

**CITY OF NORWALK  
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL  
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 13, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Travis Simms, Chair; Richard Bonenfant; John Kydes;  
Shannon O'Toole Giandurco; Steven Serasis;  
Michael DePalma (7:04 p.m.)

STAFF: Michael Mocciae, Director

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Simms called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and called the Roll.

**MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2015**

- \*\* MS. O'TOOLE GIANDURCO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak this evening.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- \*\* MR. BONENFANT MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER ESTATE  
AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY MARGARET HAYN  
FOR A WEDDING CEREMONY AND RECEPTION TO BE HELD  
SATURDAY, JULY 2, 2016 FROM 2:00 PM TO 11:00 PM. ESTIMATED  
ATTENDANCE 100.**

Ms. Hayn was present

- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. DePalma joined the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER ESTATE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY CRAIG MANISCALCO FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2016 FROM 6:00 PM TO 11:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 85.**

Mr. Maniscalco was present

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* MR. BONENFANT MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK PAVILION AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THE NORWALK LITTLE LEAGUE FOR A NLL PICNIC TO BE HELD SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2015 FROM 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 200.**

Mr. Dan Balliett was present. This is their annual end of the season picnic.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* MS. O'TOOLE GIANDURCO MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA FOR THE USE OF CRANBURY PARK AND GALLAHER MANSION FOR A POPS CONCERT TO BE HELD SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2016 FROM 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2016 AT 8:00 AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 10:00 PM ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 600.**

The Executive Director was present. They hope to have over 600 in attendance. The parking and traffic will need to be addressed. This is a free event. Mr. Mocciaie said that the City has been trying to get the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra to pay at the Park for a number of years

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH TEAM MOSSMAN EVENTS FOR THE USE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR A MOSSMAN SPRINT TRIATHLON TO BE HELD SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2016 FROM 6:30 AM – 11:00 AM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2016 FROM 10:00 AM AND 5:00 AM ON SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2016 WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM ON SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 400.**

Mr. Clayton Tebbetts was present. They have 10 – 12 Police Officers monitoring the course and an ambulance on site. This is a short race and they present their awards at 8:30 a.m.

Mr. Serasis commented that this is a well-organized and professional event. Mr. Simms said that he has heard nothing but good things about this event.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* MR. DEPALMA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH NICE INC. (NORWALK INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE) FOR THE USE OF OYSTER SHELL PARK FOR THE N.I.C.E. FESTIVAL TO BE HELD SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2016 FROM 12:00 NOON – 9:00 PM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE FRIDAY, JULY 8, 2016 AT 12:00 NOON WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 12:00 NOON ON MONDAY, JULY 10, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 4,000.**

Mr. Jerry Azore was present. He explained that he used to run the Haitian Festival in Norwalk and this year joined forces with this group.

Mr. Mocciae said that the City lost a lot of these international events, so when a community member asked if there would be any interest in this, he said that he felt strongly that this would be a good event for Norwalk.

Mr. Azore said that this is their first year and it is a free event. Mr. Bonenfant said that it is important to have a fairly accurate head count. Mr. Simms said that he has been to their events in the past and supports this.

Ms. O'Toole Giandurco asked how many people Oyster Shell Park can hold. Mr.

Mocchiaie said that the Park can hold 3 – 4,000 with parking at the Maritime Garage.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Mocchiaie asked Mr. Azore to attend the January 26<sup>th</sup> Common Council meeting.

**\*\* MR. DEPALMA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER ESTATE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY JESSICA CZAHUR FOR A WEDDING RECEPTION TO BE HELD SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2017 FROM 6:00 PM – 11:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 165.**

Ms. Czahur was present. Mr. Mocchiaie noted that all of 2016 is already booked. Ms. Czahur said that they live in New York City and this is a hidden gem.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* MR. SERASIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM AND FORWARD TO THE FULL COMMON COUNCIL:**

**ADDED CONDITION TO PARK USAGE POLICY:  
ANY EVENT AT THE DISCRETION OF THE RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE WHICH INVOLVES TICKET SALES OR ADMISSION WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL FOR A FORMAL AGREEMENT INCLUDING A PUBLIC GATHERING PERMIT.**

Mr. Bonenfant explained that this came about because of an incident that took place last summer. He said that they do not want to punish all groups. This is for groups that charge a fee. Mr. Simms said that they want to be fair to all residents.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Presentations by:**

The Ropes Zip-Line Program Cranbury Park (Vendors Interviewed, January 10, 2015)

Mr. Chris Swallow was present. He explained that they are a tree top adventure group and have 12 locations. He summarized the scope of their services and noted that they are the safest operation in the country. They are 40 feet up and in less than one acre on the ground.

