

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Minutes of the June 10, 2008 Regular Meeting**

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

**In attendance were:**

Commissioners:            Thomas Lombardo  
                                      Beth Cooper  
                                      Mark Smith

Staff:                         Laurie Albano  
                                      Mickey Docimo  
                                      Joseph Barbarotta

Guests:                      Eileen Heaphy – Dog Park  
  
                                      Joan Rinaldi – Dog Park  
  
                                      Jan Goldfluss – Dog Park  
  
                                      Peter Medoit – Use of Southfield Park  
  
                                      Kelly Aronica – Girl Scouts  
  
                                      Rick Bush – Use of Cove Island  
  
                                      Julia Wade – West Side NRZ  
  
                                      Susan Connolly – Use of Cove Island  
  
                                      Charles Stobbie – Gazebo at Gurley Park  
  
                                      Marie Stobbie – Gazebo at Gurley Park  
  
                                      Sharon Slocum – Gazebo at Gurley Park  
  
                                      Anne Olive – Gazebo at Gurley Park  
  
                                      Annette Bodetka – Gazebo at Gurley Park  
  
                                      Jean Rinaldi – Homer Wise Statue  
  
                                      James Vlasto – Homer Wise Statue

Captain Henry Marx – Stamford Sailing Foundation

Margaret Seiet – Stamford Sailing Foundation

Penney Burnett – Shippan Garden Club

Maureen Carson – Shippan Garden Club

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Thomas Lombardo.

Commissioner McGuinness and Commissioner Martino did not attend the meeting.

Commissioner Cooper arrived at 7:10 p.m.

### **Review of April 24, 2008 and May 21, 2008 Minutes.**

Review of April 24, 2008 and May 21, 2008 Minutes will be postponed to the July 2008 Commission Meeting.

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Mickey Docimo – Parks and Recreation/Operations**

- Mr. Docimo mentioned how in previous meetings we have talked about reconfiguring the entrance to Cove Island Park, his new way to try to control that area is by installing a speed bump. The Park Ambassadors are having problems with people that come flying down the hill and they are not able to stop them. Mr. Docimo feels that a speed bump will help resolve this problem. This is something to think about, we are not sure if we have the money, the cost of the speed bump is about \$6,000.
- The new vendor started at the beaches; so far everything is going well.
- Things are going well at the Skate Park.
- Mr. Docimo invited the Manager of the Skate Park to the July meeting so she can introduce herself and tell everyone what she is doing.
- Some repairs were done at the Skate Park this past week.

## **Joseph Barbarotta – Parks Maintenance**

- We are grooming the beaches on a daily basis.
- A sidewalk was put down at West Beach to separate the beach from the parking area. Eventually some planting will be done.
- Mr. Barbarotta thanked David and Ginger Winston for their help at Cove Island Park. There were about 460 people doing some plantings and Mr. and Mrs. Winston coordinated the event. There were also about 60 Deloitte people in the parking lot re-doing some of the islands.

Mr. Barbarotta is very thankful for all help we are getting from corporate sponsors and the Cove Association specially Mr. and Mrs. Winston.

- A group will be going to Cummings on Thursday to do a clean up.
- Fountain project at Columbus Park has been done; it will open next Thursday when Alive @ Five begins.
- Alive @ Five is expanding, they will be keeping the park open another hour.
- We are working on recycling in the parks. New recycle bins were put in the parks but people were using them for garbage more than recycle. To prevent this from happening we are thinking of closing them and put wire ties on them.
- Mr. Barbarotta showed the Commissioners a sample of the biodegradable bags that we are going to be giving out to the residents at the parks. Residents will be asked to use the bags for their garbage after picnics.

## **Laurie Albano – Recreation**

- Tuesday and Wednesday nights will be our Opening Night for Camp Orientation for all Staff at Hart School.
- End of the year budget is winding down.
- Scalzi Concerts are set for Monday nights in July and August.
- We have a lot of Carwin Park activities and youth activities set up for the summer.
- Fireworks will take place at Cummings Park on July 3<sup>rd</sup> with a rain date of July 5<sup>th</sup>.

- Ms. Albano stated that she received a Certified Letter from Ms. Hagenow regarding the fact that we are using Scalzi Park tennis courts two nights a week for a couple of hours for tennis lessons. Ms. Albano stated that we have been doing those tennis lessons there for many years. Ms. Albano will give her a call.
- Will start planning for fall very soon, brochure has to go to the printer by July.
- Still waiting on vendors for the RFP for the new software.
- The Recreation Center RFP was awarded but it will not begin until some time in July. Our budget for the Recreation Center Study is \$50,000.

