soil being unstable. Ms. Jacobs stated the funding strategy is still being figured out.

West River Bank Stabilization: West River Watershed Coalition have concerns for the area just upstream of the Edgewood Ave bridge. Trees were removed and the bank became vulnerable. The bank is being subject to scouring due to the water moving by. The West River Watershed Coalition is interested in doing green engineering strategies to prevent further erosion. They would like to use strategies that use natural materials such as stones rather than a retaining wall. This work will require permitting at the State and Federal level. As of now the Coalition does not need a decision but it was brought to the commission's attention if they had any concerns.

President Belowsky questioned if the phragmites helped the scouring that was taking place. Katherine Jacobs stated it was neutral. It would be better to have something noninvasive in a larger ecological system, however, in this situation the phragmites do not contribute to the problem of scouring.

Wilbur Cross Tennis Courts: Reviewed construction plans for tennis courts. These plans include keeping the existing lights, replacing fixtures that need to be replaced, and keeping same layout for all courts. To improve the tennis courts a similar surfacing which was used on the pickleball courts in Scantlebury Park will be used. Ms. Jacobs stated there is an interest in applying hybrid lines on the junior courts so the public can play pickleball or tennis. These paving improvements apply to the basketball court as it has cracking as well.

Edgewood Park Tennis Courts: Much of what was mentioned for the Wilbur Cross Tennis Courts will apply to the Edgewood Tennis Courts. The difference at Edgewood is the lack of junior courts. Ms. Jacobs suggested taking one of the existing tennis courts and replacing it with three pickleball courts. Also, the four light poles closet to parking lot do have working power they just need new fixtures which can be completed by Spring. The four light poles further away from parking lot do not have power. These four poles will need to be rewired and get new fixtures.

The issue of eliminating one tennis court and replacing it with pickleball courts was raised by both Commissioner's Walton and Babb. Ms. Jacobs agreed to do more outreach to ensure removing one tennis would not be a problem. Other options will be explored as not to displace tennis players.

The earliest construction can begin on the tennis courts will be 2022.

Repointing the Stone Wall at 180 Park Road: It was tentatively approved to repoint the stone wall at 180 Park Road. It was suggested the Wedding Cake and the Barn have repointing work done as well. The estimated cost for the Wedding Cake is \$ 14,800 and the Barn \$ 11,740. This would come from the dedicated funds for Pardee Rose Garden.

Motion to approve pointing at 180 Park Road. Motion seconded, unanimously approved. Closed.

Pickleball: Ms. Jacobs suggested applying hybrid striping at the junior tennis courts in East Shore. This would only require adding different paint. It would not take away any facilities.

- V. **Director's Report:** Deputy Director Carone thanked the commissioners for the gift cards that were given for the holidays. Parks & Public Works continue with city services to keep the city clean. Currently, the department is assisting at the hockey rink, making ice, as Albertus Magnus may have a hockey season. Also, the department is assisting Chris Ozyck from Yale's Urban Resource Initiative in removing invasive species plants at Fairmont Park.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:55 p.m.

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

Next Meeting: February 17th, 2021

Location: ZOOM