

**CITY OF NORWALK  
RECREATION AND PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 10, 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** Travis Simms, Chair; Steve Serasis, John Kydes, Michael DePalma, Michael Corsello

**STAFF:** Michael Mocciae, Recreation and Parks Director

**OTHERS:** Christopher Potts, Friends of Ryan Park; David Westmoreland, Jeff Olszewski, Stantec Project Manager.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Simms called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Simms called the roll. A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Christopher Potts asked if there would be any public input after the Ryan Park presentation. Mr. Simms said that there would not be any public input allowed after the presentation.

Mr. Potts introduced himself as the Treasurer of Friends of Ryan Park. He said that the Friends of Ryan Park were part of the Mayor's Ryan Park Advisory Committee. Mr. Potts said that there were two plans initially shown to the Committee. There were numerous objections with the first and second plan from all sides. It was decided that the plan would be reconfigured and re-presented to the Committee.

The final plan created but not all Committee members were told that there was a meeting to approve that plan. Friends of Ryan Park were not even informed that the meeting would take place and only two of the Committee members were present when the vote was taken to accept the plan that will be presented. To say that this plan was approved of by the Ryan Park Committee would be a misnomer to say the least.

Secondly, regarding the dry egress, the designers will call it something else. This will be a four foot high, 10 foot path from the corner of Raymond and Day through the middle of the park and ending by the former South Norwalk Community Center building. This will allow people from Washington Village the ability to get out in the event of a flood. It was included in the plan without any discussion with the Committee and no Committee

member ever said let's put a dry egress right through the park. He said that they did not know where this idea came from or why Stantec did it and when questions were asked at a Committee meeting, they were given no answer.

Mr. Potts went on to say that this was not a recreational use of park space, which is a requirement in the deed restrictions and also in State law, since State money was used to acquire the park. State money that is used to acquire the park have a requirement that the entire park must be used for recreational purposes. He mentioned the existence of a truck path that will go through the park as well, which is not a recreational use.

He asked that the Recreation and Park Committee keep those comments in mind when hearing the Stantec presentation.

Mr. Simms thanked Mr. Potts for the information. He asked if there was anyone else present that wished to speak.

Mr. David Westmoreland of Elmwood Avenue came forwards and said that he was Second Taxing District Chairman and was the Chair of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Ryan Park. He said that the purpose of the Committee was to facilitate and coordination the public input into the design. Mr. Westmoreland said that he was not sure if a vote was ever required from the Committee and was not present at the last meeting. He went on to point out that that the Committee was an Advisory Committee, so Mr. Westmoreland said he was not sure if a vote would be required. The new design is a dramatic improvement over the previous design and to the park and all its uses. All the feedback he had heard has been basically positive. There is concern about moving the project ahead because the Federal Funding is endangered. He said that it would be important to have Washington Village rebuilt for the residents.

Mr. Simms thanked Mr. Westmoreland and asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak. No one came forward. Hearing none, Mr. Simms closed the Public Participation portion of the meeting.

### **MINUTES OF JULY 13, 2016**

**\*\* MR. CORSELLO MOVED THE MINUTES OF JULY 13, 2016.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 13, 2016 PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (SIMMS, SERASIS, KYDES, AND CORSELLO) AND ONE ABSTENTION (DEPALMA).**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **1. Ryan Park Improvements Presentation from Stantec.**

**Approve the Master Plan of Ryan Park. As presented and advance to Final Design and construction documents project funded through Redevelopment.**

**Approve to Council or approve to set up public hearing prior to next month's meeting.**

Mr. Jeff Olszewski, the Stantec Project Manager, came forward and introduced himself to those present. He said that flyers had been produced in English, Spanish and Creole for the public and distributed to the public libraries along with being posted on line and given to the Housing Authority for distribution to their residents.

Mr. Olszewski then gave an overview of the revised plan dated August 2, 2016. He highlighted the various aspects of the new design including the gateway, a formal garden area, a renovated basketball court, a pedestrian walking loop of 1/10th of a mile, a water play area and a picnic area.

He spoke about the elevation and said that there would be a 2 1/2% slope for drainage.

There will be portable restrooms that will be a contract issue for the City by the basketball court.

