

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BOARD OF PARKS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 9, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Banjed Labrador, Acting President; Cruz M. Cotto, Lee Grisby, John Mark Hosier, Lillian Wade

OTHERS: Angel DePara, Special Project Manager; Tatiana Urena, Parks Department; Steve Hladun, Parks Department; Patricia Rowe, Special Projects Coordinator; Louis Burgos, Parks Department; Luann Conine, Recreation; Henry Vehslage from Groundworks Bridgeport; Bob Keeley, Orcutt Boys and Girls Club

OPENING CEREMONY / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Labrador called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He noted that the meeting was being conducted via Zoom.

Commissioner Labrador led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Urena called the roll and announced that a quorum was present on the call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF:

• JULY 6, 2022 (SPECIAL MEETING)

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 6, 2022 SPECIAL MEETING.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 6, 2022 SPECIAL MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

• JULY 12, 2022 (REGULAR MEETING)

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 12, 2022 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** COMMISSIONER WADE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 12, 2022 REGULAR MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM:

The public may call the office of Parks and Recreation at 203-576-7234 and speak with Tatiana Urena or email her at tatiana.urena@bridgeportct.gov to sign-up for Public Speaking.

Commissioner Labrador announced that no one had signed up for Public Speaking.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Maria Pereira, Councilwoman 138th District, motion of approval on the Dog park fencing at Success Park for separate areas and access for large and small dogs.

Commissioner Labrador was told that Council Member Pereira was aware of the meeting, but was involved in the election, so Ms. Patricia Rowe would be addressing the Commission on the subject.

Ms. Rowe said that at the last site visit, the Parks Board reached a consensus that there should be separate areas for dogs with one for the large dogs and a second one with a separate entrance for small dogs. She said that she had a fencing company that is working with the City, measured and provided her with a plan for the area. The cost for the fencing will be \$15,585.50, which is significantly more than the original amount of \$13,000 for one large space.

Ms. Rowe went on to say that she had spoken with Mr. Hladun about the signage, which should cost about \$200 for the sign, hardware and labor. The Department has inhouse sources for mulching. The new park space will require additional maintenance and the cost for that has not been determined at this time. If this is approved, it would most likely take about six to eight weeks for the chain link fencing to be delivered and installed.

A discussion followed about doggie bags and waste disposal. Commissioner Labrador stated that if the dog owners do not clean up behind their animals, the park will be closed. Ms. Rowe said that there are four other dog parks and the times of use would be consistent with the other dog parks.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM OB-1 MARIA PEREIRA, COUNCILWOMAN 138TH DISTRICT, MOTION OF APPROVAL ON THE DOG PARK FENCING AT. SUCCESS PARK FOR SEPARATE AREAS AND ACCESS FOR LARGE AND SMALL DOGS.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Christina Smith, 1001 Main Street, Suite 16, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Run/Walk at Seaside Park on Saturday, October 22, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for approximately 150 people in attendance.

Ms. Urena explained that she had received a message that Ms. Smith was not able to be on the call, but Mr. Henry Vehslage from Groundworks Bridgeport was present to address the Commissioners.

Mr. Vehslage said that he was representing Ms. Smith, the Executive Director of Groundwork, and also Mr. Bob Keeley from Orcutt Boys and Girls Club for the project. He said that they were working with an individual who organizes walk and runs. The goal is to get people out into the green public spaces.

Mr. Keeley then addressed the Commissioners and said that the goal was to have the community to have fun and build on the project for many years to come.

Commissioner Labrador asked if this would be done on the sidewalks or streets. Mr. Vehslage said that the planner had staged other 5K events and believed it would be on the sidewalk.

Mr. Burgos said that every run that had been done at Seaside had been a success and there were no problems. Mr. Hladun said that the route does go towards the casino bathhouse and there are some portion where the runners are using the roadways in the park. He said that he thought that they would need to get the police approval.

Discussion followed about the fact that the beaches are closed in October.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 1. CHRISTINA SMITH, 1001 MAIN STREET, SUITE 16, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A RUN/WALK AT SEASIDE PARK ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2022 FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 11:00 A.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 150 PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS

• Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Labrador reminded everyone that the hot weather caused the grass to dry out and that the staff had been working on the weed whacking. The City has a lot of parks and that means a lot of garbage cans and trash. He said that while they are creating parks wherever they can, but every time a new park is created, it requires more man hours and maintenance. He said that

often the Parks Department ends up with more parks, but less help and equipment. The Department can just about handle the amount of parks they have. Now is the time to remind the Council Members and those on the Budget Committee, that these parks require budget funding. There are not only Bridgeport residents who enjoy Seaside Park but out of towners also. It takes time to maintain sports fields. The goal is to provide more man power and maintaining the equipment. Discussion followed.

• **Director's Report** – Craig A. Nadrizny, Acting Public Facilities Director

Mr. Hladun said that there had been some work underway regarding potential grant funding for Ellsworth Park softball and baseball fields. The information is included in the packet, along with information about the dugout shelters.

Commissioner Labrador spoke about the potential of using canvas coverings for a dugout areas, which are less expensive than a permanent structure. They can be removed when the season concludes. Discussion followed about additional improvements, such as artificial pitcher's mound.

Mr. Hladun said that the Central Grants Department was hoping to move forward on applying for the grant funding.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVE TO APPROVE THE PARKS DEPARTMENT TO PURSUE THE POTENTIAL GRANT FUNDING FOR ELLSWORTH PARK.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Hladun said that some site work had been done at Majestic Park and the irrigation has been repaired. They are looking at completing the project by the end of September.

The repaving by the cart barn at Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course was completed earlier in the week.

There will be a meeting with the Police Department and a vendor on the 11th regarding preventing the back of Kennedy Stadium from vandalism.

Diamond 7's pads were completed and the bench installation is scheduled.

The Perry Memorial Arch drawings were received earlier in the day. The department is working with Central Grants regarding State grant opportunities to restore the Arch.

Mr. Hladun reported that the lifeguards, and the checkpoint staff are working out well.

Ms. Conine said that Mr. Hladun deserved some kudos since he was not only the Tree Warden, but also handling seven different jobs.

Ms. Conine said that there was a large barbeque for the lifeguards on Sunday. The lifeguards and camp counsellors have been out at the park for the last nine days doing a fabulous job during the heat wave. She noted that other than Commissioner Labrador, no one else has called to check to see how the life guards and counsellors were doing in the 102 heat.

Commissioner Labrador said that when he was down there, he saw the effort the life guards were making to insure everyone's safety. He said that if people were being critical, they should work for the department for a week to find out what it takes to work for the department. The Budget Committee should consider this when they think about the Parks Department.

Commissioner Cotto said that Commissioner Hosier had been out to a few of the ball fields. He pointed out that there were new scoreboards for Blackham and the City did not have any notice on the board. Mr. Hladun said that it was by Winthrop. He listed the various locations of the scoreboards. Discussion followed about the details.

Commissioner Labrador said that he would like to have one day a week where there are no scheduled events at the Parks so that the staff can work on repairing the fields.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER WADE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COMMISSISONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services