

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1346
June 17, 2009

Department of Parks, Recreation & Trees
1st Floor Board Room
720 Edgewood Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515

Present: Commissioners DePino, Miller, Torres & Tucker
Absent: President Belowsky, Commissioner Bush, Castro & Walton
Staff: Robert D. Levine, Director of Parks, Recreation & Trees

I. Minutes of Meeting 1345: No Quorum. Minutes Tabled.

Treasurer's Report: No Quorum. Commissioner Tucker asked about the reimbursement of Tom Parlipiano's Salary. Director Levine stated that the funding comes from the New Haven Foundation and is placed in an account. When we get billed by the City we reimburse them for the Naturalist's salary. Now that the grant has closed and ended, his salary has come to an end. We will be calculating the final amount owed to the City and there may be \$500.00 or so left after reimbursing the City. If there are funds left over we will continue to pay for the utilities, pest control, etc. until the funds are depleted. The city will pick up the payments after that. Commissioner Tucker asked if the City would be picking up the Naturalist salary also. Director Levine stated no Tom Parlapiano is gone. Coincidentally, he had gotten a job a few weeks prior to us knowing that the grant funding had ended. So it worked out in that respect. Commissioner Tucker asked if we had checked with Corporation Counsel regarding the ending of this grant and its legitimacy. Director Levine stated that he had spoken to Corporation Counsel Victor Bolden and that he stated the Foundation was under no obligation based on the wording of the trust to continue to grant us money for this purpose. After the original 15 year period had ended, the Foundation could use those funds for other purposes. Commissioner Tucker had run into past Park Commission President Bob Schmalz and he had said that it was quite possible that the trust was written that way. Director Levine stated that he had thought that when someone leaves funds for a "permanent" memorial, it would mean you'd need to have money to maintain the memorial forever. The Pardee Seawall is maintained by a fund established for that very purpose as well as the Pardee Greenhouses, with the Loefstedt Account. But this one was written differently and the Foundation can use the money as they wish rather than how I wish. Director Levine isn't aware of how much money was left in the Trowbridge Trust held by the Community Foundation.

Commissioner Tucker mentioned the Capasso payment and assumed there was an inspection and David Moser signed off on the payment. Director Levine stated that any payment to Capasso for Greenhouse A & B is reviewed by John Bartok and then David Moser and then the bills are submitted. We are down to a final punch list for Greenhouses A & B. They look beautiful. Commissioner Tucker asked if we'd hold a meeting at the site when it is complete. Director Levine stated that yes once the punch list is done we can have the next meeting at the Greenhouse and take a tour.

Commissioner Tucker asked if Christy Hass was available if he stopped by the Greenhouses. Director Levine stated that her schedule is 7 to 3:30 and she's usually there earlier and later than those hours. Christy will be off the rest of this week. Commissioner Tucker wondered if he could still get into the facility. Director Levine stated that if Matt Naab is around he could gain access but he has been out planting city-wide. Also, the Sound School is utilizing the Greenhouses during the school day so access is limited during school hours. Commissioner asked if there any other questions regarding the Treasurer's Report. There were none. **The Treasurer's Report was tabled.**

Director's Report: 1) Director Levine stated that there was an interesting development in the Books in Parks Program. He received an e-mail from Illisa Kelman who is facilitating the program. She had received a call from a man involved with the Weston Rotary Club called to inquire about the program. His daughter attends Cold Spring School and he saw one in Criscuolo Park. Additionally, the Rotary Club in Norwalk is interested in implementing a similar program. It's been a very positive experience. There has been only one location where the books dispenser was vandalized. Volunteers are stocking the dispensers and it seems to be a successful program. Illisa also had feedback from the Stratford and Wallingford Public Libraries and someone from lower Fairfield County. It's interesting that the idea is catching on across the state.

2) City Budget—As part of the approved City Budget there was an additional \$100,000 added to our capital accounts in addition to the \$50,000 that had already been approved. This amounts to \$150,000 extra in our capital budget to repair cracks in the Edgewood and East Shore Park tennis courts. We are going is going out to bid for these repairs. We will be going out to bid to mill and pave East Shore Park with a fabric put down over the millings and a 1 ½ overlay of the blacktop and color coating and new nets resulting in a 15 year fix at this site. The remainder of the money would go towards a three-year fix at the Edgewood courts which will include the cracks being cleaned out, a fabric going over the cracks, and then there is light slurry placed over the cracks so it doesn't migrate through. They will give us a 30 month guarantee that will result in a 3-4 year fix. The tennis players will appreciate this because it won't create a "dead spot" that would make the ball not respond properly when bouncing off this spot. Commissioner Tucker asked why East Shore would be a higher priority. Director Levine stated that the East Shore courts are in worse shape than Edgewood. Additionally, they are used by the Career Tennis Team. After a two-year period we will start to budget for a lengthier fix at the Edgewood courts. Commissioner DePino asked when these repairs would begin. Director Levine stated that the plan is that the East Shore courts would be completed by November 2009. There's really no good time to repair the courts during tennis season. We should begin September and work through October and November. We want to get the color coating down for use in the spring; otherwise we'd have to wait until April when temperatures are 50 degrees or more.

