

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023**

This meeting was held via Zoom.

ATTENDANCE: Banjed Labrador, President; Cruz Cotto, Vice President; Lee Grisby, John Mark Hosier, Denese Taylor-Moye

OTHERS: Tatiana Urena, Parks Department; Craig Nadrizny, Public Works Director; Sam Kadi, Parks Department; Atty. Ronald Pacacha, City of Bridgeport Associate City Attorney, Atty. James Maye, City of Bridgeport Associate City Attorney; Kenneth Flatto, Director of Finance; Luis Burgos, Parks Department; Brett Caulfield, Superintendent of Parks; Gerard Azor Jr., United Haitian American Society; Ernest Brown, Downtown Thursdays; Mark Fois; Tamara Gonzalez, Mental Health Fundraiser; Latoya Johnson, Halloween Trunk or Treat; Mae M.; Marlene, United Haitian American Society; Peter Spain, Rosa Torres, Mental Health Fundraiser; Donald Wilson, Bridgeport Youth Lacrosse

OPENING CEREMONY / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Labrador greeted everyone and called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

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

ROLL CALL

Ms. Urena called the roll. A quorum was present. Ms. Urena said that Commissioner Wade had an excused absence for the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF:

• AUGUST 8, 2023 (REGULAR MEETING)

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 8, 2023 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 8, 2023 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED 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.

OLD BUSINESS

1. James Maye, Associate City Attorney, City of Bridgeport, requests approval for the Lease Agreement between the City of Bridgeport and Aquarian Water Company at Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course.

Atty. Maye said that this was a follow up for Aquarian's request to replace a water pump located on the Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course. There has been a discussion with Aquarian and the proposed lease will be for a term of 60 years and some 20 year renewal options. The current lease is for 60 years and Aquarian is paying an up-front fee of \$146,000 to cover the entire 60 years. They are responsible to maintain the facility. They are requesting permission to move forward on the project. This will go before the City Council for final approval.

The Commissioners thanked Atty. Maye for his work on this item. Commissioner Hosier asked if the \$146,000 would be going to the Park Fund or to the City of Bridgeport General Fund. Atty. Maye said that he did not know. Commissioner Hosier said that he would like that answer at the City Council meeting.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM OB-1. JAMES MAYE, ASSOCIATE CITY ATTORNEY, CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, REQUESTS APPROVAL FOR THE LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT AND AQUARIAN WATER COMPANY AT FAIRCHILD WHEELER GOLF COURSE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Peter Spain, 280 Grovers Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to turn off the 113 blue-pole lights at St. Mary's by the Sea during the bird-mitigation season from August 15th – November 15th.

Mr. Spain greeted the Commissioners. He said that this was a follow up to his letter that was sent to Ms. Urena. There are a number of residents in Black Rock that are interested in this proposal because of the public safety and the cost for turning off the lights. He noted that they were more than one third of the way into the migration period.

Mr. Spain said that there was a generous offer from a member of the community to cover the cost of a well-known electrician to inspect the two electric boxes that serve the 113 blue pole lights. The residents have invested over \$70,000 in the park over the years. He asked if the

Commission would allow the electrician to submit an estimate as to the cost for turning off the lights during migration season.

Commissioner Labrador said that he was not sure who was actually authorized to allow someone to inspect the electrical boxes. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Hosier pointed out that there were two migration periods and if the lights were turned out, that would mean the lights would be out for a total of slightly more than six months. Commissioner Hosier said that he had spoken with Police Chief Porter about this and Chief Porter would like to have some time to assess the situation. Commissioner Hosier suggested that they consider holding off until February and reconsider it then. There were concerns about individuals who fish in that area.

