

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Minutes of the April 24, 2008 Regular Meeting**

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on April 24, 2008, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

**In attendance were:**

Commissioners:            Thomas Lombardo  
                                     Mark Smith  
                                     Beth Cooper  
                                     Timothy McGuinness

Staff:                         Laurie Albano  
                                     Joseph Barbarotta

Gests:                        Brian O'Neill – Fort Stamford  
  
                                     Sharon Slocum – Stamford Garden Club  
  
                                     Mariellen Harland – Bench Donation  
  
                                     Barbara Friedman – K.T. Murphy  
  
                                     Marilyn Armengd – K.T. Murphy  
  
                                     Michele Sabia – K.T. Murphy  
  
                                     Wynne Parry – Stamford Advocate  
  
                                     George Hallenbeck – Stamford Sailing Power Squadrons  
  
                                     Barbara Rose – Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation  
  
                                     Joseph Arouni – Evangelical Community Church  
  
                                     Captain Trevor Roach – Stamford Fire Department  
  
                                     Penney Burnett – Soccer Fields  
  
                                     Barbara LeCormic – Soccer Fields  
  
                                     Ruth Miller – Soccer Fields  
  
                                     Mary Deery Uva – Soccer Fields

Maureen Carson – Soccer Fields  
Maureen Boylar – Soccer Fields  
Roxanne Aaron-Selph – N.E.T.A.  
Marvin Tyler – N.E.T.A.  
Nikhil Mahajan – ASHA  
Anita Shah – ASHA  
Butch LaMotta – Babe Ruth

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:55 p.m. by Thomas Lombardo.

Commissioner Cooper arrived at 7:18 p.m.

Commissioner Martino did not attend the meeting.

**Review of the February 28, 2008 Minutes.**

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

**Review of the March 19, 2008 Minutes.**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

**Staff Reports**

**Joseph Barbarotta – Parks Maintenance**

- We are at the end of our Budget cycle and it looks like Parks and Facilities should survive fairly well. There was a \$15,000 cut from the Board of Finance from our Seasonal Account, but everything else appears to have made it through the Budget. We went in front of the Board of Representatives, but we have not received their final recommendations yet.

- We are planting new grass at Columbus Park. In coordination with UNICO we are redoing the fountain; we will steam clean it and will put new tiles in the bottom of the fountain with the Niña, the Pinta, the Santa Maria and Columbus' picture. The City is purchasing the tile and UNICO is paying for the labor to install the tile.
- Tomorrow is Arbor Day and for the twentieth consecutive year Stamford gets a proclamation from the Mayor and has been named the Tree City USA. There is criteria that has to be met, an x amount of trees need to be planted every year. On Earth Day 40 of the Cherry Trees from the Mill River Park were planted on East Main Street.
- There was a Task Force Committee Meeting for Veterans' Park this morning. The Parks Department has asked for Capital funds this year, we have some funds now but we are hoping to get the rest of the funds to install new lighting in Veterans' Park that will match the downtown streetscape lighting.
- There is a rodent problem at Veterans' Park and we have come up with a rodent resistant garbage bag to try there.
- The season is up and going, we are working on 24 fields a day,
- We lost one tree crew employee who left for another job and a second one will be leaving to become a Police Officer. A new hire will start next week.
- We are starting a Recycle Program in the parks. We will be putting out blue bins this year and we will also have trash bags at Cove Island, Cummings and the places that we man with booths. We are going to try to give people bags and ask them to bring out their garbage and throw it in a dumpster located on the way out. Residents will also be asked to put their recycle bottles in the blue containers.
- We had planned to do some work regarding the Monk Parakeets before the season started but we received some information that there are Osprey located on the nests at Cummings. We are in contact with the DEP at the State because these birds are Federally protected. We can move the nests after July, for now the work planned for the Monk Parakeets will be moved to September.

