

**CITY OF NORWALK
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 10, 2016**

ROLL CALL

Mr. Simms called the public Hearing to order at 6:10 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Travis Simms, Chair; John Kydes;
Shannon O'Toole Giandurco; Steven Serasis;

ABSENT: Richard Bonenfant; Michael DePalma

STAFF: Michael Mocciae, Director

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Steven Serasis left 6:11

Patty Ruffo

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Ms. Ruffo stated that she bought her home in the Cranbury Park area for the privacy and serenity and that the zip line will destroy that not only for her whole family but for the whole neighborhood. She stated that the entrance for the proposed park is directly across from her house and will bring a lot of cars into a very concentrated area where her children play. In addition, the noise from the zip line participants' laughing and screaming will shatter the peace of the neighborhood.

Matina Panagiotidis

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Ms. Panagiotidis primary objection was that the zip line course is too close to Cranbury School and she fears that the noise from course participants will be heard by and disrupt the Cranbury School students. In addition, the Cranbury Park Master Plan includes a trail that goes connects the park directly to the Cranbury School sports fields, which could encourage strangers to go to the school. Ms. Panagiotidis fears that the zip line will compromise Cranbury School students' safety and learning.

Jo-Anne Horvath

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Ms. Horvath stated that Cranbury Park is not an amusement park and she is very disappointed that the City is passing it to a private, for profit company. Commercializing Norwalk's open spaces that are preserved for nature is not the right thing to do and is out of touch with park users and neighborhood residents. Ms. Horvath also felt that safety was a concern, as the zip line industry is self-regulated and has had more than 15,000

injuries between 1997 and 2012. She cited West Seattle as having recently refused to put a zip line course into their park when faced with public opposition as model for Norwalk.

Don Schroeder

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Schroeder stated that there has been unbridled development in the Norwalk community and that this makes the open spaces like Cranbury Park even more important to hold onto. As the town continues to grow, the solitude and quiet they provide has become even more valuable and the City should not chip away at the little quiet space that Norwalk residents have.

Andrew Truietti

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Truietti said that the zip line is only one of the three new attractions being brought to Cranbury Park. In addition to the zip line is the bunkhouse and the gazebo which are rented to private parties. Mr. Truietti said that each one of the new attractions is a good idea but the three together raise safety, noise, and traffic concerns for the people that live nearby. He concluded that the benefits of the park changes would be outsiders and not the residents.

Julie Chelminski

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Ms. Chelminski stated that development on public parkland by private companies that will make more money than is remitted to the City amounts to a land grab. She questioned why there was no charge for parking included in the zip line plan and concluded that since Cranbury Park was purchased with federal funds under the Open Space Act that it should remain open space.

Michael DePalma arrived 6:24

John Lehansla

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Lehansla said that in a time when overdevelopment is rampant, his family wanted a home that was quiet and peaceful and that's what they found in the Cranbury neighborhood. He praised Cranbury Park as a great green space and asked that the Committee not over develop it.

Matt Forte

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Forte stated that the projected zip line project does not comply with the current zoning regulations in place at Cranbury Park and there are many other areas in Norwalk that are more suitable for this type of business where the zoning is more permissive. Mr. Forte cited the zoning codes in sections 118-310(a) and (b) to support his point. Mr. Forte also criticized the procurement process for this project preceding the public hearings as a slap in the face to the residents. He concluded that chipping away at green spaces is a slippery slope.

Glen O'Neill

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. O'Neill explained that there's already a parking problem at the park that is affecting the neighbors in the area and the zip line project will

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only exacerbate that. He questioned whether the City of Norwalk was prepared to continue to stretch resources like police, ambulance, and fire fighters, to attend to a zip line that he felt was unnecessary.

Ryan Wiedman

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Wiedman warned that monetizing one of the community's safe havens was the beginning of a slippery slope. He went on to say that Norwalk is surrounded by towns that do things very well and there is already family flight in response to the many issues the City faces. According to Mr. Wiedman, the City of Norwalk has horrible roads, bad schools, and not many safe public spaces but what they do have are lots of activities, including Stepping Stones, the Maritime Museum and so on. What they do not have are many safe green spaces like Cranbury Park. He added that the zip line project jeopardizes the child safety by bringing so many strangers into the community.