### **Eileen Heaphy – Dog Park Plans.**

- Ms. Heaphy stated that ever since the Commission gave them the approval for the Dog Park they have been working hard in their Committee raising funds. They have raised approximately \$11,000 from small donations. People are buying bricks to line the path with their dog's name and medallions that will go on the edge of the fence with their dog's name. They also received a donation of five trees. Purina Dog Chow just announced that they are given them a grant for the water fountains, \$2,200.

86 Bricks have been sold at the price of \$50 and over 30 medallions at \$25. They have received a great outpour of support. There will be a car wash on June 22, 2008 at Splash Car Wash to help raise funds.

- They are trying to do the best they can do based on the 1.3 acre at Hunt Complex that was allotted for the Dog Park.
- They have talked to Mr. Barbarotta and Mr. Docimo about how to get the water in, what the City is able to do in terms of the routine maintenance, and what they will do in terms of the money they have raised.
- Mr. Jan Goldfluss/Architect presented the working plan for the Dog Park. It is based on the survey that they got from Redniss & Mead.
- Mr. Goldfluss stated that their plan is to develop the park as two different areas, a small dog park area and a large dog park area.

Mr. Lombardo stated that he thought that the area designated for the small dog park area was supposed to remain as a grass and a play area. Mr. Goldfluss stated that this was in the original slide presentation and it encompasses almost exactly the 1.3 acres.

- Ms. Heaphy stated that Mr. Docimo suggested that they make sure that the entrance be north of Lines & Signs so that they can get in without disturbing the lower area that they need.
- Mr. Goldfluss stated that they took into account the existing uses and the separation of those uses by having fencing.
- Mr. Smith and Mr. Lombardo stated that they did not approve the area that they are planning to use for the small dog park area. They thought that area was going to remain for recreation and that the entire lower part was going to be used for the Dog Park. Mr. Lombardo stated that this plan might have to be revised.
- Mr. Goldfluss stated that if that area is removed from the plan the park will be under an acre.
- Ms. Heaphy explained that the smaller dogs need an area that is not totally slanted because it will be hard for them to get around.
- Mr. Goldfluss expressed his concern about a blind spot in the park and requests that something needs to be done to protect the pedestrians.
- Ms. Heaphy stated that their goal to open the Dog Park is Labor Day weekend.
- Ms. Heaphy stated that a way of raising money is to have a Founders Plaque at the entrance of the park. Mr. Lombardo explained that the plaque needs to be a certain size.
- A couple of Commissioners will meet Ms. Heaphy at the Dog Park to walk the area. Decision to approve the Dog Park Plan will be tabled to the July 2008 Commission Meeting.

### **Donations**

**Dominick Colandro – Bench Donation in Memory of His Parents – Cove Island Park.**

No representative was present.

### **Special Events**

**Peter Medoit – Use of Southfield Park Instead of Mill River Park for Youth Revival Service – Saturday, June 28, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. – 100 People.**

No motion. No support for this event.

**Kelly Aronica – Annual Sleepover of CT Girl Scouts – Cove Island Park – Starting at 5:00 p.m. on September 5, 2008 to 12:00 Noon on September 7, 2008.**

Ms. Aronica stated that they hired a Police Officer to cover the event.

Mr. Lombardo stated that camp fires at the beach are prohibited.

Commissioners requested Ms. Aronica to come back next month with more detailed information; they would like to know how many troops in total, how many girls are expected between the two days and the percentage of Stamford residents.

Ms. Aronica was asked to consider the weekend of September 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> instead of September 5<sup>th</sup> for the event.

Item was tabled to the July 2008 Commission Meeting.

**Rick Bosh – Fusion Associates – Use of a Portion of the Main Field at Cove Island Park on Saturday, July 19, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Mr. Smith stated that using the Great Lawn at Cove Island Park during the middle of the summer is difficult and suggested that Mr. Bosh contact the Board of Education and ask to use Westhill High School. Commissioner Cooper also suggested other locations.

No motion. No support for this event.

