

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING  
Minutes of the February 25, 2009 Regular Meeting**

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on February 25, 2009, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Stamford Government Center.

**In attendance were:**

Commissioners: Thomas Lombardo  
Beth Cooper  
Mark Smith  
Timothy McGuinness

Mickey Docimo  
Laurie Albano  
Joseph Barbarotta

Guests: Chris Beers – Kids in Crisis Triathlon  
Representative Harry Day – Kids in Crisis Triathlon  
Representative Eileen Heaphy – Dog Park  
Bridget Fox – Stamford School Readiness Council  
Ben Marcus – Homer Wise Park Playground  
Rep. John Zelinsky – Homer Wise Park Playground  
Peter Ebstein – Homer Wise Park Playground  
Liz Rosenbaum – Homer Wise Park Playground  
Daniel Walsh – Frankie Fund, LLC  
David McLain – Frankie Fund, LLC  
Ari Schwartz – Woodridge Segway Tours  
George Hallenbeck – Stamford Sail & Power Squadron  
Angelo Malizia – Ronnie Tella, American Red Cross  
Will McEwan – Lorenti Tournament

Laura Parker – Coastal Clean Up

Peter Lowe – Shoreline Adult Soccer League

Rich Santer – Shoreline Adult Soccer League

Ben Velishka – Waterside Coalition

Ginger Winston – Resident

David Winston – Resident

Commissioner Martino did not attend the meeting.

Joseph Falzone did not attend the meeting.

### **Call to Order**

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

Commissioner McGuinness arrived at 6:45 p.m.

### **Review of January 2009 Minutes.**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

Unanimously Approved

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Representative Harry Day – Kids in Crisis IT Triathlon – Sunday, June 28, 2009.**

- Representative Day requested permission to use Cummings Park and Columbus Park to stage the event.
- Chris Beers stated that the Triathlon will follow the same course it did last year. There will be no changes.
- Mr. Beers hopes to have about 700 athletes this year.
- Representative Day stated that they will use chalk that disappears very quickly.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

Mr. Smith made a motion to add Representative Eileen Heaphy and Bridget Fox of the Early Childhood Readiness Council to the agenda.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

**Representative Eileen Heaphy – Dog Park Banner.**

- Representative Heaphy requested that the Parks & Recreation Commission allow them to change the location of the Dog Park Banner from the northern most part of the park (near the Senior Center) to the corner of Courtland Avenue and East Main Street. By changing the location of the banner it will be more visible and they hope to build support in raising more money, because they are \$13,000 short.
- The Banner will be taken down when the park opens, hopefully in May 2009. If the park is not open in May they will come back to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve the request.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

**Bridget Fox - Stamford School Readiness Council – Early Childhood Fair – Cove Island Pavilion – Saturday, May 16, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve.

Must coordinate with wedding party.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

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

- Mr. Docimo stated that they are still working on the budget, they have not received any word from OPM and the Mayor on what is going to happen.
- Mr. Docimo asked his staff to put together the 3%, 6% and 10% cuts, which are being asked for by the Board of Finance. Mr. Docimo stated that they are expecting a bare bone budget at the first level. 3% Cuts will probably result in program loss, vacancies, seasonal and maybe a person or two. 6% Cuts will be major program loss, a cut back of most services, things like weekend maintenance on almost anything; the Enforcement Program will probably be cut at any level, which concerns him with the continuance of the Skate Park and the new fields opening. A 10% cut

will be devastating.

- Budget Hearings will take place on March 25<sup>th</sup> for the Board of Finance and April 1<sup>st</sup> for the Board of Representatives.

### **Laurie Albano – Recreation**

- Ms. Albano stated that they are very busy preparing for spring and summer.
- They had their first training on the implementation of the new software that will be ready go live on Monday, March 9, 2009. That morning at 7:00 a.m. they will put 50% of the full pay camp registration spots on line and then two days later they will open up the other 50% in the evening. There is a full schedule of all the registration dates.
- Ms. Albano passed around a copy of the new brochure.
- The annual park baseball field meeting will take place tomorrow night to allocate fields to sanctioned organizations.