The program runs from April to the fall. During the week appointments are every hour

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and on the weekends, every half hour. Mr. Swallow said that he has a huge team to support the course. They have been on over 850 trees and described the program followed by an arborist to check the trees.

Mr. Swallow presented a video showing the activity.

The cost is \$58.00 for adults and \$38 for kids. They give out tickets through partnerships in the community. On average, they give out 500 tickets.

Mr. Mocciae reviewed the financials and said this activity will generate a minimum of \$15,000 annually for the City.

Mr. Kydes asked if additional Park staff are required. Mr. Mocciae said that Go Ape is responsible for their maintenance, etc. Mr. O'Toole Giandurco asked if this went before the Corporation Counsel. Mr. Mocciae said that Ms. Beltz Jacobson reviewed this proposal and they hold a high level of insurance.

Mr. Bonenfant asked if the Cranbury neighbors will be invited to review the plan. Mr. Mocciae said that it is up to the Chair. He said that the Chair could call a public information session within the next few weeks and have a public hearing before the next Recreation and Parks meeting. He noted that this is an above ground activity and will not impact anything currently there.

Mr. Simms agreed that it would be a good idea to hold a public information session.

Mr. Bonenfant left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

#### Skating Rink Portable – Seasonal Veterans Park (Vendors Interviewed, January 10, 2015)

Mr. Serasis said that he works for the consultant for the restaurant at the rink, but does not work for the rink.

Mr. Ryan Hughes reviewed the Sono Ice House plan for Veteran's Park. He reviewed the community events that take place at the Ice House and said that he wants to expand what they offer.

Dale explained that the Ice Rink has prospered and there is a need for more ice. She explained that they do a lot of programs with the schools and allow students to skate regardless of ability to pay. She reviewed their community programs and said that they can't fit all of the programs at the Sono Ice House.

Mr. Hughes reviewed their fees and said that Norwalk residents get a 20% discount on admission. He estimates that they provide \$82,000 in community benefits. He also estimates that they will provide 20 jobs for this facility.

Mr. Kydes asked about projected earnings. Mr. Serasis said that it takes 2 – 4 years for any ice rink operation to re-coup their investment. Mr. Hughes said that this is a big financial investment for him. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Mocciae explained that this facility would be located in a part of the Park that is not used in the winter. He said that they would like to get this done for October. Mr. DePalma said that he sees this as good for the City, but does not see this as a money maker. Mr. Mocciae explained that when the master plan was done, one of the main features was to add activities in Veteran’s Park and one was an ice rink. An RFP was put out, but he did not receive any other proposals. The driving force is to bring activities for the public.

Mr. Mark LePore said that the reason there was only one bidder, is because it is a huge risk due to the initial cost. He said that this group was taking a huge risk and it is unique to have a group step up like this.

Dale said that they donate the facility all the time for fundraising events. She said that the cost to run the facility is huge.

Mr. Kydes said that he is concerned that out of town leagues will use the rink and prevent local residents from skating. Mr. Hughes said that very few out of town leagues use the ice rink; most play for Norwalk based teams.

Ms. O’Toole Giandurco asked to hold a public information session on the same date as Go Ape.

A public information session was scheduled for January 27, 2016:

6:30 p.m.      Go Ape  
7:30 p.m.      Sono Ice House

#### **V. Discussion**

Mr. Mocciae explained that the operating and capital budgets are in the meeting packets. He said that he understands that it will be a tight capital year.

**\*\* MR. SERASIS MOVED TO ADJOURN  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services