Mr. Simms said that he would like some clarification on the lighting around the park. Mr. Olszewski said that there would be lighting along the walking path along with electrical outlets and WiFi access. The walkway will be six feet wide with the exception of where there are flare outs to meet other walkways.

Mr. Simms asked the Committee members if they wished to send it to the full Council. Mr. Mocciaie told the Committee members that they could require another public hearing before taking action. It was pointed out by a Committee Member that there had been many opportunities to have a public hearing and during the Council Meeting, there would be an opportunity for more Public Participation.

Mr. Serasis said that he liked the plan but was sad that they had to propose redoing Washington Village in order to pay attention to Ryan Park. He listed a number of sports activities that took place at the park. He said that the comment that the area was unplayable was a slap in the face. Mr. Serasis said that it was sad that the City did not do anything for the park until there were children's programs. It should have been taken care of nine years ago. It is sad that it took a mixed use development to get the park the attention it deserved.

Mr. DePalma asked if plan would be more work for the staff. Mr. Mocciaie said that it was a much more workable plan for his staff with the Port-a-john. The City does not do permanent restrooms in any public park.

**\*\* MR. CORSELLO MOVED APPROVE THE MASTER PLAN OF RYAN PARK. AS PRESENTED AND ADVANCE TO FINAL DESIGN AND**

**CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS PROJECT FUNDED THROUGH REDEVELOPMENT.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**NEW BUSINESS.**

**1. Approve the use of the Cranbury Park Gallaher Estate and immediate surrounding grounds by Sophie Richards for a Wedding to be held Saturday, August 17, 2017 from 3:00 PM – 12:00 Midnight. Estimated attendance 130.**

Ms. Richards came forward and pointed out that the date in the agenda was incorrect. The wedding is scheduled to take place on August 19, 2017.

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER ESTATE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY SOPHIE RICHARDS FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2017 FROM 3:00 PM – 12:00 MIDNIGHT. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 130.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**2. Approve the use of Cranbury Park Pavilion 1 and immediate surrounding grounds by Calvery Baptist Church for their Annual Picnic to be held Sunday, August 13, 2017 from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Estimated attendance 150.**

**\*\* MR. DEPALMA MOVED THE ITEM.**

There was no one present from Calvery Baptist Church, so Mr. Simms said that he would move this forward to the full Council because this is an annual event for the church.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into an agreement with Punch Gym for the use of Cranbury Park Pavilion 1 and immediate surrounding grounds for the Battle of the Belles to be held Sunday August 23, 2016 from 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM. Estimated attendance 100.**

Ms. Stefanie Tropea, the owner of the Punch Gym, explained that the date was listed incorrectly on the agenda and the event was scheduled for October 23, 2016.

**\*\* MR. CORSELLO MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH PUNCH GYM FOR THE USE OF CRANBURY PARK PAVILION 1 AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS FOR THE BATTLE OF THE BELLES TO BE HELD SUNDAY OCTOBER 23, 2016 FROM 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 100.**

Mr. Simms requested Ms. Tropea give the Committee Members a brief overview of the event. She explained that it was a Ladies Strong Men's competition with kettle bells. This is the seventh year for this particular event and the proceeds are donated to the Whittington Cancer Center. The participation last year was so large that the staff needs a larger venue and used the pavilion, which worked out well.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Simms requested that the representative attend the next Council meeting for final approval.

**4. Approve the use of Cranbury Park Pavilion 1 and immediate surrounding grounds by Nielsen Company for a Summer Picnic to be held Tuesday, August 23, 2016 from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Estimated attendance 100.**

Mr. Simms asked the Nielsen Company representative to give the Committee a brief overview of the proposed event. The representative said it was just a summer corporate picnic and it has been held at Cranbury Park in the past. There will be caterers bringing in the food and there will be some lawn games and some raffles.

**\*\* MR. SERASIS MOVED THE ITEM.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into an agreement with the Greenwich Kennel Club and the Longshore Southport Kennel Club for the use of Taylor Farm for the 84th Greenwich Kennel Club AKC Dog Show to be held Saturday, June 10, 2017 and Sunday, June 11, 2017 from 8:00 AM – 6:30 PM each day. Set up to take place Wednesday, June 7, 2017 at 6:00 AM with tear down no later than Monday, June 12, 2017 at 12:00 Noon. Estimated attendance 1,000.**

**\*\* MR. SERASIS MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Simms asked the representative for the event to give the Committee a brief overview of the proposed event.

