

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1354
June 16, 2010

Department of Parks, Recreation and Trees
720 Edgewood Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515

Present: President Belowsky, Commissioners Miller, O'Sullivan-Best, Torres,
Tucker & Walton
Absent: Vice President Bush, Commissioner Castro
Staff: Robert D. Levine, Director of Parks, Recreation & Trees

Meeting Called to Order 5:32 p.m.

- I. Minutes of Meeting 1353: Commissioner Walton motioned to pass the Minutes of Meeting 1353, seconded by Commissioner Miller.** Commissioner Tucker inquired about the amount of funds that will be utilized from the English Account. Director Levine stated that the purpose of that request was the restoration of the bronze work on the monument. The estimated cost for that right now is \$142,000. The thought would be to do that over a three year period, using English Funds for half of the yearly amount. English Fund monies are designated partially for East Rock Park and West Rock Nature Center. Commissioner Walton asked about the Pop Smith request for naming walkway. President Belowsky stated that they had asked for help paying for the signage. Director Levine had thought they could go through Traffic and Parking for street signs. **The minutes passed unanimously.**
- II. Treasurer's Report: Commissioner Tucker Motioned to approve the May 2010 Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner Miller.** Commissioner Tucker asked about how often we pay Matt Naab's salary from the Pardee Flower Account. Director Levine stated that his salary gets paid to the City as a reimbursement at various time intervals depending upon when the Controller's Office sends an invoice. The figure includes medical benefits. **The motion passed unanimously.**
- III. Director's Report:** Director Levine stated that the spiral staircase has been installed in the Soldiers' & Sailors' Monument. Once we have lighting in place and the building official develops a protocol / procedure for allowing people up the stairs we can run tours. The issue is that the space is small and you need to be relatively fit to climb up to the top. The spiral stairs are 3' wide; and, at the top is a very steep "ship's ladder." Director Levine has been up to the top and the view is fantastic. A perpetual maintenance fund will be established for the monument. Any donations from tours of the monument and proceeds from summit events will be deposited into that fund.

Director Levine stated that on June 11 there was a "Soirée at the Summit" event. Approximately 200 people attended the event. They had a Ferris wheel at the top and served food and drinks. There will be a 4th of July event at the summit with fireworks being displayed. There will be a fundraiser the same day and into the evening. Tickets will be \$15.00 and include a shuttle to the summit to view the fireworks and a live band. There will be additional charges for horse and buggy rides and the chicken barbeque dinner.

Commissioner Tucker stated that years ago the City proposed to set off the fireworks from East Rock Park and naturalists objected on the grounds that the noise would frighten wildlife. He thinks the Long Wharf location was a better site. Director Levine stated that people will be watching from Wilbur Cross and Blake Field. There will be meetings with Police about which streets will be blocked and other logistical issues.

Director Levine stated that camp registrations are going a little slower than we thought they would be. Several camps are under registered at this time. However, we do expect to get a large group of children from the Housing Authority sites.

Lighthouse Point Park is going very well. We are putting a major effort into keeping amplified music and D.J.'s out of that park. There have been no reported problems with alcohol abuse at the park. As you know the drinking ordinance has been sent back to committee and there will be further discussions and meetings.

Director Levine informed the Commission that summer staff is all lined up to man the pools, beach, splash pads, & camps; in addition to maintenance staff.

East Shore Park Erosion Control project has turned out extremely well. Director Levine urged the Commissioners to take a walk along that area of waterfront. We had lost 20' of the park in certain areas over the last 12 years. Some of the pathways were lost. We have some new pathways that were moved back. Additionally, we have been working on the wall at Dover Beach which had been built in the 1920's. Sections of that wall had collapsed back in the 70's. We have completely rebuilt it along the edge of the park; and, there are plans to continue that restoration out along the street that doesn't abut the park. That phase will be conducted by the Engineering Dept. in the future.

Director Levine stated that the softball leagues and soccer leagues are going well.

Commissioner Torres stated that he noticed a lot of trees by the Boulevard and Rt. 1. Director Levine stated that the Mayor has put forth an initiative to plant 10,000 trees in five years. A thousand trees will be planted by the City through URI at Yale and another thousand trees will be planted by private parties and institutions. URI is assisting in moving people towards volunteering to plant trees privately. We are planting hundreds along the perimeters of our athletic fields, parks and open spaces. A lot of the trees are being planted by "Re-Entry Program" participants. The program is for recently released prisoners and facilitates their re-entry into society.

Commissioner Walton asked if the Summit is available for private permits. Director Levine stated that it is; however, the parking is limited. There is a new "plaza" around the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. We are working on using it for events and as a space for permitted private events.

Commissioner O'Sullivan-Best stated that the alcohol ban has gone back to committee and she doesn't believe it is common knowledge that you can get a permit to serve alcohol at any park. She believes that information would be relevant for the next committee meeting. Director Levine stated there is permission to have an enclosed "beer garden" with restrictions. The area must be enclosed and must have a police officer present.

Director Levine stated that the Mather Corp. had requested use of a piece of park land at Webster and Canal as a lay down site for a construction project. They would park construction vehicles at the site and stock pile supplies, etc. We did not get an official letter of request in time for this meeting. Commissioner Tucker stopped at the site on his way to the meeting and discovered the ground to be very hard. There were piles of top soil on the site. Director Levine stated that the City has a standard for restoration of areas used by construction companies. This site hasn't been used as park land in the recent past. Director Levine asked the Commission if they would be interested in renting out this site if the Mather Corp. comes back with a request to use the site. The Commissioners responded that yes, they would consider the request. The Commission discussed the issue for some time.

Director Levine stated that there was a large Yale project with refrigeration lines placed under the Canal Trail. Yale is giving the Park Commission \$100,000 to be placed in a fund for the maintenance and enhancement of Scantlebury Park. The actual wording states parkland in the Dixwell area.

Commissioner Tucker asked about how the Books-n-Parks program was going. Director Levine stated that he has heard reports that the volunteers are not keeping up with the program. We will be looking for more volunteers to attend the sites. The part-time person who was overseeing the program is no longer with the department.

Commissioner Tucker asked about the Babbit Trust and a Probate Court filing. Director Levine stated that we update the trust via Probate Court regarding how the Elizabeth Babbit Trust Funds are being spent.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:15 p.m.

Next Meeting: July 21, 2010, 5:30 p.m., 720 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, Connecticut