**Julia Wade – East Side Housing Partnership – BBQ at Lione Park – Saturday, July 26, 2008 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

Unanimously Approved

**Susan Connolly – Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. – Use of Great Lawn at Cove Island Park for Annual Employee Picnic – August 3, 2008 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (these times do not include set-up and break-down).**

Mr. Lombardo stated that a previous request to use the great lawn at Cove Island Park during the middle of the summer was denied since this is the high of the season.

Commissioners suggested different venues.

No motion. No support for this event.

### **Old Business**

#### **Charles Stobbie – Cove Neighborhood Association – Request for Approval for a Gazebo to be Added to Gurley Park Located at Weed Avenue and East Main Street.**

- The Cove Neighborhood Association received a Grant from the State; Representative Carlo Leone was the instrument in getting them this Grant.

The Executive Committee of the Cove Neighborhood Association has overwhelmingly voted to use the State Grant of \$9,000 to purchase, assemble and maintain a gazebo in Gurley Park.

Their decision was based on the following:

1. The State's enthusiastic approval for this use.
2. An attractive gateway to the Cove.
3. A pleasant environment for the nearby employees and local Cove residents.
4. A background for photo opportunities.

The goal of the Cove Neighborhood Association is to improve and beautify the historic Cove area.

- Mr. Lombardo stated that our experience is with the gazebo at Mill River Park at which Mr. Barbarotta explained that we spend more time trying to maintain it. Mr. Barbarotta stated that the gazebo at Mill River Park doesn't attract positive use all the time.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that the City plans to plant a feature tree in the center of the park and a couple of picnic tables.
- Mr. Docimo stated that the Cove Neighborhood Association will be surprised at the amount of maintenance that would be required in order to keep the gazebo looking the way they want. It is his experience that a gazebo only works well when it is in a wide open area, where no one can get at them with under any sort of cover. Mr. Docimo believes that if we put a gazebo at Gurley Park it would get a lot vandalism, graffiti and people hanging out there doing things that they are not supposed to do.
- Mrs. Cooper asked if there is a size requirement for gazebos. Mr. Lombardo stated that to his recollection the only gazebo we have is the one at Mill River

Park. He believes that if the gift has been acceptable to put in a City park in the past, this one certainly will be (the gazebo at Mill River Park is bigger than the one suggested for Gurley Park). To be consistent with what was approved before, we will have to find old minutes or records.

- Mr. Lombardo asked if the area where the gazebo will be installed is prone to flooding, their response was no.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that a more practical use of the grant money would be wooden guardrails.
- Ms. Albano asked if the Cove Neighborhood Association would be willing to sign a Memorandum of Agreement to maintain the gazebo. The response was yes. The Cove Neighborhood Association will also take care of graffiti.
- Mr. Lombardo asked Mr. Barbarotta to get the dimensions of the gazebo at Mill River Park.
- Mr. Stobbie stated that in the Grant there is a statement that requires them to spend the money by July 1, 2008.
- Mr. Lombardo suggested that the Cove Neighborhood Association ask Representative Carlo Leone if they can get an extension.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that if there is an agreement that the gazebo will be maintained, The Cove Neighborhood Association will have to provide insurance and some subdued manner of lighting.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that we need to get information from the Building Department on the gazebo at Mill River Park and then check with the Town Clerk Office and find an approval on the record when the gift was accepted. That will give us a precedent.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that if the State doesn't give them an extension, the Commission is willing to call a Special Meeting; otherwise they will have to come back to the July 2008 Commission Meeting.

**James Vlasto – The Homer L. Wise Memorial Committee, Inc. – Present Selection of Pose for Sergeant Wise's Statue.**

- Mr. Vlasto presented the Commission with the selection of pose for the Sergeant Wise's Statue.
- The Statue will be 6 ft. from the feet to the top; the base will be approximately 3 ft. They will like to put a plaque describing Sergeant Wise's career in the

army.

- Mr. Lombardo reminded Mr. Vlasto that the statue was approved to go at Homer Wise Park.
- Mr. Vlasto stated that the members of the Homer L. Wise Memorial Committee, Inc. are as follows:

Jean Rinaldi, President  
James S. Vlasto, Secretary and Treasurer  
Morton Dean  
Frank DiSesa  
Tony Pavia  
Barbara Pialtos  
Sandra Silverman  
Helen George Spencer  
George Vlasto

- Mr. Lombardo stated that once Mr. Vlasto gets back with all the information, he will have to post a bond, employees from Facilities will walk the Homer Wise Park with him and a determination remained as to what City funds might have to be outlaid.
- Mr. Vlasto stated that the statue is going to cost \$80,000.
- Other statues in the City like the one of Jackie Robinson should be measured.
- Mr. Vlasto stated that the Homer L. Wise Memorial Committee has agreed to contribute to the erection of the statue and the maintenance.
- Mr. Lombardo asked Mr. Vlasto to put in writing what they are willing to do, the Commission will review it at the July or August Meeting and they will get back to him. At some point Mr. Vlasto will need to talk to the Legal Department.

