

May 12, 2020

The meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners was held on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference. The public had access to this meeting by calling the following conference line and then entering the conference code:

Dial in Number #: (929) 436-2866

Meeting ID: 939 9462 5043

<https://zoom.us/j/93994625043>

Mr. Labrador stated that this meeting is being conducted with the authority issued by the Governor of the State of Connecticut and read the following:

Tonight's meeting of the Board of Park Commissioner is the regular monthly meeting for May 2020 and is being conducted by electronic means as authorized by Governor Ned Lamont executive order 7B which was issued on March 14, 2020, and which the Public has electronic access to witness this meeting.

The recording and transcription of this meeting will be posted on the City Clerk's website within 7 days.

Mr. Labrador asked that everyone abide by the Governor's request and directives contained in his various executive orders: 7 through 7J, with additional orders to be forthcoming.

OPENING CEREMONY

ROLL CALL

Present: President Labrador, Vice President Brideau, Commissioners: Wade, Cotto and Hosier, Clerk Ellen M. Gerrity. Also, in attendance were, Craig A. Nadrizny, Acting Public Facilities Director, Luann Conine, Recreation Superintendent Stephen Hladun, Special Projects Coordinator, Luis Burgos, Manager of Roadway and Parks Services, and Lee Nastu, Recreation Coordinator with Angel DePara, Database Administrator, presiding as host of the meeting.

After determining there was a quorum, Mr. Labrador called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRURY 11, 2020, PARKS BOARD MEETING

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Mr. Hosier, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Tuesday, February 11, 2020, meeting as presented.

PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM:

Due to the public health emergency, public speaking will be by written testimony only

All written testimony should have been submitted to Ellen.Gerrity@bridgeportct.gov by 4:30p.m.on Tuesday, May, 12th.***

May 12, 2020

No one signed up for the Public Speaking Forum.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Drew Goldman AICP, Urban Conservation Director, The Nature Conservancy, Seaside Wellness Trail Correspondence.

A letter of correspondence was submitted by The Nature Conservancy in reference to the Wellness Trail Correspondence stating that they are on hold now due to COVID-19 and will proceed with their plans as soon as they are able.

2. Jacob D Robison, Planner, City of Bridgeport, Office of Planning and Economic Development requesting permission to adjust one of the bicycle parking sites which was presented at the October 2019 Parks Board meeting.

Mr. Robison reiterated to the Park Commissioners that the Park Board approved the installation of shelter bicycle parking stations at the designated parks in the City at the October 2019 Parks Board meeting.

Mr. Robison said that the City received a grant through the DOT to install bicycle parking shelters and repair stands.

He said that the Beardsley Park site needs to be adjusted due to grant requirements with the floodplain.

He said that the Planning Department developed a plan for the shelter's alternate location at the south end of the park in the plaza across from the Zoo entrance and near the guard shack which will present a similar quality of amenity to those Bridgeport residents who choose to enjoy the park on bicycle.

He said that people can park and go down to the plain overlooking the lake and it is still on the Pequonnock River trail and will offer more covered parking for bicycles.

Mr. Labrador asked who would be legally responsible if a bicycle was stolen and if signs would be put up noting such.

Mr. Robison said that the City is not legally responsible for the bikes that are parked there, and he understands that since there are many bicycle shelters throughout the City, it would be a park at your own risk situation.

Mr. Labrador said that he thinks that a sign should be posted.

Mr. Robison said that in that location there would be many people around and that would deter theft.

Ms. Wade asked if the Planning and Economic Development Office could install a sign.

May 12, 2020

Mr. Robison said that they potentially could.

Ms. Wade said that just because there are people around, they would not want to be responsible for having to watch the bicycles.

Mr. Burgos said that since the shelter will be on Parks Department property, who would ultimately be liable for the stolen bicycle.

Mr. Brideau said that it would be the same as a stolen vehicle.

Mr. Cotto said that signs stating that the City of Bridgeport is not responsible for stolen bicycles would be a help.

Mr. Burgos said that the location would have to also be reviewed due to the Zoo using the circle area for vehicles and buses.

On a motion made by Mr. Hosier seconded by Mr. Cotto it was unanimously voted to approve the request with the addendum that the possibility of a sign be put up with the proper wording and by the indemnity of the City through the City Attorney's Office.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Amy Hicks, Outreach Specialist, Public Outreach | Projects, Technical Services
180 Marsh Hill Road, 2nd Floor, Mail Stop AD-2C, Orange, CT UI, requesting to speak to the Board to discuss their submittal for a proposed substation rebuild on Kaechele Place.