Mr. Spain said that when he had been on the Council in 2018, there was a period of four months when the lights were off in that area due to repairs. At that time, there were fewer incidents during that time. Discussion followed.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO HAVE AN INSPECTION DONE WITH ONE OF THE PUBLIC FACILITIES ELECTRICIANS FOR AGENDA ITEM OB-2 - PETER SPAIN, 280 GROVERS AVENUE, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO TURN OFF THE 113 BLUE-POLE LIGHTS AT ST. MARY'S BY THE SEA DURING THE BIRD-MITIGATION SEASON FROM AUGUST 15TH – NOVEMBER 15TH AS DISCUSSED.**

**** COMMISSIONER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Donald Wilson, Bridgeport Youth Lacrosse, 56 Fairview Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host the Sports for Peace Day 2024 & Middle School Sports League for approximately 2,000 people for the following dates:

6/1/2024 – McLevy Green – National Gun Violence Awareness Teen Summit on the Greens, 1:00 p.m.

6/2/2024 – McLevy Green – Youth Gospel Concert and Outreach, 12:00 p.m.

6/3/2024 – McLevy Green – Paint for Peace Kick-Off Event, 4:00 p.m.

6/8/2024 – Seaside Park Band Shell & Fields – Sports for Peace Day Sports and Music Festival, 8:00 a.m.

6/9/2024 – Seaside Park Band Shell & Fields – Sports Tournament, 8:00 a.m.

Ms. Urena said that they had checked the dates and there was only conflict was the very first date. Mr. Wilson was notified of this and it was suggested to him that he hold that event at Seaside Park. Commissioner Labrador noted that there were no closing times noted on the request.

Mr. Wilson greeted the Commissioners. He said that the closing times would be before the parks close. Commissioner Labrador said they needed a firm time. Mr. Wilson said that the Seaside Park event would be done by 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Cotto said that they need to have the closing times in writing. Discussion followed. Commissioner Labrador asked that Mr. Wilson contact Ms. Urena with the closing times. Mr. Wilson said that the closing for McLevy Green concert would be from 12 to 5 and the Paint for Peace event would start at 4 p.m. and end at 7 p.m. Mr. Wilson said that the dates and times were on the flyer.

The discussion moved back to the June 1st event. Commissioner Hosier said that they could not include the June 1st event due to the scheduling conflict.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM OB-3.
DONALD WILSON, BRIDGEPORT YOUTH LACROSSE, 56 FAIRVIEW AVENUE,
BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST THE SPORTS FOR PEACE DAY 2024 &
MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS LEAGUE FOR APPROXIMATELY 2,000 PEOPLE FOR
THE FOLLOWING DATES:**

**6/2/2024 – MCLEVY GREEN – YOUTH GOSPEL CONCERT AND
OUTREACH, 12:00 P.M. TO 5 P.M.**

**6/3/2024 – MCLEVY GREEN – PAINT FOR PEACE KICK-OFF EVENT, 4:00
P.M. TO 7 P.M.**

**6/8/2024 – SEASIDE PARK BAND SHELL & FIELDS – SPORTS FOR PEACE
DAY SPORTS AND MUSIC FESTIVAL, 8:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.**

**6/9/2024 – SEASIDE PARK BAND SHELL & FIELDS – SPORTS
TOURNAMENT, 8:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.**

AS DISCUSSED.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ronald Pacacha, Associate City Attorney, City of Bridgeport, requests approval for the Site Access Agreement between the City of Bridgeport and The Connecticut Light and Power Company dba Eversource Energy at Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course, Veteran's Park, Puglio Park, and Oxbrook Road (non-park property).

Atty. Pacacha said that he was not requesting this, but submitted the request for Mr. Nadrizny, the Public Facilities Director. Mr. Nadrizny was prepared to speak on this matter to the

Commission. Atty. Pacacha was present to answer any questions that the Commissioners might have.

Mr. Nadrizny greeted the Commissioners and said that there were two separate companies that had reached out to the City. Eversource will be replacing lines that run through the golf course and need easement agreements to enter the parks. The work will be done during the winter and they will be paying a lump sum of \$171,000 to the City for the loss of revenue for the parks listed. Mr. Flatto, Mr. Urquidi and Mr. Kadi were present at the meeting.

Commissioner Labrador asked if there was a diagram showing where the work would be done. Atty. Pacacha said that there were three maps attached to the end of the request application.

Commissioner Labrador asked if the time periods were available. Atty. Pacacha said that they were requesting November 2023 through March of 2024 and November 2024 through March of 2025 for repairs, inspections or corrective work.