Andrew Steiner

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Steiner questioned why the zip line and its 80 car parking lot were being put in this spot, next to a school, on the edge of a wetland, and near a known dangerous corner.

Haraldo Williams

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Williams stated that the placement of the project will introduce a traffic hazard between Baines Street and Live Oaks. Mr. Williams went on to say that the plan only considers the ease of the project but the difficulties it will present to the neighborhood. He suggested that if the project goes forward that it be relocated to the northeast corner of the park where it will be away from the Cranbury School and the neighborhood's homes.

Diane Santore

Supported the ice rink. Ms. Santore said that there is nothing more important than providing activities for our children and this ice rink gives people a safe place to go. Moreover, it is providing that space in a place that is dead during the winter and so it will also enhance the South Norwalk experience during winter when traffic significantly decreases. Ms. Santore went on to point out that hockey tournaments money generators for the surrounding areas, including Norwalk hotels, the maritime center, restaurants, etc. She concluded that the benefits of this project go beyond the skaters themselves but will enhance the whole area.

Bud Hempstead

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Hempstead urged a slower timeline in order to see how the pavilion and bunk house rental, which are already slated to start, will effect the traffic and parking situation at the park. He also pointed out that there is not public demand for the zip line but there is lots of opposition to it and that it was not part of the original master plan for the park. He added that, unlike the ice rink, the zip line will probably not bring much additional revenue into Norwalk since its location so near Wilton means that out-of-towners coming to use the zip line will stop there rather than continue into downtown Norwalk. Mr. Hempstead also questioned the revenue only agreement for the zip line project in lieu of the

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more common land lease style agreement.

Mike Mushak

Support for the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Mushak pointed out that no trees will be cut when erecting the zip line, that it fits into the natural landscapes, it gets people closer to nature, that it is a family activity, that it will bring out-of-towners into Norwalk, and that the company has a very good safety record. Mr. Mushak compared the Norwalk opposition to the opposition the company faced when putting a zip line course up in New Britain where the course is not immensely popular. He also stated that with Cranbury School already right next to a well used public park the emphasis on strangers using the zip line, when they already use the public park, was a strange objection.

David Rinaldi

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Rinaldi stated that the people who will use the zip line will largely not be Norwalk residents. He went on to say that \$15,000 per year for a lease are horrendous terms and the additional revenue clause will not even cover the increase in waste removal costs. He said that the location on the outskirts of Norwalk, rather than an urban park, was a mistake. He contrasted the zip line with ice rink, which is down town where primarily Norwalk residents will use it and which will bring the community together.

Lynn Carelton

Opposed the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Ms. Carelton objected that the lease is way too cheap and is not in line with the property values in the area. She went on to say that the park is already not well supervised and bringing more people in will only aggravate the problem. Ms. Carelton stated that this and the proposed driving range at the golf course, are the beginning of a process to rent out the whole park to private companies.

6:57 Richard Bonenfant arrived

Tonya Stiner

Opposed to the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Ms. Stiner said they she bought her home in the area for the walkable neighborhood with low traffic, which the project will ruin. She also said that the Cranbury park master plan includes a corridor from the park and connecting directly to the sports fields of Cranbury School.

Raffaele Ruffo

Opposed to the projected zip line at Cranbury Park. Mr. Ruffo stated that Norwalk does not need a business in the park. The park is for everyone to enjoy, not for one business to make money.

Travis Simms read into the record two letters in support of the zip line project at Cranbury Park from Celia Maddoz and Mark Berns.

The public hearing was adjourned by Travis Simms at 7:05.

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AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 10, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Travis Simms, Chair; Richard Bonenfant; John Kydes;
Shannon O'Toole Giandurco; Steven Serasis;
Michael DePalma; Michael Corsello

STAFF: Michael Mocciae, Director

ROLL CALL

Mr. Simms called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m. and called the Roll.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2015

**** MR. BONENFANT MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED
** MOTION PASSED, MR. CORSELLO ABSTAINED**

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

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

A) AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE TRIANGLE COMMUNITY CENTER FOR "PRIDE IN THE PARK" TO TAKE PLACE SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2016 IN MATHEWS PARK FROM 12:00 NOON – 8:00 PM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2016 AT 7:00 AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 8:00 PM ON SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2016.