The representative said that this is the 84th dog show for the Club and people come to it from all over the country. There are numerous events for those who attend. Mr. Serasis asked if people could attend with their dogs. The representative explained that if the dog was competing, it would have to be registered in advance. However, there is a parade for miscellaneous and FFS breeds. The point is to educate everyone about the different breeds.

Mr. Simms asked if there were fees associated with the event for the public. The representative said there was spectator gate fee and entry fee for those who were in the show. The spectator fee is \$10.00 per car each day, which covers both parking and admission.

Mr. Mocciaie cautioned the organizers that the tent and other items had to be out of the park in a timely manner. He was assured that this issue had been addressed and that the tent would be out of the park on schedule.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Simms requested that the representative attend the next Council meeting for final approval.

**6. Approve the use of the Show Mobile by the Norwalk Seaport Association for the Oyster Festival to take place Thursday, September 8, 2016 through Monday, September 12, 2016.**

**\*\* MR. DEPALMA MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Mike Reilly, the Oyster Festival Chairman came forward. He said that if the Show Mobile could be on site by Thursday, it would be wonderful.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**7. Approve the use of the Fodor Farm Barn and Pavilion by Ninety 9 Bottles for a Wine Festival to be held Saturday, September 24, 2016 from 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Estimated attendance 150.**

Mr. Simms asked the representative for the event to give the Committee a brief overview of the proposed event. The representative said that this would be about 30 different wineries with sample and cheese and crackers. She gave a quick run down of how this would be done. The tickets cost \$50.00 and are available only in advance online.

**\*\* MR. DEPALMA MOVED THE ITEM.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**8. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into an agreement with Stepping Stones Museum for the use of Mathews Park for a Worldwide Day of Play to be held Saturday, September 17, 2016 from 8:00 AM –5:00 PM. Estimated attendance 3,000.**

**\*\* MR. SERASIS MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Simms asked the representative for the event to give the Committee a brief overview of the proposed event. The representative said that this event is sponsored by Nickelodeon and is to encourage kids to get outside. Stepping Stones has done this for many years. The park will be used for activities and games.

There were concerns about parking. The representative said that there had never been problems in the past and listed off a number of nearby parking sites that they have permission to use.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Simms requested that the representative attend the next Council meeting for final approval.

**9. A) Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into an agreement with Sport Tec Construction Corp. project #3705 Turf and Field Renovation at Brien McMahon High School for a sum not to exceed \$946,500. Account #0917-6030-5777-C0568.**

**B) Authorize the Director of Recreation and Parks to issue change orders for project #3705 Turf and Field Restoration at Brien McMahon High School for a sum not to exceed \$94,650. Account #0917-6030-5777-C0568**

**10. A) Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into an agreement with Field Turf (A Tarkett Sports Company) for the purchase of Field Turf Classic HD Pure Fill (cork) with Versa Tile Fabric for the new Brien McMahon Multi-purpose/Baseball field for a sum (sole source) not to exceed \$911,205.64 Account #0917-6030-5777-C0568.**

**B) Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into an agreement with Field Turf (A Tarkett Sports Company) for the purchase of Field Turf XT-57, 2.25” for a sum not to exceed \$617,828.76. Account #0917-6030-5777-C0568.**

Mr. Mocciae explained that Agenda Items #9 & #10 go together. He said that the Committee had been presented with the choice of using crumb rubber or cork in the sports field at McMahon. Sport Tec has done the tennis courts at Nathaniel Ely and Fox Run along with other locations.

He went on to explain that the cost for the outlined in #10 A was for the cork field. However, the department does not have enough money to afford the cork field. The crumb rubber field will cost less.

Mr. Mocciae said that the contractor just installed two field in New York, one at Pleasantville and another at Glendale. Unfortunately, after a heavy rain, the new cork fields did not perform well because the cork floated on the water.

There is a letter from Field Tec that lists a number of fields that were just installed, including Dartmouth, Harvard, and Gillette Stadium. He pointed that he wondered why a medical college or a professional sports team would put crumb rubber in if there was a problem with the material.