Discussion followed about where the work would be taking place. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were supposed to leave the grounds as good if not better than when the work starts.

Commissioner Labrador asked that the Commissioners be updated as to how the project was proceeding.

Mr. Flatto said that Eversource has the right to do their work via the easement, which run through the golf course. It's approved by the Citing Council and it will take place. However, Mr. Flatto said that due to the negotiations, they were receiving money to offset any loss of revenue from the golf course. Their project will take place in their right of ways, so the Commission has very limited authority in this matter. Discussion followed.

Atty. Pacacha said that there had been negotiations with Eversource regarding insurance and indemnification of the property for unforeseen issues. Mr. Kadi will have the right to approve the replacement items such as the grade of sand, and the quality of the cart paths. There are a number of protections in the contract that will take care of any damage done to the course as a result of this activity.

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 1. RONALD PACACHA, ASSOCIATE CITY ATTORNEY, CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, REQUESTS APPROVAL FOR THE SITE ACCESS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT AND THE CONNECTICUT LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY DBA EVERSOURCE ENERGY AT FAIRCHILD WHEELER GOLF COURSE, VETERAN'S PARK, PUGLIO PARK, AND OXBROOK ROAD (NON-PARK PROPERTY).**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Ronald Pacacha, Associate City Attorney, City of Bridgeport, requests approval for DISH Wireless, LLC to install antennas and supporting equipment at Kennedy Stadium.

Atty. Pacacha said that this request was being made on behalf of Public Facilities. DISH wireless approached the City for permission to mount equipment at Kennedy Stadium. There will be a single light tower and some equipment storage of approximately 10' x 15' on the ground. This will be similar to the arrangement that T-Mobile made in the past. DISH would have a non-exclusive right to use the tower, which will allow other carriers to come in to install their own antennas with the approval of the Commission. The agreement is for five years with a maximum of four additional five year extensions. They have agreed to pay the City \$4,500 a month and they will pay a lump sum of \$52,000 for the first year. Each year, the rent amount will increase by 3% compounded. There are similar protections for insurance and indemnification. There will be a \$25,000 removal bond to insure that all of the equipment is removed by DISH from the property when they leave.

Commissioner Labrador asked who would be determining the rent for any other communications company that wishes to put their antennas up on the tower. Atty. Pacacha said that the City will be the one approving other communication companies and determining the rent for their antennas. He noted that the antennas would be similar to others in the area.

The project will start after they receive their permits. Atty. Pacacha said that DISH will provide them with a detailed time line once they are ready to start construction. He added that he would expect it to take only a few months. Mr. Nadrizny said that DISH had hired Engineering to make sure that the structure would be appropriate and suitable for the location.

Commissioner Hosier wished to know where the tower would be located. Atty. Pacacha said that there was a site plan with the tower location and the equipment location included in the information packet. Mr. Nadrizny said that it would be on the road that runs behind the stadium and would be near the fifty yard line. There is already some light towers located there.

Commissioner Hosier said that he had just received the information packet the day before and would like to table the item so he can review the information. Copies of the equipment diagrams were displayed on screen. Mr. Nadrizny said that he did not think the new tower would not have an impact since there were already two towers in place. Commissioner Hosier said that he did not want to sign off on something that he had not reviewed.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 2. RONALD PACACHA, ASSOCIATE CITY ATTORNEY, CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, REQUESTS APPROVAL FOR DISH WIRELESS, LLC TO INSTALL ANTENNAS AND SUPPORTING EQUIPMENT AT KENNEDY STADIUM.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Ernest Brown, 77 Huntington Turnpike, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host Downtown Thursdays at McLevy Green every Thursday from Thursday, June 6, 2024 to Thursday, August 30, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a set-up time at 3:00 p.m. and clean-up time at 8:00 p.m. for approximately 100 people.

Mr. Brown said that they wanted to do some Downtown Thursday in the past and wanted to start them up again.

Commissioner Labrador asked how Downtown Thursday had worked in the past. Mr. Burgos that they had worked okay in the past until the most recent event. In the past, they have been good cleaning up after themselves. However, the last clean up bond will not be returned.

