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## SPECIAL PARKS BOARD MEETING AGENDA

JUNE 28, 2021 - 5:00 PM

A Special Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference. The public may listen into this meeting by calling the following conference line and then entering the conference code:

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### 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, and Stephen Hladun, Special Project Manager. with Angel DePara, Database Administrator, presiding as host of the meeting.

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

### GUESTS

1. Adam Safi, TAD Productions, LLC, 3535 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to hold a concert at the Seaside Park Band Shell on Saturday, September 24, 2022, with set-up dates of September 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, and break down and clean up on Sunday, September 25, 2022, Gates open at 12:30pm | First Act at 2:30pm | End at 12:00AM.

Mr. Safi said that he is joined this evening by associates Dario Pugliano and Tyler Murray.

Mr. Labrador said that he has gone over their event proposal and asked the Park Commissioners if they had any questions for Mr. Safi about his proposal.

Mr. Hosier asked Mr. Safi to give the Park Commissioners an overview of what they want to do.

Mr. Safi said that they want to hold a one day all day concert at Seaside Park, predominantly either hip hop or EDM music and that they are targeting local college students in the area from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield University, Yale University of New Haven, Quinnipiac University of Connecticut and the University of Connecticut in Stamford, CT.

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He said that they would like to style the one-day event like a Gathering of the Vibes type event, or similar setup.

He said that they would like to have a lot of local businesses participate in food vending and selling merchandise and they just want everyone to have a good time and stimulate the local community.

He said that they were all graduates of Sacred Heart University and when the kids get back to campus every year, the first week there is not a lot going on, and they don't have a lot of classes and people want to get to know their other classmates in their new environment, so they were thinking of busing the school kids from Sacred Heart University down Park Avenue and having most of their guests come by train.

Mr. Safi said that they want to orchestrate a safe and enjoyable entertaining event that they would like to continue to do annually, if possible.

He also said that previously, Miss Wade had raised the concern of the age of the people in attendance at the event and that they are open to making it an 18-year-old plus event as opposed to a 16-year-old plus.

He said that this is something that they are very happy to do now, and they really want to work with the City of Bridgeport and want to start a long-term relationship and can really see this as a bright opportunity.

Mr. Safi that that they are three college educated hard working professionals, and this is not a full-time job for them, but they would want to make this a full-time job if the cards are in their favor.

Mr. Safi said that that Seaside Park is a great park that is underutilized and has beautiful views of the sound and they would really like to share this with the Community, but he does not think he even knows what five miles will be down the road.

Mr. Labrador said that he has a couple of questions he would like to ask them.

He said that he looked at the pictures of the mapped event they submitted as far as parking and where the entrances to the event would be, with one of the entrances on Iranistan Avenue and another would on Park Avenue going through the Perry Memorial Arches.

He also noticed where the Bridgeport Police Department would be stationed

Mr. Safi said that the staff and the performers would come in through the arches on the outbound side and the inbound side would be where the guests would walk through and go through security screening with a wand and if the City would like them to have drug dogs that is something that they could have there.

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Mr. Labrador said that he is more concerned about the area where people are going to get into and out of the event.

Mr. Labrador asked about the vendor tents.

Mr. Safi said that they would have 6'x 6' popup tents for vendors and they will also have food trucks.

Mr. Safi said that the only permit that would be needed is a building permit for the stage and they have a professional staging company that has worked with some of the largest concerts in the country and they would get all the documentation that would be needed

He said the stage is like an accordion that they fit in the back of an 18-wheeler, so it is all up to code.

Mr. Labrador asked how many porta potties they will have?

Mr. Safi said that they are looking at getting 220 deluxe porta potties, 10 handicap, and a couple of VIP porta potties for the artists.

He said they will also have 50 sink stations which will have six nozzles each.

He said that they spoke with the porta potty company and they said that is what they recommend for the amount of people they will have.

Mr. Labrador said that he thinks that the amount of people they have coming to the park for one day is a little too much for him, but that is his opinion.

Mr. Hosier asked of the vendors they have secured for the event; how many are from the City of Bridgeport?