B) APPROVE THE USE OF THE SHOW MOBILE BY THE TRIANGLE COMMUNITY CENTER FOR "PRIDE IN THE PARK" TO BE HELD SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2016.

Triangle Community Center Representative was present

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK YMCA CAMP SUNRISE TO USE CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR THEIR SUMMER CAMP ON THE FOLLOWING FRIDAY'S: JUNE 24, JULY 1,8,15,22,29, AUGUST 5,12,19 FROM 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 100.

Norwalk YMCA Camp Sunrise representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

APPROVE THE USE OF THE NATHANIEL ELY GROUNDS BY CAROLYN ASKEW FOR A REUNION TO BE HELD SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2016 FROM 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM. SET UP AT 9:00 AM ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 200.

Carolyn Askew was present and stated that the event is a neighborhood reunion of past and present residents of Ellis Court and that people are coming from all over the country to attend. Mr. Simms stated that this type of event is positive for the community and reminiscent of the huge block parties of the past.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

**** MR. CORSELLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH NORWALK ARTS CELEBRATION, INC. FOR THE USE OF 50 WASHINGTON PLAZA, VETERANS PARK PARKING AREA, AND HERITAGE/OYSTER SHELL PARK FOR THE 40TH ANNUAL SONO ARTS CELEBRATION 2016 TO BE HELD FRIDAY – SUNDAY, AUGUST 5,6,7, 2016 FROM

**7:00 AM FRIDAY, AUGUST 5, 2016 THROUGH 6:00 PM SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 2016.
ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 15,000 – 20,000.**

Kevin Bourne, president of the South Norwalk Arts Celebration was present. He stated that this is the 40th annual event.

Mr. Kydes asked if the event is going to have the same layout as previous years and Mr. Bourne replied that there may be minor changes but it will largely be the same. Mr. Kydes remarked what a well run event it is.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT THE COLOR VIBE 5K FOR USE OF VETERANS PARK TO HOLD A ROAD RACE ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2016 FROM 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE FRIDAY, AUGUST 19, 2016 AT 9:00 AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 12:00 NOON ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 2,500 – 6,000.

Ms. Erin ??? was present as the representative and spoke about the event. It is a national run and an incredible opportunity for Norwalk to hold it. The company holding the race takes care of all set up and clean up. After the race there is a party with local vendors. A portion of the proceeds are designated for charity and this year it will be presented to the American Legion. Ms. Erin ??? also pointed out at that the event will bring business to Norwalk and that it's a relatively short race so it will not tie up traffic for too long.

Mr. DePalma asked if Norwalk reached out to the organization but Ms. Erin ??? replied that the organization had reached out to them. Mr. Bonenfant asked what costs will be to the City of Norwalk and Ms. Erin ??? replied that the race pays for everything, including the police

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

**** MR. SERASIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT “DBA ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION CT CHAPTER TO USE CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR “WALK TO END ALZHEIMERS (WALK/5K) SUNDAY,

SEPTEMBER 18, 2016 FROM 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2016 AT 6:00 AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 1,500+.

Lexi Kennedy, special events director for the Alzheimer's Association in Fairfield County, was present. Ms. Kennedy stated that this is the biggest event that the chapter does and that it has grown every year. It is now one of the top 30 walks in the country. She requested that '5k' be deleted from the application as it is just a walk for the attendees to do together, with no distance requirement.

Mr. Serasis commented that he has participated in the event for the last 3 years and that the walk provides tremendous relief and comfort for caretakers.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH ACHILLES INTERNATIONAL TO HOST A LIGHTHOUSE TO LIGHTHOUSE RACE IN SHADY BEACH FROM 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016 AT 6:00 AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 8:00 PM ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 250.

