

June 9, 2020

The meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners was held on Tuesday, June 9, 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: 951 0976 6318

<https://zoom.us/j/95109766318>

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 MAY 12, 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, May 12, 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, June 9th.***

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No one signed up for the Public Speaking Forum.

OLD BUSINESS

1. 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 could not make the meeting.

2. 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.

3. Mr. Frederick T. Garrity Jr., Director, CT United Ride, in conjunction with the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of CT (UPFFA of CT) requesting to update the Commissioners on their new plans for the 20th Annual CT United Ride" Seaside Park on Sunday, August 30, 2020.

Mr. Garrity said that the Park Board approved his event at February 11, 2020 Parks Board meeting and he would like to update them about his event.

He said that they are in the process with the State DOT in Norwalk and other towns to get the traffic plan approved. He said that several towns have already approved the plan including Bridgeport.

He said that have made some changes at the start location and at the ending location in Bridgeport.

He said that the riders, Fire Fighters and Police are always distanced apart within the motorcade.

Mr. Garrity said that they will feed the riders at Seaside Park with pre-made hot dogs and hamburgers as usual which will expedite the line and seating will have proper distancing in place.

He said there will be no speeches or reason for people to gather into a single large crowd.

He also said that there will be limited vendors.

Mr. Garrity said he will work with the Public Works Department to ensure that all social distancing is in place.

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On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Mr. Cotto it was unanimously voted to approve the event with the new social distancing in place.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Vinnie Brand owner of The Stress Factory Bridgeport, 167 State Street, Bridgeport, CT and Harlen Haus, requesting to use McLevy Park on Saturday, June 20, 2020, as an outdoor dining area for a fundraiser to benefit first responders.

Ms. Wade asked if the parks are opening for all events or just this one.

Mr. Roach said that he understands that different events have been canceled due to COVID-19, because of social distancing, but this is a unique request due to it being an extension of the outdoor dining area where social distancing guidelines will be strictly adhered to.

He said that the event involves tables with reserved seating where the six-foot rule would apply.

Mr. Roach submitted a map where the tables are mapped out for seating.

He said that they have had discussions with Public Facilities, Police, Fire, Zoning and the Health Department.

Mr. Brideau asked if this would be a onetime event.

Mr. Roach said that if the event is successful, they may come back before the Board to reapply for others.

He said the initial event would be a benefit.

Mr. Roach said that the City is also trying to help keep downtown business' running since they have been closed for a while.

Mr. Roach said that all net profits from this event will go the First Responders.

Mr. Cotto asked if there was a breakdown of what percent will be going to the first responders.

He said that on this first event the expenses coming out of the event would be for the comedian, and some workers, but most of the staff will be donating their time. He does not think his expenses will be substantial, and he will open his books up to the City after their event is done.

Mr. Brand said that he and his wife have been in business for a long time and their commitment to the Bridgeport community is significant.

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He said that this event will not make his business survive, but what he is trying to do is give people hope, keep the comedy club in the forefront of people's minds, and offer the hospital support because the first responders have been under tremendous stress.

Mr. Brand said that in order to make this event successful they would have to move on it very quickly.

Mr. Cotto asked how the Board would explain to others who were holding their free event for the people of Bridgeport, and who have had their event canceled because of COVID-19, that the Park Board is allowing another business to hold their event during this pandemic.

Mr. Brand said that he thinks that his event would be done safely by controlling his event with the selling of tickets only and that all social distancing will be adhered to with tables being at least six feet apart.

Mr. Cotto said that usually people provide a general breakdown of the monies that they receive.

Mr. Brand said that presently he is not sure of what his costs will be since all comedian's costs are different and they have not booked one yet.

He said that the costs would be for the comedian, some staff and cleanup and all other proceeds will go directly to the First Responders.

Ms. Wade said that the Board would receive a backlash from people who had to cancel their events.

Ms. Conine stated that she is in favor of the event since Mr. Brand has a plan in effect and will follow all guidelines, she is in favor of approving an event that will help the First Responders.

Mr. Labrador stated that he does not think it is a good idea to allow one business to have an event at McLevy Park because it will open the park up to other business asking to use the park.