Ms. Hicks introduced Richard Pinto, Project Manager and Todd Berman, Environmental Specialist and Kate Brennan who will do the presentation.

The following was submitted to the Board of Park Commissioners in regards to the proposed substation rebuild on Kaechele Place: To improve the bulk electric system in Connecticut and in particular the Greater Bridgeport area, The United Illuminating Company ("UI" or the "Company") proposes to rebuild its existing Old Town Substation, a 115/13.8-kilovolt (kV) transmission and distribution substation located at 280 Kaechele Place in the City of Bridgeport (the "Project"). The Project entails the construction and operation of a new 115/13.8-kV transmission and distribution substation, proposed to be built on an adjacent parcel to the existing substation on presently undeveloped, UI-owned property, also off Kaechele Place. After the new substation is placed into service, the existing Old Town Substation will be decommissioned. UI will file an application for the Project in the summer of this year with the Connecticut Siting Council ("CSC").

Mr. Pinto referred to the Old Town Road site plan that was submitted to the Board.

Mr. Pinto said that the new substation will be rebuilt and is located at the north west corner of Elton Rogers Park along Kaechele Place and south of Sequoia Drive.

May 12, 2020

He said that the new proposed substation will be rebuild just to the north of the existing substation, bordering the existing right of way and their property line on the west side of the existing substation.

Mr. Pinto said they are looking for an easement to acquire in order to get the lines into the substation.

Mr. Berman stated that the total easement is .1 acres.

Mr. Labrador asked how many trees would they need to have removed?

Mr. Berman said that on March 6, 2020, they went out to the site and did a census of trees greater than 6" in diameter and said that they would be removing approximately 10 trees greater than 6" in diameter for the easement.

Mr. Pinto said there will be a retaining wall of about 10' high with a slotted fence on top of the retaining wall.

Mr. Hladun asked if the 10 trees would be replaced as part of the re-landscaping plan.

Mr. Berman said that they are planning on adding more than 10 trees, but they will not be as mature as the ones that will be removed.

Mr. Pinto said that they will be placed inside along Kaechele Place and the north western boundary of the property line in front of the facility.

Mr. Brideau said that he was in favor of the project due to the betterment of the UI service in the north end.

Mr. Pinto said that that the current substation is 50 plus years old and they will be upgrading it to modern industry standards with state-of-the-art equipment and will provide long term reliability to the local region.

Mr. Nadrizny asked if the UI Company will be maintaining the area and wanted to know if they would be paying additional taxes on the increased area.

Mr. Pinto said that he is not sure how the taxes would work.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the Board should request legal services from the City Attorney's Office.

Annette Protos, UI Real Estate said as the property owner maintains the tax payments on the property, the UI Company will be encumbering the property with an easement arguably that diminishes the value of the property and may diminish tax owed.

May 12, 2020

She said that the easement would be valued with an appraisal and when they have the final design of the substation and they have a finite proposed easement area and it goes onto to a prepared survey and it is shared with the City, then they have the area appraised to find out the value of the easement.

On a motion made by Mr. Hosier seconded by Mr. Cotto, it was unanimously voted to approve the UI Company's easement proposal substation rebuild on Kaechele Place.

Mr. Hladun said that Eversource Energy is requesting a separate permanent easement so they can access the utility structures that transects Elton Rogers Park.

Mr. Pinto said that Eversource is asking permission for a permanent 25' easement to access towers behind the sub-station for maintenance and installation during construction.

Helen Tarif, Eversource Energy representative said that there will be limited tree removal on this easement, which was an old road used in the past and currently has gravel on it and will be used as the access road for this project.

Mr. Patel, Project Manager, Eversource Energy stated that they are working with the UI Company on the structure installation on the north east corner adjacent to the existing substation to access the structure for the maintenance and installation during construction.

Mr. Labrador asked that Mr. Hladun visit the site to make sure that there are not too many trees removed for this project.

Mr. Hladun said that he would visit the site along with UI and Eversource Energy representatives.

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Mr. Hosier it was unanimously voted to allow the UI Company and Eversource Energy to access the utility structures that transects Elton Rogers Park.

2. Jorge Cruz, Common Council Member, 131st District, 251 Black Rock Avenue, Apt. 2-R Bridgeport, CT and a member of the New Democratic Town Committee of the 131 District requesting to speak to the Board regarding Banners left on ball field home fences in multiple areas at Seaside Park by the Caribe League.

Mr. Cruz said that the banner issue creates a public safety hazard and should not be allowed to be hanging on ball field fences all summer long.