3) Camp registration—Registration continues to go well. Deputy Director has held meetings with Camp Directors. Staff is 90% in place. We haven't had lifeguards on the clock at Lighthouse as of yet due to the weather. Hopefully, shortly, that will change. We have gotten permission from the Board of Aldermen to charge parking fees at Lighthouse Point Park at anytime during the year. This differs from past years when we only charged non-New Haven registered vehicles to park between Memorial and Labor Day. Residents with vehicles registered in New Haven are free of charge. Commissioner Tucker asked about the pass he received in the mail. Director Levine stated that that will admit you to the park without stopping at the gate to show your New Haven car registration. Non-resident vehicles are charged \$10 per day or they may purchase a season pass for \$50.00.

4) Director Levine stated that the maintenance division is a little behind in the mowing city-wide. We're starting to catch up on that with seasonal workers. Commissioner Tucker stated that the bike trail in New Haven is in pretty good shape, much better than the Hamden portion. He also noticed that Hamden seems to have AT&T flags as if there is an AT&T cable buried in the right-of-way. Does New Haven have the same thing in there right-of-way and who is getting money from that? Director Levine stated that there are defiantly things under there, such as fiber optic cable. City Plan handles all that since it's not designated park land.

5) Director Levine stated that one of the best projects we have going right now is the Soldiers and Sailors Monument restoration in East Rock Park. You should really go be at least once every two

weeks or you'll be missing a lot. They are rebuilding the knee wall that surrounds the monument. They're rebuilding and stabilizing the stairs that go up to it. They are widening and putting in a new grant staircase entrance. They will be rebuilding a replica of the original door to the monument. They are installing lighting inside and out. They're installing decorative LED lights on the exterior. There will be a new fence going all around the perimeter and a spiral staircase is being installed inside the monument. The monument will be open to the public at certain times. We'll try and get volunteers to man and collect a small donation from people who want to go into the monument. Maybe we could talk to the Friends of East Rock Park they could manage the monument and tours. This will be very exciting nobody remembers the last time anyone was up inside the monument. We're hoping to have the staircase installed by October. Additionally, we're repairing the wall at Lighthouse Park adjacent to Morris Creek. It's been collapsing at certain points. We've had a slowdown at the East Shore Park Erosion Control Project. We had gotten permits from the DEP to do certain hard and soft treatments to stop the erosion. The DEP had said if we see any significant erosion occur we'll have baseline photographs and then we'll be able to place a harder solution the next time. However, before we even built it, there was riprap in place and a section in the middle that was supposed to be planted collapsed so it will all need to be riprap in that section. So that project has been stalled a bit due to changes in the permit. Once it's in full swing the project should be over after 120 days. There are sections where the pathway is being pushed back away from shore and a decorative fence will be placed all along that area. Eventually, after Phase II, which comes later; there will be a pathway that goes down to a nice little beach area that has formed.

Commissioner Tucker asked if there has been any progress with the Edgewood Park Community Garden. Director Levine stated that there has been no feedback. The couple that had started planting a garden have removed all the plantings and apologized for the inconvenience.

Commissioner Torres asked about the parking being developed along the 34 connector. Director Levine stated that the property is owned by Economic Development and they are in charge of the area. When it was a mess we ended up maintaining the area. About 12 years ago it was a real mess and we went in and cleaned it out. When Edgewood Pond was dredged, the spoils were tested and placed at the 34 site. They passed all the hazardous materials tests but the Ph of the material was so out of whack we needed to add material that would level it out. That was a long process due to the salt in the pond. We finally got the grass to grow and then the development of the parking areas began.

Commissioner Torres said he was approached by a resident asking to cut back the branches touching his home. He didn't think that the homeowner was allowed to trim city trees. Director Levine stated that in reality, he is authorized to trim branches that hang over his property. He can't remove the tree, but he can trim the tree. It's best to call us first and the tree division will inspect and advise the homeowner. A discussion of tree trimming over private property, neighbor's private trees and city street trees continued. Director Levine stated that the city conducted a GPS inventory of the street trees within the city and we have 32,000 street trees. The East Rock Park trail map was done with a GPS.

Litter signs will be posted along the perimeter of Edgewood Park as well as Criscuolo Park.

Commissioner Tucker asked if Director Levine received his e-mail regarding the mugging on the trail. Director Levine stated that he was concerned that the "blue light" didn't work and they are on contract. He called City Plan the next day and they will be working with Yale to see if they will put these blue lights on their contract. There are only about 8 on the trail and Yale probably has 100. We do encourage the police to come into the parks and drive around. Our employees wear brightly colored shirts that identify them as Park employees.

Commissioner Tucker wondered who owes the beginning of the canal trail where it starts at Shelton Avenue and quickly crosses to Ivy. There a little tiny piece of land there that's being used by the contractor looks like it would be the perfect place for a park. Director Levine will investigate the property.

Commissioner Torres asked about the soccer league that plays at the Boulevard fields. Director Levine stated that they are doing well. They've been rained out a couple of times. We have a guy down there every Sunday who they pay. They had police for the first three weeks and everything worked out fine with that. Part of it is we're only letting them have four games on each field. The players from game one really need to leave before the players from game two arrive. The crowds are smaller now and much more manageable.

Commissioner Tucker mentioned that he would need to leave the July meeting early for another meeting. Please place any important items at the beginning of the meeting. Commissioner Miller thought that there was no July meeting of the Commission. Director Levine stated that there's usually no August meeting. Commissioner Miller said that if there's nothing on the agenda for a particular month we should be able to cancel that meeting. All agreed.

Meeting adjourned: **6:30 p.m.**

Next Meeting: **July 15, 2009**