Mr. Brown said that he was aware of this and had been the one that called Mr. Burgos about the issue last time. Commissioner Labrador said that it was important to have this on the record regarding the forfeiture of the clean-up bond. He suggested they plan to wind the event down a bit earlier because there are a number of residences nearby.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 3. ERNEST BROWN, 77 HUNTINGTON TURNPIKE, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST DOWNTOWN THURSDAYS AT MCLEVY GREEN EVERY THURSDAY FROM THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2024 TO THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2024 FROM 4:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M. WITH A SET-UP TIME AT 3:00 P.M. AND CLEAN-UP TIME AT 8:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 100 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Labrador reminded Mr. Brown that he had to get all the proper permits sign off before he could have the event. Mr. Brown said that he understood.

4. Latoya Johnson, 3 Edwin Street, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Halloween Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. either at Newfield Park or Seaside Park Band Shell to include vehicles parking on park property. Set-up time at 3:00 p.m. and clean-up at 6:30 p.m. for approximately 100 people.

Ms. Johnson said that she holds a number of events during the year to discourage gun violence. In past years, she has held this at a park, but the vehicles have been parked streetside and she would like to hold it where it was more enclosed. Last year there were some capacity issues and vehicles were parked on both sides of the street. She would like to have it in a more enclosed location.

Commissioner Labrador said that he was concerned about the number of vehicles on the grass. Mr. Caulfield said that child safety was the priority, but there were previous events where cars had run over the tracks and there has been damage to the field, particularly if the field is wet

from the previous day. He said that the weather would dictate whether they could have it. Discussion followed.

Ms. Johnson said that last year, she had had 12 vehicles participating. Commissioner Grisby suggested they hold it in a Seaside parking lot. Discussion followed. Mr. Nadrizny said that there was a large parking lot by the bath houses and the entry for West Beach. Off season park admission is in effect. This was agreeable to all.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 4. LATOYA JOHNSON, 3 EDWIN STREET, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A HALLOWEEN TRUNK OR TREAT ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2023 FROM 4:00 P.M. TO 6:00 P.M. EITHER AT NEWFIELD PARK OR SEASIDE PARK BAND SHELL TO INCLUDE VEHICLES PARKING ON PARK PROPERTY. SET-UP TIME AT 3:00 P.M. AND CLEAN-UP AT 6:30 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 100 PEOPLE AT THE LOCATION DISCUSSED BY THE COMMISSION AND PARK STAFF.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. Tamara Gonzalez, 178th Street, Derby, CT, requesting to host a Mental Health Fundraiser and Music Competition Car Show on Saturday, October 21, 2023 at Seaside Park behind Casino Bath House from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a set-up at 7:00 a.m. and clean up at 6:00 p.m. for approximately 75-100 people.

Ms. Gonzalez said that she had held an cancer fundraiser at Seaside Park which was a success. Now they would like to hold a fund raiser for Mental Health at the same location. Ms. Torres said that they had held similar events in October and May for the last three years. Everything has been done in a timely manner.

Commissioner Labrador said that there had been other events in the Park and they have not followed the rules or held events without the Parks Board knowledge.

Commissioner Grisby asked if this was a car show and the vehicles are in the parking lot. Ms. Gonzalez said that she was aware that there were groups who were causing trouble, but her group follows the rules and clean up after themselves. At the last event, all the permits were signed off on and there were no problems. Mr. Burgos said that the event went well. The group was well organized and followed the rules.

Commissioner Labrador asked that the music be kept clean. Ms. Gonzalez said that she would see to that.