### **Joseph Barbarotta – Parks Maintenance**

- Mr. Barbarotta stated that they have been working on Bids and RFP's. They turned over the Bid for the Beach Concessions to OPM yesterday. The Bid was put out in three different ways as follows:
  1. A group of three beaches and the Hockey Rink.
  2. Separately with just the beaches.
  3. Just the Hockey Rink.
- They are working on the new Port-o-John Bid, which will be out within a week.
- Tree Removal Bid will also be put out. This a \$60,000 Bid that comes out every year, it is for things that our staff can't handle.
- Mr. Lombardo stated for the record that the Tree Warden, Ron Markey and also Phil D'Amico have been extremely responsive to the issues they had on his street and neighborhood.

### **Donations**

No Donations.

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to move up Playground at Homer Wise Park ahead on the Agenda.

Seconded by Smith

Unanimously Approved

**Playground at Homer Wise Park.**

- Mr. Lombardo read the following letter sent by Representative James Diamond:

Dear Mr. Lombardo:

I would like the record to reflect my opposition to the proposed playground in the Homer Wise Park, which sits in my district on Chester and Bedford Streets.

The corner of Bedford and Chester Streets is one of the busiest in all Stamford, as it is an entrance to Stop & Shop. There is a very well used public bus stop on the corner; since Bedford is a one way street, it is the main bus stop for the Ridgeway Shopping Center.

This location is too close to speeding traffic, making it unsafe for a playground. Additionally, Chester Street was just recently made "Residents Only" parking street and a playground there will only exacerbate the parking problems which occurred after the arrival of L.A. Fitness.

Even if a playground is funded by private donations, the neighborhood is better served by the playground at Scalzi Park, which is a nearby, well maintained and patrolled public park.

I have been contacted by many Chester Street constituents who are universally opposed to this playground and have never been contacted by one single constituent who supports it. My opposition to this playground does not mean that I will oppose in the future, some proper recognition in the park to Homer Wise, who the park is named for.

Please do not approve a playground for this park.

Sincerely,

Representative James D. Diamond.

- Representative John Zelinsky stated that Mr. Ben Marcus called him asking about having a slide and some swings in the back of Homer Wise Park. Mr. Zelinsky mentioned to Mr. Marcus that there was a request many years ago from another constituent who wanted a significant playground at Homer Wise Park and there was a strong opposition from residents of Chester Street and after that the matter was

dropped. Mr. Marcus still wants to pursue the request.

- Mr. Zelinsky stated that he would not describe it as a playground; all Mr. Marcus is requesting is a couple of swings for small children and a slide in back of the Homer Wise Park on the Chester Street side, well away from Bedford Street.
- Mr. Marcus distributed five letters from constituents who are in favor of the playground at Homer Wise Park.
- Mr. Marcus restated that he is only asking for a swing set with 3 or 4 swings on it and a slide. The playground should be fenced in and put in the back of the park.
- Mr. Peter Ebstein stated that it is inappropriate to have a playground in Homer Wise Park; the playground should be at Scalzi Park. Mr. Ebstein is concerned that in the evening this playground will become an attractive nuisance.
- Liz Rosenbaum stated that she is not in favor of the playground at Homer Wise Park. About 15 years ago there was a fairly consistent issue with kids at night at the park, which was very uncomfortable for the neighbors. Mrs. Rosenbaum feels that a more substantial memorial to Homer Wise would be more benches or more plantings.

Mr. Smith made a motion to disapprove the installation of a playground at the Homer Wise Park.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

YES: Mrs. Cooper  
Mr. Smith  
Mr. Lombardo

NO: Mr. McGuinness

### **Special Events**

**Daniel Walsh – The Frankie Fund, LLC. – Use of Scalzi Park Skateboard Park Area for a Pro/Am Skateboard Contest, a Cookout with Live Music to Raise Money for Charity. Date of Event TBD – 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Commissioners feel that this event is too big for Scalzi Park. Mrs. Cooper suggested that the event be done somewhere else, to work out all the problems and then come back to the Commission at another time.

The organizers related that they planned to contribute to a few local charities. Among those named was a non-profit with which Mr. Lombardo's wife is associated. Mr. Lombardo disclosed the potential conflict of interest and recused himself from participation in any discussion.