### **Laurie Albano – Recreation**

- Busy with spring programs and planning for the summer.
- We almost have all of our summer hiring done.
- Ms. Albano has been placed on the West Beach Design Committee, the first meeting should be on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Lombardo stated that Mrs. Cooper contacted him and told him that she was not able to serve as part of the

Committee so he will attend the meetings in her place.

- Ms. Albano stated that she went in front of the Board of Representatives on April 21, 2008; there is no word on any cuts yet. Recreation took a \$2,000 Budget reduction out of our Administrative Account #2530 from the Board of Finance.
- On Thursday, May 1, 2008 we are interviewing the four finalists for our feasibility study for the Recreation Center.

### **Fort Stamford**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to add Fort Stamford to the Agenda.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

Mr. Lombardo stated that Fort Stamford has been a very under used facility for many years and now is becoming a very desired facility. There are three groups that have interest in using parts of the building. Mr. Lombardo asked the Goodbody Garden, the Fort Stamford Preservation Coalition and Laurie Albano from the Recreation Department to each give a quick presentation to the Commission where they can present their needs. Additional information can be submitted in writing to aid the Commission on their progress and take a vote.

Mr. Lombardo commended Mr. O'Neill and the Goodbody Garden for all the work they have done at Fort Stamford.

### **Brian O'Neill – Fort Stamford Preservation Coalition**

- Fort Stamford was purchased as a property by the City of Stamford a number of years ago. A Bi-Centennial group was formed to celebrate the Fort and the site, they raised money for the building and intended to use the building as a museum and a place where they can have lectures on the history of Stamford. Unfortunately the organization was not able to sustain themselves and the City was kind enough to take over the property which remained dormant for a number of years.
- The property is on the National Register of Historic Places and several years ago the State recognized it as a State Archeological Preserve, there is approximately 9 other sites in the State that have that designation. Basically the site is a No Dig Zone.
- It has always been the goal of the Fort Stamford Preservation Coalition to develop programs and have an exhibit which will introduce children and families to the history of the site and the role of Fort Stamford in the American Revolution.

- The Fort Stamford Preservation Coalition has developed an idea for an exhibit. They have had contacts with many organizations including the Historical Society, Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution, State Archeologists and others, and they are all very excited about this project. It is their intention to get the school system involved and become a regular showcase for them.
- Their needs are minimal on the part of the input from the City. They plan to solicit some funds to build the exhibit and put it together. They have an antique Coach stored at the site, which belonged to James Hoyt who was an outstanding citizen of Stamford. Mr. O'Neill and a group of volunteers spent several thousand of dollars on starting the restoration of the Coach. Former Director of Operations, Mr. Tim Curtin, approved that the Coach be stored at the garage in Fort Stamford.
- The Fort Stamford Preservation Coalition requests from the Commission and the City that the building be secured with Sonitrol.
- The Fort Stamford Preservation Coalition would like to use the second floor of the building; they are planning on having a couple of cases in the middle of the floor for artifacts. They will also need to have access to the bathroom on the first floor. They want the exhibit to stay throughout the summer, the fall and all of July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. They would like to have exclusive use of the building, if they can only get limited use, the situation needs to be controlled and fully understand that the objects cannot be touched.
- Mr. O'Neill stated that the State Archeological Preserve designation extends to all the property that has not already been developed; it cannot be dug for any purpose including new plantings. Mr. O'Neill stated that it is OK for the City to install the short steel post with cannonball top and a decorative chain to keep people off the lawn.
- Mr. O'Neill requested that the garage be used for the exclusive use of the Coach and nothing else.
- Mr. O'Neill stated that they would like a commitment that the City is going to support their efforts. Mr. Lombardo suggested that the garage be covered by Sonitrol.

### **Sharon Slocum – The Goodbody Garden**

- Ms. Slocum stated that they have an Executive Board meeting on the first Tuesday of the month and after that they work in the garden. They usually meet at their houses, but would like to hold one or two of the Executive Board meetings at the Fort. They would also like to have a Garden Club Meeting once a year at the Fort.