Ms. Wade agreed with Mr. Labrador.

Mr. Brand wanted the Board to know that he and his wife have a significant emotional commitment to Bridgeport.

He said that for the last five weeks they have done free Zoom shows for their customers such as the Fairfield County Social Service workers who have been under a lot of pressure from people suffering from domestic violence, and increased drug and alcoholism problems from COVID-19.

They also made \$160,000 for Fairfield County Boy's and Girl's Club.

Mr. Brand said that they have not kept one cent from any of these shows.

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He said that they would like to show people that shows can be done safely and that businesses can continue to contribute to the emotional and financial wellbeing of an area.

Mr. Brand said that he understands the Board's apprehension, of letting them have the event, but he hopes that the Board will take him at his word that he would submit a complete breakdown of costs.

Mr. Hladun said that the Parks Board had not denied any event permit requests. The Department and the Board had made all permit requests subject to state, local and federal guidelines during COVID and are required to adhere to the City's policies during the pandemic.

Mayor Ganim stated that this should be a good event and that it should follow all COVID-19 guidelines and if any issues should come up that are substantive before this event, he will certainly make the Board aware.

Mr. Cotto said that this request should not be different than any other event held in the parks and they should abide by the Park Board rules.

Mayor Ganim also stated that the City of Bridgeport is partnering with Mr. Brand so he does not know if they will need the Park Board's approval for the event, but out of respect to the Board they would.

Mr. Hosier made a motion to approve the event, seconded by Mr. Brideau to set aside the date for the event based upon that COVID-19 guidelines and Mayoral approval and that guidelines are adhered to, Mr. Cotto voted no and Ms. Wade voted no; Mr. Labrador voted in favor, therefore breaking the tie, and the motion passed.

Mr. Brand thanked the Board for their vote and as soon as he is able, he will give the Commissioner a full breakdown of the cost for his event.

ADDED:

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:

New Business

1. Rowena White, Director of Communications, Office of the Mayor, and Gina Malheiro, Director of City Events and Special Projects, Office of the Mayor/Office of Planning and Economic Development requesting to speak to the Board regarding the following:

The city would like to present a proposal to the Parks Commission that outlines a co-sponsorship between the City's D. Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course and a regional Media Outlet.

The Media outlet is requesting to host a Golf Tournament at Fairchild Wheeler on August 14, 2020. The City is requesting consideration of this proposal and partnership. It is an opportunity to earn free media that will directly benefit Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course.

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Mrs. Malheiro introduced Shannon Begley, Connoisseur Media.

Ms. Begley said that this event is a golf tournament being put on by 99.1 PLR which is part of Connoisseur Media.

Ms. Begley said the event is the 22nd Mike Lapitino Golf Classic which will be held on Friday, August 14, 2020, at the Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course.

She said that the tournament is promoted on-air and on-line and benefits Griffin Hospital's Hewitt Center for Breast Wellness that supports the local community. Over the years this golf tournament has raised over \$300,000 for the cause.

She said that they are looking for a way to tie it into Bridgeport since it is being held on Bridgeport property.

She said that as the course sponsor, Fairchild Wheeler and The City of Bridgeport will have the opportunity to bring a minimum of 100 golfers to the course and can be a part of this great community event on-air, online and onsite tournament.

She said that they will follow all CDC guidelines and safety procedures.

Fairfield Wheeler Golf Course will be included in all on-air promotional announcements and get their own commercial spots to promote the golf course.

Mr. Brideau asked if she had spoken with the Golf Pro Stephen Roach?

Ms. Begley said she has, and he has booked the date for them.

Mr. Brideau also asked if she was aware that only one person is currently allowed in a golf cart at a time.

Ms. Begley said she is aware, and they are prepared to rent 100 golf carts and rent more from the outside if needed.

Ms. Wade said that she approves of the event and their charity and noted that breast cancer runs in her family.

Mr. Brideau also approved of the event and noted that he too has breast cancer in his family.

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Ms. Wade, it was unanimously voted to approve the event with the usual stipulations.