Mr. Safi said that currently none of the vendors have been secured because at this point everything is tentative because they do not know if they will be able to get the park, so they have not finalized anything as of yet.

He did say that out of the 21 vendors listed 6 are from Bridgeport, and all the others would be from the Fairfield County area.

He said that this is tentative and if the Commissions want them to get more vendors from Bridgeport, that is someone they would like to prioritize.

Mr. Safi also addressed Mr. Labrador's concern about the amount of people in attendance; he said that if 15,000 to 20,000 is too many people, is 10,000 to 15,000 too many or 10,000 too many?

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He said that if the numbers they said are too high, they would be willing to work with the City because they would like to have a good relationship with the City that continues for a long time.

He said that he thinks this relationship would be beneficial for TAD Productions and the City of Bridgeport.

Mr. Labrador said that he does not want Mr. Safi to misunderstand him because he understands promoters, and he knows that as a business they need the numbers to get revenue; he is just trying to visualize the event himself and it would not be fair for him to say.

Mr. Safi thanked Mr. Labrador.

Mr. Safi mentioned that their numbers would be half of what the Gathering of the Vibes had.

Ms. Wade said that that she thought it was a State Law for anyone under the age of 21 to drink.

Mr. Safi said that she is correct in that you must be age 21 years of age to drink in the State of Connecticut.

Ms. Wade said that she is not comfortable with kids attending the event under 21 years of age.

Mr. Pugliano said that Ms. Wade's concerns are addressed with the two booths that they will have while checking in.

He said that the first booth would be to check in so, if they are above 21 years or older and they want to drink, they would get a wristband, and they would show them their ID, they would then go to the 21 plus booth and they would give them the proper wristband and they would show their ID again.

Mr. Pugliano said that this is how they will filter out the people who are younger than 18 years of age; so, there are checks and procedures that they will implement to avoid any situations like that.

Ms. Wade asked what they would do if someone had a fake ID?

Mr. Pugliano said that their security team is advanced enough to detect that.

Mr. Safi said that they will also have the same method the Police Department uses to determine whether an ID is real or fake.

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Mr. Safi said that they are hiring a private security team that are professionals and have many years of experience.

Mr. Safi said that they are not going to say that nothing will happen, but if anything were to happen, everything will be taken care of and done in a very responsible manner.

He said that they are going to hope for the best but will prepare for the worst.

Mr. Cotto said that he sees that they have a P listed on their map for police in their proposal, but the only place he sees that is at the entrance of the event.

Mr. Pugliano said that the locations are preliminary because the police do not want them to go through the City Police Department until they have received Park Board approval.

He said that they will have police coverage wherever the Bridgeport Police Department designates them to have it.

Mr. Cotto said that he is a retired Police Officer, and he has never seen a setup like the one they have in their proposal, he said that the police are needed inside the fenced in area.

Mr. Murray said that the Police will migrate into the event area after the event has started and there will never be a blind area when it comes to Police coverage.

Mr. Labrador said that there are a lot of uncertainties of the way they want this event to come across and he is not comfortable.

Mr. Hosier said that based on the proposal that was presented to the Board of Park Commissioners, this event does not fit with what the City of Bridgeport and Park Board is looking to hold at this time.

Mr. Hosier made a motion to deny the event.

Mr. Safi said that he would like to have another meeting with the Public Facilities, Health, Police and Fire Departments, and all departments involved so that everyone is on the same page.

He said that would be the normal process.

Mr. Labrador said that the usual process is if the Parks Board feels comfortable with any requested event and they approve the event, the next step is to get signoffs from the various City Departments.

Mr. Safi asked if the event could be postponed and not denied tonight.

Mr. Labrador said that there is a motion on the floor.

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On a motion made by Mr. Hosier, seconded by Mr. Cotto, it was unanimously voted to deny the event.

