

New Haven Board of Park Commissioners

Meeting No. 1365
September 21, 2011

Department of Parks, Recreation & Trees
Pardee Greenhouse—Headhouse
180 Park Road
Hamden, CT 06517

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

- I. **Minutes of Meeting 1364:** Commissioner Bush motioned to approve the Minutes of Meeting 1364, seconded by Commissioner Castro and it passed unanimously.
- II. **Treasurer’s Reports:** Commissioner Castor motioned to approve the Treasurer’s Report, seconded by Commissioner Bush and it passed unanimously.
- VI. **C.J. Fucci Construction—Request to Use Park Property:** Vincent Federico from C.J. Fucci addressed the Commission. Mr. Federico was present to request the use of Ella B. Scantlebury playground as a construction “lay down” (storage of concrete pipes) area for an on-going project. The project involves installation of sewer overflow pipes in the Yale area. The project takes place primarily on Trumbull, Prospect and Orange Streets. The site requested would be in use from October 1 through December 31, 2011. The particular area of Scantlebury Park that Fucci is requesting to use is in the area of Webster & Canal St. It is not part of the main park; it’s adjacent to the Farmington Canal Greenway. Other construction companies have used this area in the past. The main use of the area will be used to store pipe for the project. Director Levine stated that it has been an area where the Commission has granted permission for use during construction; however, none of the past users have ever restored the area to an acceptable condition. Commissioner Tucker; who is absent, has particular concerns about this area. He complained that past users have left the soil very compacted and left gravel behind making it impossible to grow grass.

Mr. Federico displayed photographs of what the area looks like now; there is no grass just dirt. He assured the Commission that Fucci Construction would loosen the existing compacted soil, add top soil, re-seed and establish grass in this area where there is currently none.

The pipes will be 24” to 36” concrete pipe. President Belowsky asked if Fucci would put up \$5,000 until spring when they complete the work and restore the area; we have not had good luck in the past with contractors standing by their promise to restore areas. Mr. Federico said they would comply with that request and offered a \$5,000 surety bond;

which is a binding and would be paid if the area is not restored to the Commission's satisfaction. President Belowsky agreed to a bond if it was \$10,000.

- IV. Easter Seals Goodwill—Fantasy of Lights:** Mr. Richard Borer, President of Easter Seals Goodwill Industries introduced himself. Mr. Borer came to the Commission to request permission to utilize Lighthouse Point Park for the annual Fantasy of Lights fundraiser. He explained that this is one of Easter Seals Goodwill's largest fundraisers and has been taking place for 17 years. The last few years their costs have gone up a bit and the car traffic has gone down. Additionally, several years ago we had some very expensive copper wire stolen from the park. We have added security to the site since that time. Easter Seals is investing in LED lighting for the display which is costly.

Director Levine stated that there are concerns that the start date is creeping back into earlier into October. We will be able to work with you somewhat; however the longer the setup takes; the longer the park is out of service to the public. Additionally, we lose revenue on rental of the Carousel building. This year we have a project in the works to bury a utility line from the carousel building to behind the bathhouse. When we start the project we will work during the day and ensure you have power at night. Another concern was the utility bills and how they are moved from the City to Easter Seals and back. Those are the main concerns of the staff and we can set up a separate meeting to work everything out.

Director Levine stated that he understood the revenue from the event has been going down; however, this past year the 5% was very low. This is a significant impact on the park Minimum annual fee with the formula

Commissioner O'Sullivan-Best stated that there are other Easter Seals Goodwill programs within the City and particularly within the park structure that she was concerned about. The discussion continued with Mr. Borer concerning store sites, funding, and numerous programs that benefit New Haven.

Director Levine stated that about 10 years ago Easter Seals fully funded the building of a huge playground in Eastshore Park saving the city about \$250,000. The site is one of the most used playgrounds in the city.

President Belowsky thinks we were getting 5% of the gross and we may now be getting 5% of the net. We will work something out that is beneficial to both parties.

- V. Outdoor Sculpture—Edgerton Park:** Stephen Kobasa addressed the Commission regarding a temporary outdoor art display in Edgerton Park. Mr. Kobasa has spoken with the Edgerton Park Conservancy and they are in favor of a display of this type. He stated that they would like to do this in the spring; late March early April and lasting six to eight weeks. They will only consider sculptures that would not disturb the property. The southwest quadrant of the park is the area we are interested in placing the display. We would like your permission to proceed. Director Levine stated that we would need an

insurance certificate holding the city harmless in the event of an injury. Mr. Kobasa thanked the Commission for their consideration.