2. Reverend Sara Smith, (United Congregational Church), and non-profit (Nourish Bridgeport, Inc.) requesting to again run the Stratfield Saturday Farmer's Market in Clinton Park (at the corner of Brooklawn and North), from June 20, 2020 – October 3, 2020 from 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

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They are requesting to use the Stratfield Park portion of Clinton Park. It has entrances and the black fence and wall - which will help control access and numbers of people, and people flow, whereas Clinton Park does not. It is too wide open to adequately monitor these safety protocols.

Heidi Vanderwal , Market Director spoke on behalf of the event.

Ms. Vanderwal stated that in order for the Stratfield Saturday Market to follow the Governor's safety protocols, they will limit the number of people in the market at one time, everyone must wear a mask, social distancing from the vendors, people will come and go and there will be no staying, they will have one entrance and one exit.

She also said that they will not have music played at the event as they did last year.

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Ms. Wade it was unanimously voted to approve the event with the usual stipulations.

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Mr. Hosier, it was unanimously voted to add Carolyn Vermont to the agenda.

Ms. Vermont said that since the shooting of George Floyd, a number of groups have had rally's at McLevy Park.

She said that a member of the Redemption Church of Love would like to use McLevy Park to hold a peaceful, prayerful rally on June 27, 2020, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

She said that they would have approximately 50 people at the event and that the rally will include speakers and preaching and things along that line.

Mr. Brideau said that they would have to follow all the CDC guidelines related to social distancing.

Ms. Vermont said that they will absolutely follow the CDC guidelines and will wear masks and have social distancing.

On a motion made by Mr. Hosier, seconded by Ms. Wade, it was unanimously voted to approve the event with the usual stipulations.

REPORTS

CRAIG A. NADRIZNY, ACTING PUBLIC FACILITIES DIRECTOR

Mr. Hladun spoke on behalf of Mr. Nadrizny.

Park Projects:

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- Comfort Station Renovations: Renovations are nearly complete at Beardsley Park by an outside contractor, and at Seaside Grove and Iranistan & Waldemere by Public Facilities Building Maintenance.
- Capozzi open space preserve at St. Mary's By the Sea: Recently several trees were planted, and soil spread for clover seeding as part of a second phase of the public/private partnership with the Ash Creek Conservation Association.
- D. Fairchild Wheeler Memorial Golf Course: Re-opened on May 15, 2020. Entrance Planting bed at welcome sign is in the process of being renovated with help from Public Facilities Building Maintenance. Golf Cart lease agreement being prepared by City Attorney's Office for final processing/delivery within the month of June.
- MANILA PARK PLAYGROUND: Playground Equipment scheduled to deliver in early July. Preparation work including removal of the existing playground to begin a few weeks prior.
- Parks Reopening Plan During Covid-19: Resident Park Stickers sold at Central High School Alternate venue from May 18-20. Beardsley & Seaside Park Checkpoints opened on May 21. Restrooms at Beardsley All Inclusive Playground, Seaside West Beach & Casino Bathhouse opened on May 23, as well as Park Checkpoints were able to start processing credit cards. Park hours extended on June 1, 2020 to 8AM-6PM Daily, with checkpoints open for resident sticker purchases from 8AM – 4PM. Parking capacity has been limited to 30% in first phase as well as other park restrictions such as Bridgeport residents only, wear masks when in proximity to others, social distancing, no grilling, etc. Thank you to all City Departments and City residents who made the Memorial Day Weekend and the first few weeks of the park season opening a success! We thank you!

Seaside Park PERRY MEMORIAL ARCH STUDY & ASSESSMENT: Consultant is to start inspection week with aerial lift second week of June.

Mr. Nadrizny had no further business.

Mr. Labrador said that he has been a member of the Board of Park Commissioners since 2007.

He said that he believes that the Board of Park Commissioners do their best in making pertinent decisions for the community at their monthly meetings and feels dissatisfied with the way the Parks Board has been treated by the Administration.

He voiced his concerns on their role within the Parks and Recreation Department on a daily basis.

Mr. Labrador complimented the Parks and Recreation Department employees and the hard work they do every day.

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Mr. Labrador ended by saying to the Park Board and employees to please stay safe, stay healthy and blessed because without the good Lord's help we would get nothing done.

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