2. Efrain Colon, Puerto Rican Parade of Fairfield County Inc., 50 Harding Avenue, Stratford, CT, requesting to end the Puerto Rican Parade and hold their festival at the Seaside Park Band Shell. on Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Mr. Labrador read the request from the Puerto Rican Parade of Fairfield County Inc.:

“We are requesting permission to use the bandshell on Sunday, July 11, 2021. The bandshell area will be used to hold a vaccine clinic for 6 hours and during that time we will have a band playing live music for two hours of two sets. Once they are done playing, a DJ will continue with entertainment.

We plan to have 5 food vendors, and informational tables.

We would like to hang the flag on Saturday, July 10, 2021, on the bandshell, followed by removal of the flag on Monday, July 12, 2021.

The PRPFC needs the following:

5 golf carts – The golf carts will be used to supervise each division component throughout the parade route.

Walkie Talkies.

Picnic tables – two under the tree by the pond, two near the band shell and a few others (2) away from the bandshell and one each in front of the food vendors.

Enough garbage barrels on the perimeter and inside of the event.

Make sure that those attending the event are not ticketed by the Police Department.

Mr. Labrador said that he understands everything is happening at the last minute and he appreciates what they are asking for.

He said that the Board approved their event partially at an earlier meeting and asked the other commissioners if they had any questions or concerns about the additional request.

Mr. Labrador asked Mr. Colon if this request is in addition to their earlier request?

Mr. Colon said that he is correct.

Ms. Wade said that she read their proposal and it seemed to be more like a list of demands rather than a request.

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She said that she thinks that this additional request should have been asked for in their initial proposal.

Mr. Hosier said that he personally would like to see a more detailed request come before the board.

He said that he knows that they have done this in the past and it has been very successful, but he is concerned with not having something concrete in front of him to read and with the Board just approving something based on the past.

Mr. Colon said that he is aware that the Police Department no longer has walkie talkies available for them to use.

Mr. Cotto asked if the walkie talkies were to be in communication with the Police Department?

Mr. Colon said that they would have been used for communication between coordinators on the parade route.

Mr. Colon said that the walkie talkies should not have been on their list, so he apologizes for that.

Gina Malheiro, Director of City Events with the City of Bridgeport and said she was on the meeting tonight to give support to the Puerto Rican Parade of Fairfield County

She said that to fill in some of the gaps here, as far as the walkie talkies are concerned, it is in fact true, they did reach out to Scott Appleby at the EOC, and they no long have walkie talkies.

She said that this event is very similar to what they've had in the past, they have been in touch with the police department, as far as the parade is concerned and the police department is well aware that they want to have this event, but are also well aware that they had to go before the Parks Board to revise their application, so the police department is waiting to hear the Park Board's decision on this, so that they can discuss police detail for the parade and the event after.

Mr. Labrador said that his concern right now is that they are trying to take a parade that was going to be small scale and try to do a larger event in just two weeks' time.

Mr. Colon said that Councilwoman Maria Valle and Councilwoman President Aidee Nieves are here tonight and could explain the event in more detail.

City Council Maria Valle 137th District thanked President Labrador for allowing her to speak to the Board.

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She said that first, she wanted the Parks Board to know that their event list was more of a list for their committee and what will be needed at their event; it was not a demand.

She said that they are requesting to hold a small-scale event at the Band Shell and area, with a vaccine clinic, one band to play to attract the people to come in to be vaccinated and a DJ after that: and one food truck on site.

She said that the most important thing is to get the people vaccinated and to cover as much ground as they could to get folks vaccinated because she knows that less than half a month ago, they received a report that in Bridgeport only 23,000 people were vaccinated; it may have increased a little, but they have 140,000 plus residents in Bridgeport, and they need the ones that have not yet been vaccinated to do so.

City Council President Aidee Nieves thanked the Board for giving her the opportunity to speak, but tonight she is not acting as Council President, she is speaking on behalf of the Puerto Rican Parade and Festival Committee.

She thanked Mr. Labrador for allowing her to access Seaside Park to allow them to have their mobile vaccine units there in the past and that they also had one of their units at the Juneteenth Parade.