Mr. Corsello pointed out that most of the fields in Fairfield County were crumb rubber. Therefore if crumb rubber was unsafe, the parents should not let their children play on those field. Mr. Mocciae agreed and said that there had not been a study on this. Every field that Norwalk has is a crumb rubber field. Mr. Serasis agreed and said that he had coached on the McMahon field for almost 10 years and that it was hard to get hurt on that field. He went on to say that he had been told that when it is hot outside, the temperature of the field surface is very close to what it would be on a cork field. It was pointed out that Dartmouth and Harvard were not putting in crumb rubber fields for economic reasons. Mr. Mocciae agreed and said that they were being installed for safety reasons and pleasure.

There was a brief discussion as to whether there should be a public hearing on these items. Mr. Mocciae pointed out that the Nathaniel Ely field had just been installed and there had not been a problem or any objections raised.

**\*\* MR. CORSELLO MOVED THE FOLLOWING:**

**9 A) AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH SPORT TEC CONSTRUCTION CORP. PROJECT #3705 TURF AND FIELD RENOVATION AT BRIEN MCMAHON HIGH SCHOOL FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$946,500. ACCOUNT #0917-6030-5777-C0568.**

**9 B) AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND PARKS TO ISSUE CHANGE ORDERS FOR PROJECT #3705 TURF AND FIELD RESTORATION AT BRIEN MCMAHON HIGH SCHOOL FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$94,650. ACCOUNT #0917-6030-5777-C0568;**

**AND**

**10 B) AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH FIELD TURF (A TARKETT SPORTS COMPANY) FOR THE PURCHASE OF FIELD TURF XT-57, 2.25" FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$617,828.76. ACCOUNT #0917-6030-5777-C0568.**



**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Mocciae said that this has to be done before Christmas so that the turf will be ready for the baseball season.

**11. A) Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into an agreement with L. Holzner Electric Company for project # 3687 Veterans Memorial Park Launch Ramps & Visitors Docks Improvement for a sum not to exceed \$2,118,900. Account #0917-6030-5777-C0367 and 0917-6030-5777-C0367.**

**11 B) Authorize the Director of Recreation and Parks to issue change orders for project #3687 Veterans Memorial Park Launch Ramps & Visitors Docks Improvement for a sum not to exceed \$60,000. Account #0917-6030-5777-C0367.**

Mr. Mocciae said that he had been working on this project for a number of years. He said that the first bid package was for the entire plan and the cost was \$4.1 million. This portion of the project is not fully funded and Mr. Mocciae will be going to the BET for additional funding. The permit is only for three years and the Department is currently at the end of the second year. Mr. Mocciae listed the final steps, which includes presenting the project to P&Z and adding it on to the Council agenda.

**\*\* MR. DEPALMA MOVED THE ITEMS.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Nathaniel Eli Tennis Court.**

Ms. Caron Palder, the Grassroots President, came forward and said that the students come for Roodner Court and play at Springwood/Eli park. Now Mr. Mocciae had helped with getting funding to repair the courts. Grassroots would like to add more courts and the USTA will also be providing funding. One of the Board members has identified a donor who would be interested in donating \$300,000 but would want the courts named after her late husband.

Mr. Mocciae gave a quick overview of the process that would need to be done. Mr. Corsello said that this situation would be slightly different because the previous items that were named were because they were former City employees. This would be a naming the courts because of the donations.

Mr. DePalma pointed out that the focus was repairing and expanding the tennis court. He said that the detail

**\*\* MR. SERASIS MOVED TO MAKE THIS ITEM AN ACTION ITEMS AND TO SEND IT TO LAND USE WITH THE LANGUAGE TO BE DETERMINED BY CORPORATION COUNSEL.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE IN FAVOR (SERASIS, SIMMS, AND DEPALMA) AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (KYDES AND CORSELLO).**

Mr. DePalma asked if there would be a discussion about the zip lines. Mr. Mocciae said that it would be coming back to the Committee.

*Mr. Corsello left the meeting at 8:26 p.m. A quorum was no longer present.*

Mr. Serasis said that he had a friend who was a trapeze artist and knew about "Go Ape" and that it was the best company. He said that he, his son and this friend had gone up to Cranbury Park and walked the zip line course. No houses were visible at any point along the course.

Mr. Mocciae said that he would suggest that this item be brought forward in October. He added the company was interested in coming down to Norwalk to show where the course would be.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. DEPALMA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services