- They would like to use the bathroom facilities when they work at the garden.
- They would like to have permission to park in the back parking lot.

**Laurie Albano – Recreation**

- Ms. Albano stated that in the 11 years that she has been working for the City the Youth Programs have quadrupled. The Recreation Department has outgrown even using the school space; there is a lot of trouble with daytime space when schools are in session. They have been renting churches but they are starting to get very expensive. The City has a feasibility study to look at the possibility of building a Recreation Center to be operated by the Recreation Department. After Fort Stamford was renovated the Director of Operations mentioned that this would be a good place for Ms. Albano’s day time programs and asked her to put on her Quarterly Goals to prepare a program scenario and schedule for that facility.
- The facility will be used for the Birthday Party Program, the Pre-School Program and possibly a small program of no more than 20 kids after school. Mr. Lombardo stated that the Birthday Party Program should be done at a church.
- Ms. Albano stated that they would like to use the second floor of the building and the yard in front of the building.

Mr. Lombardo stated that the Commission will ask the Director of Operations come to the next meeting and requested that Mr. O’Neill, Ms. Slocum and Ms. Albano submit their written proposals so they can be put together into a package to distribute before the meeting.

**Donations**

**Waterside Coalition – Donation of Benches for Southfield Park.**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve Waterside Coalition’s donation of benches for Southfield Park. The benches will have to be the same type of benches that we already have at all the parks. An employee from the Parks Department will meet Ms. Harland to determine the right location for the benches.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

Unanimously Approved

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve the Waterside Coalition’s request to paint the garbage pails at Southfield Park green.

Seconded by many

Unanimously Approved

**Special Events**

**Barbara Friedman – K.T. Murphy – Use of Pavilion at Cove Island and the Great Lawn for All Day School Field Trip – Tuesday, June 10, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. – 550 Kids and 100 Adults. Discussion of Parking Permit Fees.**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve K.T. Murphy School's request to use Pavilion at Cove Island and the Great Lawn for an all day school field trip on Tuesday, June 10, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. – 500 kids and 100 adults.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

Ms. Cooper made a motion to approve 20 volunteer parking passes at Cove Island Park for K.T. Murphy School's all day school field trip on Tuesday, June 10, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

Ms. Friedman stated that Sodexo will be providing the food for the field trip. The Commission stated that the food has to be provided by the park's vendor, he has the first right to refuse. If the vendor can't provide the food for so many people then they can have Sodexo do it. The other option is to do a bag lunch.

**GE Asset Management – Use of One of Stamford Parks for Company Picnic/Sports Demonstration – Thursday, June 26, 2008. Event will Start at 3:00 p.m. and Have a Duration of About 5 Hours. Set Up at 10:00 a.m. – Rain Date June 30, 2008.**

Item withdrawn from Agenda by GE Asset Management.

**US Power Squadrons – Annual Fire Extinguisher and Flare Safety Demonstration at West Beach – Monday, June 2, 2008 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

**Barbara Rose – Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation – Walkathon on Sunday, September 28, 2008 from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Cove Island Park.**

The Commission discussed with Ms. Rose the complaints that the residents had after the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's event last year. Mr. Lombardo stated that the complaints came from residents from Seaside Avenue, Weed Avenue and Wallacks Point. Mr. Lombardo stated that they cannot use amplified music, park on the lawn, drive over the bridge or put advertising banners in the park.

Mr. Lombardo stated that Ms. Rose needs to get more Stamford residents on their Board of Directors.

Ms. Rose stated that she might look at another location to do the Walkathon this year. The Commissioners suggested a couple of places in Norwalk.

Mr. McGuinness suggested that Ms. Rose come back to the Commission next month with a plan to address all of the issues that were discussed.

Item was tabled to the May 2008 Commission Meeting.