He also said that he does not see why a specific league should dominate the park with so many banners.

He is asking the Parks Board to not allow leagues to keep banners on ball field fences all summer long.

May 12, 2020

Mr. Labrador said that according to the Charter for the Parks Department the leagues may put up banners but should take them down at the end of the day.

Mr. Cruz said that this request for the removal of banners is coming on behalf of himself and Councilperson Denese Taylor-Moye.

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Mr. Hosier it was unanimously voted that all banners put on ball field fences should be taken down at the end of each day or the banners will be subject for removal by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

3. Charlie Dowd, Deputy Athletic Director, Sacred Heart University requesting to discuss a potential public/private partnership for the baseball facility at Veteran's Park.

On a motion made by Mr. Hosier seconded by Mr. Brideau, it was unanimously voted to table the request due to lack of representation.

4. Kenneth C. Baldwin, Robinson & Cole LLP, 280 Trumbull Street, Hartford, CT, requesting to speak to the Board regarding a proposal to use an undeveloped portion of the SHU campus acquired by SHU from the City of Bridgeport and have the City lift the development restriction in the deed to allow for the construction of a tower site and access driveway only, to be developed by Verizon Wireless.

Mr. Baldwin said that he represents Verizon Wireless in the request for the Park Board's consideration.

He said that Verizon Wireless is looking to install a telecommunications facility on a 6-acre parcel of land that is owned by the Diocese of Bridgeport adjacent to Sacred Heart University.

He said that this parcel was conveyed to Sacred Heart University and then ultimately to the Diocese of Bridgeport in 2016.

He said that the deed included a restriction on development anywhere on the parcel.

He said that the facility will consist of a telecommunications tower 120' tall and a 50' x 50' compound at the base of the tower and a short access road that will extend from a portion of the Sacred Heart University campus either from the northwest corner of the campus or from an existing cul-de-sac adjacent to the dormitories northeast of the facility.

Mr. Baldwin submitted a map that shows the 6-acre parcel that the Diocese of Bridgeport owns and is trying to seek relief from part of the deed restrictions.

He said that they are not looking for the complete removal of the deed restrictions, only to the extent necessary so that the telecommunications facilities could be built on that parcel.

He said he is here tonight to seek input and general acknowledgement from the Parks Board.

May 12, 2020

Mr. Baldwin said ultimately the matter would have to be approved by the City Council, but they would be looking for the Park Boards recommendation and comments on this proposal because of Park Board's involvement in the original transfer of that property from the City of Bridgeport to the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Mr. Labrador asked how the Diocese of Bridgeport become owner of the land.

Mr. Baldwin said the parcel of land was conveyed by Sacred Heart University to the Diocese of Bridgeport shortly after the City conveyed it to Sacred Heart University.

He said that a significant portion of the Sacred Heart University is owned by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Mr. Hosier asked if the restrictions on the deed were conveyed to the Diocese of Bridgeport?

Mr. Baldwin said that the deed that conveyed the property from Sacred Heart University to the Diocese of Bridgeport carried those restrictions with it.

Mr. Hosier said he does not see a reason to go against the deed restrictions.

Mr. Brideau and Ms. Wade also agreed.

On a motion made by Mr. Hosier, seconded by Ms. Wade, it was unanimously voted to deny the request.

5. Candice Peterkin, Sheisart Magazine LLC, 68 Gem Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to showcase local talent and art at the Seaside Park Band Shell, on Friday, July 17, 2020, from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., with between 150 – 200 people in attendance. Also requesting to have food at the event.

Mr. Labrador said that at this time we do not know if the parks will be open or in what capacity they will open, but we can reserve the dates with the stipulation that the present restrictions will be lifted.

On a motion made by Mr. Hosier, seconded by Ms. Wade, it was unanimously voted to approve the dates with the stipulation that the conditions allow based on State and local guidelines.

6. Chris Rogers, Town of Fairfield WPCA, requesting permission to utilize approximately 60' x 80' portion of the Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course parking lot as a temporary construction laydown area and for a field trailer from late May through October.

On a motion made by Mr. Hosier, seconded by Mr. Brideau, it was unanimously voted to table the request due to lack of representation.

May 12, 2020

7. Harry Trinidad, 15 Scuppo Road, Unit 301, Danbury, CT, requesting to play DJ music on the grassy area in front of the Seaside Park Casino Bathhouse Section 1, on 5/24, 6/7, 6/21, 7/5, 7/19, 8/2, 8/16, 8/30, 9/7, 9/13 & 9/27/2020 from 12:00 PM – 7:00 PM with 25 – 100 people.