Representative Gary Williams from Achilles International was present. He told the Committee that Achilles International is a 501(c)(3) organization that advocates for athletes with disabilities to participate in mainstream sporting events. He said that the race is a 14 mile open water race open to all sea worthy human powered vessels and that the event ties in well with maritime history of Norwalk. The group works closely with Norwalk River Rowing and other groups, like Flotilla 72, who are helping with safety in advance and on race days. It is the second largest open water event in New England.

Mr. Bonenfant asked how many years the event was done in Norwalk. Mr. Williams replied that they had held it in Norwalk from 2011-2013. Mr. Bonenfant asked if it interfered with the Go Green Weekend and Mr. Kydes replied that it was not being held this year.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE WILLIAM RAVIES CHARITABLE FUND FOR THE USE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR A “WILLIAM RAVIES RIDE & WALK EVENT” TO TAKE PLACE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2016 FROM 7:00 AM – 1:00 PM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2016 AT 8:00 AM AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2016 AT 5:00 AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 500.

Eric Epstein, the William Ravies Ride and Walk Event Director, was present. He stated that the event is a family event that has three route options, including a 25 mile bike ride, a 5 mile bike ride, and a 5k walk.

Mr. Serasis asked which charities the money goes to. Mr. Epstein replied that the money is administered by the David Runion Foundation as money for grants given to young scientists.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER ESTATE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY ALISON SAPACK FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2017 FROM 2:00 PM – 11:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 125.

Mr. Sapak was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

**** MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

APPROVE THE USE OF CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER ESTATE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY ALIX TORRES FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2017 FROM 2:00 PM – 11:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 100.

Representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE EXCHANGE CLUB OF NORWALK FOR THE USE OF TAYLOR FARM FOR THE ANNUAL NORWALK EXCHANGE ANTIQUE AUTO SHOW TO BE HELD SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016 FROM 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM WITH A RAIN DATE OF SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2016 AT 12:00 NOON WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 12:00 NOON. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 500.

Ken Saunders was present and stated that this is the 41st Annual Gateway Antique Show and that all their charity donations go back into the community.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

APPROVE THE USE OF MATHEWS PARK FOR A WEDDING BY COREY TOBY TO BE HELD SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2016 FROM 8:00 PM – 12:00 MIDNIGHT. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 260.

Representative was present.

Mr. Corsello asked what the capacity is on weddings and Mr. Simms replied there is no capacity beyond the fire code.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

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

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH JDRF (JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION) FOR

THE USE OF BRIEN MCMAHON CASAGRANDE FIELD ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2016 FROM 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE 6:00 AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2016. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 1,000.

Theresa Bogus was present to represent the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms reminded the representative to attend the February 23, 2016 Common Council meeting for final approval.

**** MR. SIMMS MOVED TO SET THE DATE AND TIME FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON DEPARTMENT FEES AND CHARGES 2016-2017:**

Michael Mocciaie stated that the Department is not looking at raising fees because they are getting good use and do not want to overcharge but there are a few fees that they are interested in adding. He recommended the public hearing start 15 minutes prior to the next hearing on March 9th and that the 15 minutes should be sufficient since there is not usually good public turnout.

Mr. Bonenfant stated that these are Mr. Mocciaie's proposals and that after the public hearing he should decide if he wants to do them or not. Mr. Kydes mentioned that there had been talk of adding passes and parking fees at Cranbury park and asked if that was included in the new fees. Mr. Mocciaie replied that yes at a rate of \$5 per day or \$75 for a year pass. Mr. Corsello said that there are already incidents of people pulling into the exit and asked if this would be an added incentive to do that. Mr. Mocciaie replied that there are sheriffs during the day and police at night checking for passes. Mr. Bonenfant asked what the rules will be for large events. Mr. Mocciaie replied that attendees are told to inform the gate that they're attending the event and then they do not have to pay the parking fee, following the model used at Shady Beach.

The public hearing was set for 6:45 on March 9, 2016.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

DISCUSSION

In reference to the Department Operating and Capital Budgets, Mr. Mocciaie explained that the department did not lose a lot of money and that he is, overall, happy with the operating budget. The Department received funds for dogs to control the geese, funds for the attendants at Cranbury which he expects will ultimately pay for itself, partly in income but mostly because people and people will respect the park more which will decrease the costs from vandalism, littering, etc.