**Evangelical Community Church – Outreach Event at Cumming Park – Saturday, June 7, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Rain Date June 8, 2008 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

**Lymphoma Research – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Lymphomathon – Request to Change the Date to Saturday, October 18, 2008 Instead of Saturday, October 4, 2008.**

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

**Stamford Fire and Rescue Department – Big Rig Day at Cove Island Park and Also the Use of a Portion of the Parking Lot – Saturday, May 17, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

The Mayor's Cabinet would like to do a "Touch a Truck Day" at Cove Island, there will be trucks from the Fire Department, Police Department, Construction Trucks, etc. Turner Construction will participate in the event.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve Stamford Fire and Rescue Department's Big Rig Day at Cove Island parking lot near the boat ramp.

Tuner Construction will need a Certificate of Insurance.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

### **Old Business**

**David Winston – Booth Realignment and Traffic Sidewalk Plan into Cove Island Park.**

- Mr. Lombardo stated that he sent Mani Poola two e-mails but has not received a response yet.
- Mr. Winston stated that he just wanted everyone to be kept informed.

**Stamford Babe Ruth – Talent Evaluation at Cubeta Stadium – Monday, June 23, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

- Mr. Smith stated that he was not able to reach the representative from Babe Ruth. He needs to find out if this program is going to be run by Bobby Valentine or is it going to be a Babe Ruth funded program. If it is a Babe Ruth funded program and the proceeds are going to Babe Ruth he would like to negotiate the \$750 Maintenance Reimbursement Fee. If the program is going to be through Bobby Valentine they will have to pay the same as IST, which was \$750 Maintenance Reimbursement Fee.

Item was tabled to the May 2007 Commission Meeting.

**Review Revised and Approved Park Regulations.**

Motion was made by Mr. McGuinness to approve the DRAFT Park Regulations with the exception that anywhere that says Office of Operations in the document it should read Office of Operations and Parks and Recreation Commission instead.

Seconded by many

Unanimously Approved

**New Business**

**Nicholas Braccia – Stamford Bocce.**

Item tabled to the May 2008 Commission Meeting. No representative was present.

**Penney Burnett – Installation of Four Synthetic Fields.**

The following are Ms. Burnett’s comments to the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding the installation of four synthetic fields:

**COMMENTS ON TIRE TURF ATHLETIC FIELDS IN STAMFORD  
Presented April 24, 2008 – Parks & Recreation Commission**

Thank you for allowing me to talk to you tonight. I am here to ask for your help with respect to the City’s plan to install artificial turf athletic fields in West Beach Park and Lione Park.

- As you may know, at West Beach Park the City plans to destroy an existing open park space that serves multiple uses, and enclose it in a single-use soccer

complex covered with ground up used car and truck tires. Although Lione Park is already an athletic facility, its' field surface will also be converted from natural grass to synthetic tire crumb turf.

- First of all, having just celebrated Earth Day two days ago, many of us cannot understand how the City can take away a multi-use open green space that is available to the general public at West Beach, and turn it over to the exclusive use of soccer leagues. As members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, we hope that you share our concern about the loss of one of the last remaining open green spaces south of I-95, save Cove Park.
- More than the loss of open space, of much greater concern to us is the materials they are planning to use for the fields. As you may know by now, the artificial turf they are planning to use is not your old AstroTurf. These new fields are made from plastic grass filled in with ground-up used truck and car tires. The tire crumbs are NOT underneath the plastic grass but rather are spread ON TOP OF the grass. The amount of recycled tires going into these fields is immense. The two fields at West Beach will cover an area of almost 200,000 square feet and will be covered with over **285 tons – that is more than one-half million pounds -- of potentially toxic ground up used tires** spread across over 4 acres of public parklands. At Lione Park, 120,000 square ft – almost all of the existing park area - will be covered with plastic grass and 180 tons of tire crumbs.

It is not clear to us that the Parks and Recreation Commission has been involved in the planning or approval of these fields, but we want you to be aware of our deep concerns about the potential risks of these fields.