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Ms. Hosier, it was unanimously voted to approve the dates with the stipulation that the conditions allow based on State and local guidelines.

REPORTS

CRAIG A. NADRIZNY, ACTING PUBLIC FACILITIES DIRECTOR

REQUESTS FOR MOTIONS:

- **D. FAIRCHILD WHEELER GOLF COURSE:** Request for a motion to approve the trade-in of the City's existing fleet of electric golf carts and enter a 4-year lease agreement for 120 new electric Golf Carts and related equipment with Wells Fargo, Club Car Inc.

Mr. Brideau asked if the City will get credit for the carts being traded in?

Mr. Hladun said yes, the trade-in value of the existing carts is estimated at a little over \$200,000.00.

On a motion made by Mr. Cotto, seconded by Ms. Wade, it was unanimously voted to approve the trade-in of the City's existing fleet of electric golf carts and enter a 4-year lease agreement for 120 new electric Golf Carts and related equipment with Wells Fargo, Club Car Inc.

- **MANILA PARK PLAYGROUND:** Request for a motion to approve the replacement of the existing playground with a new playset with swings, bench seating areas and plantings.

Mr. Hladun said that the present playground is from year 2000, so it is over 20 years now and needs to be replaced.

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Ms. Wade, it was unanimously voted to approve the request for the replacement of the existing Manila Park Playground with a new playset with swings, bench seating area and plantings.

- **NEWFIELD PARK:** Request for a motion to approve the Juneteenth Memorial Plaque to be placed on a stone with plantings along Jefferson Street near the picnic pavilion to commemorate the history of Juneteenth.

On a motion made by Ms. Wade, seconded by Mr. Brideau, it was unanimously voted to approve the Juneteenth Memorial Plaque to be placed on a stone with plantings along Jefferson Street near the picnic pavilion to commemorate the history of Juneteenth.

May 12, 2020

FOR DISCUSSION:

- Discussion of using credit cards for Park Stickers this season.

Mr. Hladun said that more and more people are using credit cards and their phones to process their payments and now with COVID-19 Pandemic, more people prefer to use credit cards instead of cash

Mr. Nadrizny said that times are changing, and most people do use credit or debit cards and it is safer than the transfer of cash during these times.

Ms. Wade asked if the price of stickers will be the same as last year?

Mr. Nadrizny said that right now there will be no change in price.

Mr. Brideau was in favor of the use of credit cards in the parks.

Park Projects:

- Comfort Station Renovations: An outside contractor is in the process of completing Beardsley Park. Public Facilities Building Maintenance Division is renovating Seaside Park Grove and Diamond 11. All shall be ADA compliant when completed.
- D. Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course: New Equipment Lease Agreement completed, and equipment has been received in early March.
- Seaside Park - PERRY MEMORIAL ARCH STUDY & ASSESSMENT: The consultant has started the project and is in the initial stages of their analysis of the structure.
- St. Mary's by the Sea Capozzi Preserve: Ash Creek Conservation Association continuing the partnership to maintain and make additional improvements.

Recreation Department

Ms. Conine said that they had to cancel Night Recreation, Swimming Academy and Swimming Lessons for this year and moving forward she wanted to thank Craig Nadrizny for being proactive with the safety of his staff and senior citizens.

She said that she is in favor of the City moving slowly on reopening the parks due to safety reasons.

Mr. Nadrizny wanted the Board to know that Public Facilities is still moving forward and working on a daily basis and getting things done.

Mr. Labrador hopes that the staff is held on the highest level for their health and safety during this time.

May 12, 2020

Mr. Nadrizny said that every employee has their temperature taken each morning and it is mandatory to wear a mask while on the job.

Mr. Labrador hopes that more Seasonal employees are hired to help maintain the parks.

Mr. Nadrizny said that right now we are hiring a minimal amount of seasonal employees, but the department will hire them as needed.

Mr. Hladun wanted to acknowledge Craig Nadrizny, Acting Public Facilities Director, Luis Burgos, Manager of Parks and Roadway, Ellen Gerrity, Payroll Clerk, Luann Conine, Recreation Superintendent, Lee Nastu, Recreation Coordinator and Angel DePara, Database Administrator for all their hard work on the Parks System Plan.

Mr. Nadrizny thanked Luis Burgos and his staff for their hard work with a minimal staff.

Mr. Labrador asked said that the Bridgeport parks are some of the nicest parks around and that he appreciates the hard work the staff puts into them.

Mr. Nadrizny had no further business.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Mr. Hosier, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Gerrity

Ellen M. Gerrity
Clerk