Mr. Smith made a motion deny the request.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

YES: Mr. Smith  
Mr. McGuinness  
Mrs. Cooper  
ABSTAINED: Mr. Lombardo

**Ari Schwartz – Woodridge Segway Tours – Permit to Use Segways on April 12, 13 & 14 in Scalzi Park from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Mr. Smith made a motion to deny request.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

Mrs. Cooper made a suggestion that from now on when there are items on the agenda that come back year after year for approval, that the Commission goes to a consent agenda where there is no need to present.

**George Hallenbeck – Stamford Sail & Power Squadron – Annual Fire Extinguisher & Flare Demo – West Beach – June 1, 2009 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mrs. Cooper

Unanimously Approved

**Old Business**

**Ben Velishka – Waterside Coalition – Fence Proposal for Southfield Park.**

- Mr. Velishka stated that he raised \$22,000 to run a fence for Southfield Park similar to the fence in front of the Avalon development. The fence comes down Southfield Avenue in front of the Avalon development, then it makes a left turn down the left hand side of Southfield Park. The new fence will be made of steel to meet with City specs. They are buying two additional extra panels and will store them at the Waterside Coalition Office in case there is an immediate damage to a panel or two. Mr. Velishka explained that they received \$5,000 from the Mayor's Beautification Grant, \$10,000 from O & G, \$5,000 from neighborhood donations and \$2,000 from Mr. Velishka.
- Mr. Velishka stated that they would like to plant some bushes and in order to do that they will have to move the fence about 12". The bushes will not grow more than 2 feet tall.
- The work will be done by Westchester Fence. They will provide the City with Certificate of Insurance.

- Mr. Lombardo stated that he would like to walk the area. Item was tabled to the March 2009 Commission Meeting.

### **Review Proposed Park Regulations for March 2009 Meeting Approval.**

- Item was tabled to the March 2009 Commission Meeting. Mr. Lombardo requested that a copy of the proposed Park Regulations be re-distributed to all the Commissioners.

### **New Business**

#### **Rich Santer – Shoreline Adult Soccer League – Permit to Use West Beach Soccer Field Nine Times a Year – Sunday Mornings for Two Hours – Either 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

- Mr. Santer stated that the team is a local team.
- Mr. Santer stated that the City needs a local team to adopt the new fields to keep an eye on them otherwise they get misused; they would like to offer this to the Commission.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that we now have a moratorium on additional leagues, teams and fields.
- Mr. McGuinness suggested that now that we are going to have two new turf fields the Commission should revisit the moratorium. Ms. Albano agrees that this should be discussed for the West Beach Field only.
- Ms. Albano stated that she met with Bob Pepi from Stamford Youth Soccer and he is not using the fields that early on Sunday mornings. The Fairfield County League uses the fields starting at 11:00 a.m. or 12:00 p.m.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that Mr. Santer needs to provide the Commission with a specific proposal. The expanded use of the fields will need to be discussed with Mickey Docimo/Parks Superintendent, the Commission and Shoreline Adult Soccer League.
- Mr. Lombardo stated that 75% of the players have to be Stamford residents. A copy of the roster will have to be provided.
- Item was tabled to the March 2009 Meeting.

#### **Laura Parker – New Canaan Country School – Coastal Clean Up Project – April 5, 2009 – Cove Island Park.**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. Smith

Unanimously Approved

### **Tournaments**

**Ronnie Tella – American Red Cross – Fall Ball Softball Tourney for Darien/Stamford Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces Program – Saturday, September 12, 2009 – Rain Date Saturday, September 19, 2009 – Cummings Fields 1 and 2.**

Mr. McGuinness made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mrs. Copper

Unanimously Approved

**Will McEwan – 2009 Lorenti Tournament – Use of Cummings 1, 2, 4, 5 and Kosciuszko Park – Saturday, May 3, 2009 – Rain Date May 10, 2009.**

Mrs. Cooper made a motion to approve.

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

Unanimously Approved

### **Correspondence**

Correspondence from Representative Art Layton regarding Dog Park Banner Placement was discussed.

Each Commissioner received a copy of two letters, one from Representative Jim Diamond regarding the Homer Wise proposed playground. The other letter from Joseph and Jessica Segre regarding concerns/complaints at West Beach.

**The next Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 18, 2009.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mrs. Cooper

Seconded by Mr. McGuinness

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Margarita Arenas  
February 27, 2009