**1. First is the health risk. When kids play on these fields, they are directly exposed to the ground up tire crumbs and dust that arises from these crumbs.**

These crumbs have been shown to contain dangerous chemicals. The long-term toxicity from exposure to these chemicals is unknown, much like the early exposures to asbestos, smoking and lead. Dr. David Brown, a former CDC toxicologist, has published a report for EHHI in New Haven on the health risks for children playing on tire turf fields. I have brought copies of Dr. Brown's report for your information [PASS OUT REPORT]. Dr. Brown has strongly recommended that children under the age of 12 not be allowed on these fields. More recent information out of New Jersey indicates that the plastic grass itself may also contain unacceptable levels of lead contamination. Although the City claims the synthetic turf they are planning to install does not contain lead, there is no evidence that they have conducted any tests to confirm this. In addition, these fields get extremely hot on sunny days, and children have been known to pass out on the field from the heat. **It is important to note that there is no study – not one – where the material has been proven safe for kids.**

- In addition, no one has discussed the fact that the West Beach complex will be only 55 feet from residential housing. The temperature on these 4 acres of ground

up used car and truck tires can reach over 130 degrees F in the summer. Talk about global warming! The heat releases volatile compounds from the tire crumbs and the fields smell like burning rubber. Residents will be not be able to leave their windows open or use their terraces. Apartments surrounding Lione Park will face the same problems.

**2. The second risk from these fields is environmental damage from runoff water, particularly at West Beach Park.** Studies have shown that heavy metals, such as zinc, can leach from recycled tire crumbs into water, and that the leachate is toxic to all aquatic life, including fish and shellfish. At West Beach, the fields will drain through a bed of crushed rock underneath the synthetic surface into a drainage system that will be pumped directly into Westcott Cove. This makes no sense given that Westcott Cove is used heavily by swimmers and recreational fishermen, and that the Westcott Cove oyster beds just underwent extensive renovation this past winter.

**3. There is an alternative, and we ask you tonight to require the City to explore this alternative.** Children have been playing on natural grass for years. We also know that natural turf that is maintained organically is safe for both our children and the environment. Additionally, on an all-inclusive cost analysis, the installation and maintenance of natural turf actually costs less than tire crumb turf. City officials and the soccer leagues claim that natural grass fields simply are not an option because they will not stand up to the intended use. But we know of towns that have successfully converted parks and heavily used athletic fields to grass. In fact just two weeks ago the Shippan Point Garden Club hosted a presentation by a Parks Commissioner from Marblehead Massachusetts (Chuck Osborne) who oversees such a program in his community. We would be happy to get more information on this to you.

If it is the City's position that organic management of natural turf fields will not sustain the intended use of our parks, then we respectfully suggest that the intended use should be reconsidered. As members of the community surrounding West Beach Park, we actually enjoy seeing the children playing soccer. And we all agree the fields need substantial improvement but not at the expense of our children's health or the environment.

We are asking for your support in opposing the installation of these fields in both West Beach and Lione Parks.

Other residents expressed their concerns as well.

### **Tournaments**

**Use of All 12 Scalzi Park Tennis Courts for New England Tennis Association (N.E.T.A.) Tennis Tournament – Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, September 14, 2008 – Starting at 9:00 a.m. and finishing at around 8:00 p.m.**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve.

One tennis court must be left open for the public. There will be a \$1,000 maintenance reimbursement fee.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

**ASHA for Education – Cricket Tournament – Scalzi Park – Saturday and Sunday Sometime in Mid- September 2008.**

Item tabled to the May 2008 Commission Meeting. Since there was a conflict with Scalzi Park, staff will research other available fields.

**Stamford Babe Ruth – 18 Year Old Tournament – July 11 – July 17, 2008.**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve.

Babe Ruth has to work out with Legion regarding the dates that Legion already has in Cubeta that week or play at Stamford High on those nights.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

**Correspondence**

Correspondence was discussed.

**The May Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 21, 2008.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mrs. Cooper

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Margarita Arenas  
April 25, 2008