She said that through Grossman Solutions they were able to have a mobile vaccine unit throughout the City of Bridgeport and at community events and thought that since they were having the Puerto Rican Parade, they would try to get the Band Shell area for their vaccine clinic.

Ms. Nieves said that since Police Chief Garcia does have safety concerns for anything on a large-scale event, this will definitely be a small-scale event.

She said that they scaled the event down to just have a few vendors with some food and a DJ, and she is hoping that this can be a consideration because they have seen the successes of the vaccine clinics in the parks and today, 20 people were vaccinated at Seaside Park.

Ms. Nieves said that these small clinics are successful, so she is asking the Parks Board for their consideration, not as the City Council President, but as a person who is working to ensure that their communities are getting vaccinated.

Mr. Labrador said that he had the pleasure of going to the Puerto Rican Day Parade and Festival for many years and in the past, they have been successful with a bare minimal of incidents and no one can fully guarantee that something can happen.

Mr. Labrador thanked Council President Nieves and Councilwoman Valle for clearing things up for him, as to the size of the event, the vaccination clinic, one band, DJ and one food vendor and the walkie talky situation; but the other Board member may have other questions or concerns.



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Mr. Hosier thanked them for clearing up his concerns and questions in that the event will be on a much smaller scale.

He also said that he thoroughly supports the vaccination attempts and that this is extremely important for our City.

Ms. Wade said that she is all in favor of a vaccine clinic; but does not want the City to open themselves up to favoritism.

She said that there will be other people who will try to claim that this is favoritism, who will bring a similar request to the Board and not get approved.

Mr. Hosier said that the Puerto Rican Day Parade has been in existence for years and there is a precedence, and of what we expect of them.

Ms. Wade said that she is not against the Puerto Rican Parade and Festival, she is worried about favoritism

Mr. Brideau said that he agrees with Commissioner Wade and that it does show favoritism.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he has no issue or concerns and thinks it will be a small event as they expressed, and he knows that the City has worked well with them in the past and that they are getting better and better every year.

He said that this event is for a good cause and thinks that the Parks Board should support it.

Mr. Hladun said that the Parks Department has prepped in previous years and he knows that the festival is pretty well attended, and that one of the biggest concerns is making sure that there is adequate preparation if a lot of people show up because it is pretty well attended.

It's great to get everybody out and vaccinated but just make sure that those measures are in place to facilitate them so everyone can enjoy the event safely.

Ms. Malheiro said that she has been involved with this organization for the last six years since she has been working for the City as the City Events Director and they have it well organized and we have never had a problem with their organization and the police, fire, and public facilities have all been on board with the event and there has never been a problem and it was always well attended, and she thinks it's something that the community needs at this time.

She said that this is not something new it's something that we have had in the city for years.

Mr. Labrador said that he did see on social media, on another event, beautiful pictures of the event, but there was also an issue where individuals who took it upon themselves to park on our grassy fields, which the Parks Board would never have approved.

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He said that if there was damage done to the fields, who would be responsible to fix the damage.

He said that the Parks Board has to be aware of approvals that they give to organizations because their name is on that approval.

Ms. Valle said that she respects what Mr. Labrador said, however, she would like to clear up a few things.

She said that this is not favoritism because they've been doing this parade and festival for 20 plus years, and because the event's rules and regulations were lifted by the City, they came upon this late, but were able to get this off the ground.

She also said that that this is a smaller sized event than usual, they will not have popular bands coming in, and they will only have a smaller group playing for a couple of hours and then they have a DJ for the duration of the vaccine program.

She also wanted to recognize and thank each of the Commissioners for the work that they do and the importance of protecting our parks.

Ms. Wade said that the Board would not vote due to favoritism, but because word will get around, she believes that some people will take this as favoritism.

Mr. Labrador said that he feels that the Parks Board makes their decision on what is the best fit for the community.

He said that the Parks Board has held their ground in making decisions and has not let politics or other outside influences make their decisions for them.

Mr. Cotto asked if they were having a police presence during their park event?

He said that they are waiting to talk to the Bridgeport Police Department again with regards to how many police will be needed at their event to help cover safety and security.