Mr. Mocciaie went on to say that he is not happy with what the Finance Director approved for the

capital budget. The \$1.5 million approved is the lowest amount received in the past 25 years. As an example of one of the more urgent projects to be done, Mr. Mocciae discussed the public access boat launch ramps. He said that at low tide the ramps are inaccessible and at high tide they are flooded and in their present condition they do not meet U.S. Marine Standards, so that if an accident occurs on the launch the City will be sued. When the Department put it out to bid they did it as a full project, including new launch ramps, a new parking lot, new docks, and new utilities on the docks. Legitimate bids were between \$3.6 and \$3.8 million dollars. The Department received \$1 million last year and only another \$1 million this year. With this budget the Department will not be able to bring the docks up to code but will be able to attach new ones to the old ones.

Mr. Mocciae used Brian McMann High School as another example of an urgently needed project. He said the Department began the project last year by doing the lower filed and was going to continue to finish the project this year but received no funds at all for the project.

Mr. Mocciae went on to discuss Cranbury Park. According to Mr. Mocciae, Cranbury Park produces funds and is almost self supporting. The Department would like to add a glass conservancy so that they could rent it out for events with estimates that it would bring in over \$1 million dollars and would be self sustain. However, Mr. Mocciae stated that the Department has used all the money it was given for this year already.

Mr. Mocciae also stated that the Department needs additional funds for ADA work. He said that he requested funds to put playgrounds in at two schools and to do maintenance on existing playgrounds. Marvin School and the Beach each need \$150,000 for total replacements – one because it is over 15 years old and no longer in compliance and the other because the company that supplied it went out of business and replacement parts are no longer available. Instead of the \$300,000 requested the Department was allocated only \$125,000, which is not enough to do either playground.

Mr. Mocciae also discussed the Concession Stand. The City was receiving only \$4,000 when Stew Leonard's was leasing the building and the new tenant is paying for \$30,000 per year. However, in the lease the City is responsible for building maintenance and the building has broken windows, doors that do not work, and other maintenance issues.

Mr. Mocciae concluded his budget requests to the Committee with a summary of the tennis courts at Nathaniel Lee and Matthew Park. The Department has prices for tension concrete, which has a 20 year guarantee against cracks, but only received money for maintenance. Mr. Mocciae concluded his presentation by saying that these are the issues that matter the most to the Department, and while there are many other projects that are pressing, these are the most urgent.

Mr. Kydes asked if the City was sued because of an accident at another tennis court. Mr. Mocciae replied that there was a law suit. He added that he also did not receive any money for paving, although it was requested in the budget. Mr. Kydes wanted to know if the Department could somehow piggy back off of the City's paving resources and Mr. Mocciae replied that they do, to some extent, but that the City paving people do not want to have to be responsible for

controlling the Department's projects and the Department wants to maintain control over their projects, which limits how much cooperation is possible.

**** MR. SERASIS MOVED TO SEPARATE THE ACTION ITEMS SO THAT THE HOCKEY RINK COULD BE ADDED AS A STAND ALONE ACTION ITEM:**

Mr. Serasis recused himself from the ice rink vote. Vote to suspend the rules to add the hockey rink as an action item.

Mr. Kydes stated that there was discussion of adding language to the agreement to give the Council the authority to eliminate the music or limit its volume and that he would only be able to stand in support if the language was added. Mr. Mocciae replied that it could be added to the agreement.

Mr. Kydes asked if the City would be retaining a bond in case the rink closes up shop. Mr. Mocciae said that there may be a bond to cover the asphalt and concrete but that it would be minor.

Mr. Kydes asked if the rink still agreed to issue every Norwalk student a free pass, and, upon being told that they were, stated that the proposed dates of October 15 through November 20th was too short a time frame. The rink representatives said that extending the passes any later would seriously cut into their most profitable season but that they were agreeable to changing the time frame until after Martin Luther King Day if that was preferable. However, the rink representatives requested that Friday night skates be excluded from the free pass, since it is one of their more profitable nights. There was general agreement from the committee that these requests were reasonable.