**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 the Talent Evaluation it's going to be ran by Bobby Valentine, but the revenues are going to be shared with Stamford Babe Ruth.

Mr. Smith requested that Stamford Babe Ruth be allowed to use the field on June 23, 2008.

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve that the revenue be split between Bobby Valentine and Stamford Babe Ruth for the June 23, 2008 date. They can use the field from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

**Carole Yudain's Inquiry Regarding Rose Bush Planted on the Side of Old Town Hall in Honor of Her Late Husband – Follow Up.**

Item was removed from order of Business.

**New Business**

**Gary Bivona – Placement of an Amusement Ride at a City Beach – Preferable Cove Island.**

Item tabled to the July 2008 Commission Meeting. Representative was not present.

**Chris Gerbert & Stamford Sailing Foundation – Southfield Park Discussion of Sailing Foundation Trailer and Parking.**

- Mr. Gerbert did not attend the meeting.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that he spoke to Mr. Gerbert at the site. Mr. Gerbert told Mr. Lombardo that there were supposed to be trees planted and he wanted to make sure that they were.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that the trailers are temporary and nobody can park on the grass.
- Captain Henry Marx, Chairman of Stamford Sailing Foundation stated that if Mr. Gerbert had contacted him, he would have done something about his concerns.
- Capt. Marx distributed a copy of the plan put together with the Waterside Coalition, included is a landscaping plan which has a commitment from the Board of Directors of the Coalition to make a \$500 donation to the \$3,000 to \$4,000 planning fee to put the bushes on the road side.
- Capt. Marx stated that he is willing to meet with Mr. Gerbert at his convenience and mutually discuss what they need to plant there and come back to the Commission for approval.

- Capt. Marx will be out of the office for the next two weeks, he will contact Mr. Gerbert when he comes back.
- Capt. Marx stated that he doesn't know when the completion of the permanent building will be.

**Penny Burnett – Shippan Point Garden Club – Complaint About Trees Being Cut Down at West Beach.**

- Mr. Lombardo stated that he received an e-mail from Ms. Burnett regarding the fantastic work that the Shippan Point Garden Club did at West Beach and the removal of certain trees that were a canopy.

Mr. Lombardo stated that he forwarded the e-mail to the other Commissioners and the Staff asking them to look into the matter.

- Mr. Barbarotta stated that the reason why they cut back over in that area was that they had complaints from the neighbors on safety issues on that corner of the park.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that there were some dead trees at the corner of the park. Mr. Barbarotta explained that there are all kinds of illicit activities going on in that corner; they also have taken out crack vials, beer bottles and condoms.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that they have safety concerns; somebody could be dragged to the bushes over there. The Parks Department did not have any intentions of impacting any of the Shippan Point Garden Club's work.
- Some of the things that were cut down were invasive species. Based on the Tree Warden's assessment of the nuisance they clear that corner.
- Ms. Burnett stated that she was under the impression that if you are going to cut down larger trees, they needed to be posted, and they were not. Ms. Burnett said that the plantings that they did on that side are not protected anymore and will be ruined because they have no shade. Mr. Barbarotta stated that time will tell, if they need to help water the plants, they will.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that the Tree Warden has the judgment that anything that is safety or nuisance to the public he can cut down without posting and that is what happened at West Beach.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that there is a planting plan being reviewed by Phil D'Amico, the Tree Warden and David Emerson.

- Mr. Lombardo suggested that the Shippan Point Garden Club meet with Pepi, Phil D'Amico and Dave Emerson to try to solve the problem and to discuss if we have to replace some trees, and about the watering.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that the corner of West Beach has not been designated by anyone as bird area.
- Mr. Barbarotta stated that Phi D'Amico will contact the Shippan Point Garden Club to set up a meeting.

### **Tournaments**

No Tournaments.

### **Correspondence**

No Correspondence.

**The July Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 16, 2008.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Smith

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Margarita Arenas  
June 13, 2008