Mr. Colon said that he wanted the Board to know that they respect all the guidelines that are set up and will abide by all the rules.

He said that in regard to parking on the grass, as they've done in the past, they only give out special permits to the people in their organization that need to park and only park a few cars there.

Mr. Labrador asked the Park Commissioners if there were no other questions, to make a motion for the event.

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Mr. Cotto made a motion to approve the event, seconded by Mr. Hosier. Ms. Wade and Mr. Brideau abstained. Mr. Labrador broke the tie and voted to approve the request and the motion passed, with the usual stipulations.

Councilwoman Nieves wanted Mr. Labrador to know that the earlier event he mentioned, people were parking on the grass because the out of out-out-town guests were being ticketed.

Councilwoman Valle said that the vendors and band members will be the only people allowed to park next to the band shell.

Mr. Colon said that they are asking the participants to park at the Iranistan Avenue baseball diamond parking lot.

He said they will ask the Police Department not to ticket anyone in that location.

Mr. Colon thanked the Park Commissioners.

Mr. Labrador announced that Ellen Gerrity, Clerk of the Board is retiring from the Department of Parks and Recreation Department after forty-two and a half years and therefore this will be her last Parks Board Meeting.

He said that this is a bittersweet moment for him, the Parks Board, Public Facilities Department and City of Bridgeport.

He said that she has been special to him from day one and holds a special place in his heart not only as an employee in the Parks and Recreation Department but for what she means to the Parks Board and had been number one with him from the start.

Ms. Conine said that Ellen has been in the Parks Department for many years and has helped anyone who has asked her for information over the years and did it with a smile, including looking up information for the City Attorney's Office in the Parks and Recreation archive files, and we will miss her for everything she has done for the Parks and Recreation Department and everyone over the years.

Councilwoman Valle said that it breaks her heart to hear that Ellen is leaving, she said that she is one heck of an individual and she has always been there for the Puerto Rican Parade and Festival over the years and was also there when she needed personal help; she listened to her and advised her, she saw her cry and saw her pain and she knew how to quiet it down.

She said that she loves Ellen too and hopes that this is only but a nightmare that we are hearing, and she hopes that she is not really leaving us; she said that we need more people like her.

She said God bless her and we really hope she will stay.

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Ms. Valle mentioned that Luann is also a fighter and who sometimes is not listened to but is also greatly appreciated.

Mr. Hosier wished Ellen much love and will miss her.

Ms. Wade said that she will miss Ellen and appreciates the first time she met her at the Parks Board meeting and said that she treated her like she's known her forever.

She said that Ellen has stood on her porch many days talking to her and she will miss those talks and will miss her.

She told her to enjoy her retirement because she deserves it.

Mr. Brideau said that he has spoken to Ellen many times and he has really enjoyed all the information about the Parks Department that she shared with him, and it has been wonderful meeting with her and wishes her the best of luck.

Mr. Cotto said that he recently came on the Board and has also retired recently devoting 43 years of his life to the City of Bridgeport as a Bridgeport Policer Officer.

He said that he will miss her, and she will be missed by a lot of people that know her and don't know her.

Mr. Cotto told Ellen to go in peace and enjoy her retirement.

City Council President Aidee Nieves said that she wanted to wish Ellen the best of luck in her retirement and to enjoy her retirement time.

She said that she knows that she has committed her entire life to the City of Bridgeport and the residents of Bridgeport owe her a debt of gratitude.

She said for herself, she just wants to say it's been a pleasure to know her, to work with her and listen to her and she respects her raising her voice very profoundly and she said that she does not know if she could do what she does, but she wanted to say that she is a great woman and there are going to be some large shoes to fill in the Public Facilities Department and Parks Department as well.

She said God Bless her and she hopes she enjoys her retirement and hopefully we can all get together and have some wine with her at one of the parks.

Ms. Gerrity thanked everyone for their kind wishes and said she will miss them all.

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

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ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Brideau, seconded by Mr. Cotto, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ellen M. Gerrity*

Ellen M. Gerrity  
Clerk