**** MOTION CARRIED WITH FIVE VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MR. SERASIS).**

Mr. Mocciae informed the Committee that Go Ape, the company seeking to build the zip line course at Cranbury Park, was present to answer any questions the Committee members had. Mr. Mocciae went on to say that he did not hear any big objections at the public hearing. As a recreational activity, zip line courses fall under the zoning code exceptions and can be run commercially in city parks. He also said that parking was going to be in the main lots and that people would then walk down the trails to the zip line course, rather than park on the side closest to the course since he wanted to preserve the parking for the bunk house and pavilion.

Mr. Corsello asked what would happen if there was a wedding or other event being held at the park and there was no parking. Mr. Mocciae responded that there is going to be overflow parking at the Carriage house for an additional 50 cars. Mr. Serasis remarked that the people's primary concern appeared to be that they do not believe people will park in the main lot and is there a way to monitor parking. Mr. Mocciae replied that there are constables already in place to monitor parking.

Mr. Kydes asked if Mr. Mocciaie had numbers on how many park users are Norwalk residents and how many are non-residents. Mr. Mocciaie replied that he did not know but that the Department was estimating that the zip line will bring an additional \$40,000-50,000 just at the gate. He added that the Department's primary objective is to finish the master plan and that the zip line course will not impede the current park uses, such as mountain biking and dog walking, while defraying costs for taxpayers. In response to concerns about strangers in the park Mr. Mocciaie stated that anyone can use the park and take the unofficial (the official trail has not been built) trail from the park to the school. He concluded by stating that the park has to be inclusive of all park users' interests.

Mr. Simms added that when he visited the proposed zip line course site, the noise from the school was so minimal, even with lots of children out playing, that he did not believe the noise from the course would be a distraction for the school. He stated that many of the complaints were based on misinformation, like the parking issue that has already been addressed.

Mr. DePalma stated that, since the park is in his district, he has talked to several people over the past week or so and that the main concerns are safety for the community and the zip line participants, the parking, which has been alleviated by moving it to the main lot and adding the overflow lot, and the traffic, which he projects will fall between the business' estimates and the community's fears. Since it is going to be a tough vote, Mr. DePalma asked that someone clarify what the City's motivation is to put in a business that will primarily be used by out-of-towners. Mr. Mocciaie replied that adding the business will defray the running costs of the park. He added that it's like the beach, where Norwalk sues non-residents to defray the cost of running it so that residents can use and enjoy it.

Mr. DePalma requested an assurance that some of the money taken in by the City from this venture will be used to hire security guards. He said he understood the Department's intentions to hire added security but that he needs something more concrete to show his constituents.

Mr. Corsello asked how much revenue the City expected to receive from Go Ape. The Go Ape representative replied that the model being used in Norwalk is very similar to the one in put in in New Britain and New Britain received close to \$20,000 their first year. Expectations are that it will be closer to \$100,000 by years 4 or 5. Go Ape added that, in addition to revenue, the business is provided intangible benefits to the park in the form of employees watching for vagrants, putting a little used section of the park back into use and thereby discouraging vagrants and illegal activities, and that they work closely with the park department to create mutually beneficial plans. Go Ape closed by saying that they have heard these very same concerns at almost every zip line course they have installed and that the concerns stop once the course is built.

Ms. O'Toole Giandurco asked if any of Go Ape's courses were in equally residential neighborhoods and was told that there were.

Mr. Kydes asked if there was any discussion of giving Norwalk residents a discounted price. Go Ape replied that they had done that in other locations but that it had not been discussed in

Norwalk. However, they said that they would be open to discussing it and would only ask that the passes would not be available during their peak season.

Mr. Simms asked if Go Ape would be available to walk interested council members through the New Britain course to address any lingering questions and they said that they would be happy to and that the New Britain course is very similar to the projected Norwalk course and might help clear up any confusion.

**** MR. DEPALMA MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Felicia Lambe
Telesco Secretarial Services