

**CITY OF NORWALK
RECREATION, PARKS
AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 14, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Travis Simms, Chair; Richard Bonenfant; Michael DePalma;
Steve Serasis; Michael Corsello (7:07 p.m.);
Shannon O'Toole Giandurco (7:07 p. m.)

STAFF: Michael Mocciaie, Director

OTHERS: Michael Griffin, Harbor Master; Alan Lo, Buildings and Facilities
Manager; Thomas Hamilton, Chief Financial Officer, Board of
Education

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Simms called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2016

- ** MR. SERASIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2016 AS PRESENTED**
- ** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. BONENFANT)**

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- ** MR. DEPALMA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**
 - 1. APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER MANSION AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY AMY PHILLIPS (NEPHEWS WEDDING) FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2018 FROM 2:00 PM – 11:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 125.**

A representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Corsello and Ms. O'Toole Giandurco joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

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

2. APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER MANSION AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY JAMES DECRISANTIS (DECRISANTIS/CAMMARK WEDDING) FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2018 FROM 1:00 PM – 10:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 125+.

A representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

3. APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER MANSION AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY EMILY DIURNO FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 2018 FROM 5:00 PM – 10:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 150.

A representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

4. APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER MANSION AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY SAMANTHA MONTINERI AND PATRICK SHANNON FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2018 FROM 1:00 PM – 10:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 135.

A representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

5. APPROVE THE USE OF THE CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER MANSION, PAVILION #1 AND THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY JULIE SHARP FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2017 FROM 1:00 PM – 10:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 120.

A representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The following item was tabled:

6. Approve the use of the Cranbury Park Gallaher Mansion and immediate surrounding grounds by Kalecia Cain for a Wedding to be held Saturday, July 15, 2017 from 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Estimated attendance 100.

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

7. APPROVE THE USE OF CRANBURY PARK GALLAHER MANSION AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY JOHN MCKINNEY FOR A WEDDING TO BE HELD SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2017 FROM 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 200.

A representative was present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

8. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH *JS ENDURANCE* FOR THE USE OF VETERANS PARK AS START & FINISH FOR THE 2017 SONO HALF MARATHON TO BE HELD SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2017 FROM 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. SET UP TO TAKE PLACE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2017 AT 12:00 NOON WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 12:00 NOON ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2017. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 2,000.

A representative was present and said that this will be their third year holding this event. The representative said that they did not have to close many streets and there were no complaints. Ms. O'Toole Giandurco said that in the past, she participated and everything was run beautifully.

Mr. Mocciae said that they did an effective job of communicating street closures and they also had a large Police presence.

Mr. Simms added that they do a phenomenal job.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms asked the representative to attend the next Common Council meeting on January 10th.

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

9. APPROVE THE USE OF CRANBURY PAVILION I AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THE NORWALK LITTLE LEAGUE FOR A NLL BASEBALL PICNIC TO BE HELD SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2017 FROM 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 300.

A representative was present. The representative said that they hold this end of the year event every year.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

10. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH CORPORATE FUN RUN INC. FOR THE USE OF CRANBURY PARK PAVILION I AND PARK FOR A CORPORATE FUN RUN FAIRFIELD COUNTY 5K TO BE HELD THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2017 FROM 10:00 AM – 9:30 PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 600-700.

A representative was present. The representative said that this is their third fun run. It is an after work, company team building event. The fun run starts and ends in Cranbury Park. They run in the residential area and there will be no street closures. In addition, there will be 4 – 5 Police officers present.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Simms asked the representative to attend the next Common Council meeting on January 10, 2017

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

13. APPROVE THE USE OF THE CITY OF NORWALK VISITOR DOCKS FOR A COLLABORATIVE PILOT PROGRAM FOR THE SUMMER OF 2017 BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND THE

NORWALK RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT. THE (USFWS) WOULD BE ALLOWED TO KEEP THEIR MANNED VESSEL AT THE DOCKS IN ONE OF THE AREAS NOT USED BY ANYONE DUE TO THE DRAFT IN RETURN FOR:

- **ALLOW ISLAND KEEPERS TO BETTER SERVE VISITORS AND PROVIDE ENHANCED PUBLIC ACCESS TO ISLANDS THAT ARE PART OF THE MCKINNEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.**
- **PROVIDE 2 FULLY TRAINED STAFF IN BOATING SAFETY, OPERATIONS, FIRST AID AND CPR AS WELL AS VISITORS SERVICES.**
- **EXTRA WATCH OF CITY PROPERTY AFTER NORMAL WORKING HOURS.**
- **COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS INCLUDING CITY ISLAND CLEAN-UP AND SITE PROJECTS.**
- **DAYS OF OPERATION MAY 1 – NOVEMBER 1, 2017**

Mr. Richard Potvin, Refuge Manager was present. He said that by allowing the boat to dock at the Visitor's Dock, it will allow them to do their job more efficiently. A benefit to the City is that they will be another set of eyes and ears on the water. Mr. Mocciaie said that the City will not lose a paid space for this boat.

Mr. Michael Griffin, Harbor Master said that the dock is directly across from the State approved and funded pump out station, which makes the proposed space undesirable to the public. He said that spot is almost never utilized. In addition, in the event a significant summer storm is forecast, Fish and Wildlife will remove the boat.

Mr. Griffin explained that the boat will be a base of operation and as a result more attention will be paid to the islands. Mr. Potvin added that they run summer programs. Mr. Serasis noted that they will provide two people who are trained in CPR, First Aid and boating safety and depending upon the type of emergency, can be available for assistance.

Mr. Potvin said that in the past, they were stationed on Sheffield Island, but that facility is no longer available.

Mr. Corsello said that his concern is if they get feedback about the Visitor's Dock and if it will cause a problem. Mr. Mocciaie said that this is a pilot program. He suggested going through one season and if there are any issues, they will take care of them. He said that there have been on-going talks about this project.

Mr. Bonenfant said that the boat is big and will appear to take up the entire Visitor Dock. Mr. Griffin said that it will be in the corner; the boat is a houseboat and is 40 feet long. It is a high-profile boat and is designed to be in shallow water. Visitor Dock is a base of operation. Mr. Mocciaie said that the boat will be Federally labeled.

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Mr. Serasis said that he is happy that the boat will be based at the Park and asked if anyone is certified on the site. Mr. Mocciae said that they are not; there are only operators with an AED. Mr. Serasis said that this will be beneficial in the event of an emergency. Their people can start first aid, until the first responders arrive.

Mr. Corsello asked how they will know there is a need to render assistance. Mr. Potvin explained that the boat will be occupied 24 hours a day. They could put up a sign letting people know that first aid is available.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

11. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH NORWALK GRASS ROOTS TENNIS AND EDUCATION TO ACCEPT THE DONATIONS OF FUNDS (UP TO \$400,000) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW TENNIS CENTER AT SPRINGWOOD ELY PARK AND TO NAME THE FACILITIES AS “WILLIAM RIPPE TENNIS CENTER” TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT OUTLINED IN NOVEMBER 16, 2016 MEMO.

Ms. Caron Calder, President was present. She explained that she was here to ask the Committee to approve the naming of the facilities to the William Rippe Tennis Center. Mr. Lo said that this Committee referred this item to the Land Use and Building Management Committee. They advertised and held a public hearing. Following the public hearing, they voted to approve the request to name the facilities after Mr. Rippe and moved it to this Committee. The only comment was that they would like to see letters of support. Mr. Lo said that some letters of support were received and they are in the file.

Mr. Bonenfant said that there are some construction meetings going on about the Nathaniel Ely School. Ms. Calder said that she has been in communication with the Board of Education and talked to Mr. Lo. In light of the potential for a new school to be built it could be feasible to move the courts. Mr. Lo presented a map of the area and said that the proposal is to put the new tennis courts in front of the existing courts.

Mr. Hamilton noted that there is a lot of ledge in the area and added that this park is the open green space for the residents. Ms. Calder said that their plan will keep all of the green space. She said that their intent to move forward is because they have a funder and they do not want to lose that.

Mr. Corsello said that he loves what Grass Roots does and does not have a problem with this, but asked if this has been done before. Mr. Mocciae said that nothing this sizable

has happened before, except for the land donations from the Marvin and Canevari families.