(Cont.): VI. C.J. Fucci Construction: Commissioner Best-O’Sullivan motioned to allow C.J. Fucci Construction to utilize a specific area of Scantlebury Park for construction site storage. Fucci must provide a \$10,000 bond to insure site is fully restored and grass planted in the spring; Motion seconded and amended by Commissioner Castro requiring Fucci to inform the Alderperson, passed unanimously. Closed.

(Cont.): IV. Easter Seals Goodwill Industries: Commissioner Castro motioned to allow Easter Seals Goodwill Industries to utilize Lighthouse Point Park for their annual “Fantasy of Lights” fundraiser providing they donate some percentage of the funds raised to the Donation Account. The Commission and Director Levine discussed what formula to use in calculating the donation from Easter Seals to the Park Commission Donation Account. Commissioner O’Sullivan-Best Amended the Motion to include a donation of \$2,000 plus 1% of the gross receipts will be donated by Easter Seals Goodwill and we will revisit matter every two years; the motion passed with four yeas and one abstention. Closed

(Cont.): V. Outdoor Sculpture—Edgerton Park: Commissioner Bush motioned to accept Stephen Kobasa’s proposal for an outdoor sculpture exhibition in Edgerton Park. The Commission and Director Levine discussed insurance requirements and how to oversee the project. The Motion is contingent upon the Edgerton Park Conservancy Board agreeing to oversee the project and Mr. Kobasa supplying a million dollar liability policy for the exhibit; the Motion passed unanimously. Closed.

III. Director’s Report: 1) Director Levine stated that the biggest thing that has been going on since the last meeting is the Hurricane Irene cleanup. We had 230 men 114 vehicles involved in the cleanup. When the wind started to die down we had all these people in place to begin the cleanup. During normal operating conditions the Parks Dept. has four tree crews; during the cleanup we had 18 tree crews....we were spending almost 3,500 an hour on contractors. The magnitude of the cleanup for us was huge. Our tree crews were in at 10 p.m. the night before the storm. We were one of the only towns that did that; our guys were here and ready to respond. In other towns the crews couldn’t get on the job as quickly due to downed trees and wires. Director Levine believes that New Haven’s response was extraordinary. The Emergency Operations Center was open for seven days straight with City, UI reps on hand. Currently we have 10 crews out plus contractors. Parks and DPW are still out doing cleanup and pickup of debris. We weren’t in the park system at all for 10 days. We didn’t mow, preform field preparation and the park system was closed to all permits. The one park we did cleanup and prepare for the public was Lighthouse Point Park. The weekend following the storm was Labor Day so we wanted the public to be able to use the park. The Carousel building had damage and we had contractors and staff working to get it ready for the three weddings that were to be held that weekend as well. 2) Pilot Pen re-did the tennis courts at W. Cross; they resurfaced

and crack sealed all the courts and converted two of the courts into those mini courts that are a good size for teaching children. 3) This years Halloween Festival will be different than previous events. It will be less horrifying and more family oriented. We are collaborating with the Friends of Edgewood Park and Westville Renaissance on this year's event. 4) The Mayor arranged for a "thank you" party on Thursday at the Carousel building for the Hurricane responders and their families as well as contractors. It's basically open to everyone in the city. 5) Commissioner Bush asked about afternoon programs in the schools. Director Levine said we still run Community Recreation and "Open Schools." I will have more information about our programs at the next meeting; I may have Bill Dixon come to that meeting. We have Felicia Shashinka as a Recreation Supervisor and we use a lot of seasonal workers to run the programs. Additionally the Rangers are involved in some of these programs as well as the traditional ranger activities. The other Recreation Supervisor position is vacant right now due to a Workers' Compensation injury; so, we will be filling that position. Felicia & Martin put together the whole youth recreation program and open schools; it's at different schools on different days from after school until 9pm. 5) East Rock Bridge information is just an FYI from the Engineering Dept. 6) President Belowsky requested an emergency plan on notifying the Commission during storms like Hurricane Irene. Director Levine said he could send out an email update via cell phone. 7) Pastore Memorial Clock site work has begun, the check has been cut, they will be shipping the clock to the vendor and we should be in good shape. 8) Commissioners asked about the holiday party for employees. Sage restaurant may not be in business after the storm. President Belowsky suggested clothing or insulated lunch bags, Director Levine suggested LED flashlights as a choice; they were nice to have during the storm. He will have a few suggestions put together for the Oct. meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 7:00 p.m.

Next Park Commission Meeting: October 19, 2011

Location: 720 Edgewood Ave.—1st Floor Board Room