Commissioner Cotto pointed out that the parks don't open to 8 a.m. Mr. Burgos said that he is usually on site by 7, so it would not be a problem.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 5. TAMARA GONZALEZ, 178TH STREET, DERBY, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A MENTAL HEALTH FUNDRAISER AND MUSIC COMPETITION CAR SHOW ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023 AT SEASIDE PARK BEHIND CASINO BATH HOUSE FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. WITH A SET-UP AT 7:00 A.M. AND CLEAN UP AT 6:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 75-100 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. Gerard Azor Jr., United Haitian American Society & Caribbean American Festival Exchange, 91 Ridgeley Avenue, Fairfield, CT, requesting to host a Caribbean Culture Festival either on Saturday, July 27, 2024 or Saturday, August 10, 2024 at Seaside Park Band Shell from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a set-up time at 7:00 a.m. and clean-up at 8:00 p.m. for approximately 500 people.

Mr. Azor greeted the Commissioners and said that the organization has been in existence for over 22 years. They are looking to hold the first Caribbean American Festival at Seaside Park. They had previously held this festival in Norwalk for seven or eight years. He added that he was the Treasurer for the Norwalk International Cultural Exchange (NICE) festival.

Commissioner Labrador suggested that Mr. Azor speak with Mr. Burgos, Mr. Caulfield and Mr. Nadrizny. He noted that the park admission fees would be in effect, and a variety of other issues. Commissioner Labrador said that once he meets with the Park staff, he should come back to the Commission and gave a brief overview of the permit process.

Marlene, one of the staff, said that they had held events at Veteran's Park in Norwalk, and were familiar with the permit process, insurance, had a plan for port-a-potties, and other details. Mr. Azor said that the growing Haitian and Caribbean community was moving north to the Bridgeport area, which is why they are hoping to hold it in Bridgeport. Commissioner Labrador repeated his recommendation that they speak with the Park staff first. Mr. Azor said that he had spoken with Mrs. Urena about the details. An aerial photo was displayed on screen. Discussion followed.

Ms. Urena said for the record that when she had spoken to Mr. Azor, he had indicated that they wanted to have parking at the marina park circle. This needs to be discuss with the Park staff also. Commissioner Labrador said that he wanted this festival to be a success.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO RESERVE THE DATE FOR AGENDA ITEM 6. GERARD AZOR JR., UNITED HAITIAN AMERICAN SOCIETY & CARIBBEAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL EXCHANGE, 91 RIDGELEY AVENUE, FAIRFIELD, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A CARIBBEAN CULTURE FESTIVAL EITHER ON SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2024 OR SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 2024 AT SEASIDE PARK BAND SHELL FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M. WITH A SET-UP**

TIME AT 7:00 A.M. AND CLEAN-UP AT 8:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 500 PEOPLE PENDING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PARK STAFF.

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Labrador encouraged Mr. Azor to contact the Park staff as soon as possible. Mr. Burgos asked what date they were targeting. Mr. Azor said that they were hoping for July 27th.

REPORTS

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

Mr. Caulfield thanked the Commissioners on the Board and said that it was a long and great summer. He said that Commission goes to bat for the Park staff with the larger events and it was greatly appreciated. He noted that some of the permits were being signed at the last minute and this put a lot of pressure on Mr. Burgos and the rest of the staff to get everything up and running.

Mr. Caulfield then gave an overview of the projects in progress, which was included in the written information report.

Mr. Caulfield noted that they had also done some sidewalk repairs at St. Mary's by the Sea along Gilman Street.

Sound on Sound construction has started for the event. The splash pads have been cleaned out for the season and the bath houses will be closed down after Sound on Sound on October 2nd.

Recreation – One of the Recreation staff then present the highlights from the Recreation Division as presented in the information report.

Mr. Nadrizny thanked the Parks Commissioner for their work and said that they looked forward to continuing the teamwork in completing a number of projects. He added they would be doing even more projects next year.

• Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Labrador thanked the entire staff for all the work. The grounds staff comb the beach and maintain the grounds and the life guards watch over the residents. The parks look so good because of all their work. He encouraged people to think about the positive things that happen in the parks rather than focusing on the negative things. It's important to remember that it takes work to make the parks look good.

Commissioner Labrador said that they would not put up with people calling last minute about events. From now on, if the process is not followed the way it is supposed to be, the answer will

be no. Sometimes the Board tries to allow people to have events, but there has been abuse and people have tried to get permission for events from others in the City without the Parks Commission approval.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COMMISSION GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services.