Mr. Simms said that this is a win – win for the community; the funding will go far. Mr. Bonenfant said that there is an Ordinance about naming City properties. Ms. O’ Toole Giandurco asked where the extra money will come from. Mr. Hamilton said that this is not a done deal; there was a meeting last night where they discussed building a school on this site. The concept being discussed is to integrate the Grass Roots program into the school. A discussion took place between Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Simms about building a school at the Nathaniel Ely site.

Mr. Serasis said that if a school is approved, then the Board of Education will be able to pay toward getting the tennis courts constructed. Mr. Lo said that if they are able to build the school there, it will cost less than trying to remove the ledge and acquiring seven to nine acres, needed for a school.

Mr. Hamilton said that the Board of Education’s concern is that they do not want the tennis courts to preclude their ability to build the school. He said that if they go forward this year with the school at Nathaniel Ely, the additional costs to move the tennis courts is part of the project. If there is a decision to go forward the following year, then he does not know if they can commit the money.

Ms. O’Toole Giandurco said that she is not comfortable moving forward with so many unknowns. Mr. Corsello agreed and said that this may be premature. Ms. Calder said that the Committee is being asked to approve the project, not approve the funding. Mr. DePalma said that the Committee is only being asked to vote to accept the donation and if the project does not go forward Grass Roots will have to figure out what to do.

**** MR. CORSELLO MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION AS FOLLOWS:**

11. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH NORWALK GRASS ROOTS TENNIS AND EDUCATION TO ACCEPT THE DONATIONS OF FUNDS (NOT LESS THAN \$400,000) TOWARD THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW TENNIS CENTER AT SPRINGWOOD ELY PARK AND TO NAME THE FACILITIES AS “WILLIAM RIPPE TENNIS CENTER” TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT OUTLINED IN NOVEMBER 16, 2016 MEMO.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Mocciae said that if they build the school at the Nathaniel Ely site, they will have the same issue they have at Jefferson, where there is no green space. They will end up with a school with no outdoor space for the kids or the community.

Mr. Bonenfant said that he would be more comfortable if he knew whether or not there was going to be a school at that site.

Mr. Hamilton said that the Common Council will have the full information on how the school will meet the needs of the district, including recreational space and eliminate the portable classrooms at Jefferson School.

**** MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED WITH ONE (1) VOTE IN OPPOSITION (MR. BONENFANT)**

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

12. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE MARITIME ROWING CLUB TO USE A PORTION OF THE PARKING AREA ADJACENT TO THE SOUTH MARINA DOCKS AS WELL AS A PORTION OF THE LOT FOR BOAT STORAGE (TEMPORARY FENCE) AND TO USE THE EXISTING DOCK AREA FOR LAUNCHING. THIS WILL BE TEMPORARY FROM MARCH 31 – JULY 31, 2107 DUE TO DISPLACEMENT BY THE WALK BRIDGE. THE MARITIME ROWING CLUB WILL MOVE UP THE NORWALK RIVER UPON COMPLETION OF THEIR PERMITS AND DOCKS AUGUST 1, 2017.

Mr. Benjamin Vengerovskiy gave an overview of the Rowing Club. He said that they have been continuously operating in their present location for 20 years. Three of their alumni attended the Olympics. Their present location is adjacent to the WALK Bridge. They are working very closely with the Connecticut Department of Transportation in terms of relocating their Club. Their deadline to vacate their property is March 31, 2017. Being in Norwalk is essential to them.

Mr. Moccia said that this use fits into what they want to do in Veteran's Park. He said that he and the Maritime Rowing Club have worked together for years. The proposed location is an area where it would not be an issue with the existing boaters. Mr. Vengerovskiy said that they would maintain that area of the Park.

Mr. Vengerovsky said that they are an Olympic training center.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. O'Toole Giandurco left the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

**** MR. SIMMS MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEM TO THE AGENDA**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

14. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH RACE COASTAL ENGINEERING, LLC FOR THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE SERVICES FOR VETERANS PARK BOAT RAMP & PARKING AREA IMPROVEMENTS FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$40,000. ACCOUNT #0917-6030-5777-C0367.

Mr. Mocciae explained the item and said that they need people with coastal engineering experience.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

V. DISCUSSION

1. Recreation and Parks 2017-2018 Operating Budget

Mr. Mocciae explained that he added three new items to the operating budget; the NICE Festival, a Parks foreman and changed the Athletic Supervisor to the Recreation Superintendent.

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

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services