

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 12, 2023**

This meeting was held via Zoom.

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

STAFF: Tatiana Urena, Parks Department; Brett Caulfield, Superintendent of Parks;  
Luis Burgos; Lee Nastu, Parks; Chineka Haye, Recreation Dept.; Luann Conine;

OTHER: Craig Nadrizny, Public Works Director; University of Bridgeport: John Caserino;  
Bryant Herrell, University of Bridgeport; Mark McGovern, Campus Planning

**OPENING CEREMONY / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Labrador greeted everyone and called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

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

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Urena called the roll. A quorum was present.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE WAS 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](mailto:tatiana.urena@bridgeportct.gov) to sign up for Public Speaking.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **Donald Wilson, Bridgeport Youth Lacrosse**, 56 Fairview Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, providing an update to host the Sports for Peace Week 2024 & Middle School Sports League for approximately 2,000 people for the following dates:

- 6/1/2024 – City Hall Park – National Gun Violence Awareness Teen Summit on the Greens, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. set-up at 11:00 a.m. clean-up at 5:00 p.m.
- 6/2/2024 – McLevy Green – Youth Gospel Concert and Outreach, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., set-up at 11:00 a.m. clean-up at 5:00 p.m.
- 6/3/2024 – McLevy Green – Paint for Peace Kick-Off Event, 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., set-up at 3:00 p.m. clean- up at 8:00 a.m.
- 6/8/2024 – Seaside Park Band Shell & Fields – Sports for Peace Day Sports and Music Festival, (Fields) 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. clean-up at 2:00 p.m.; (Band Shell) 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., set-up 1:00 p.m. clean-up at 7:00 p.m.
- 6/9/2024 – Seaside Park Fields – Sports Tournament, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., with a set-up at 8:00 a.m. and clean-up at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Labrador noted that the representative was not in attendance.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM AS ABOVE LISTED FOR BRIDGEPORT YOUTH LACROSSE TO THE END OF THE AGENDA.**  
**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED THE MOTION.**  
**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. **John Carserino, University of Bridgeport**, Bridgeport, CT, providing an update on the walkthrough projects performed by the University of Bridgeport at Seaside Park.

Mr. Bryant Merrell stated he was representing the item and reviewed previous presentation and outlined an updated drawing of the location of the batting cages requesting approval. He showed the drawing and renderings of the location of the concession stand and the spot with better access to the cages.

Mr. Mark McGovern, Director of Campus Planning at UB spoke of the new location that was improved with better access, closer to the dugouts and home plate.

Commissioner Labrador outlined that they didn't want in the empty spot and in the middle of the green areas that would not fit as far as scenery. It is moved by the shed and not an eyesore towards the park, and cages would be surrounded by plants to fit into the area naturally. He added that it would be watched by coaches and utilized by youth and asked for an overhead photo.

Brett Caulfield spoke of the benefits of the newly proposed location and highlighted the uses by not only U.B. but by youth baseball programs endorsed by the City.

Commissioner Cotto asked about the security, keys and managed for proper use and management of garbage, etc.

Commissioner Labrador outlined the rules for usage that will be held accountable and within the responsibility of the field use as with any field applications to the Board of Parks.

Commissioner Grisby asked how the keys will be administered and how the coaches will be responsible for key management. Mr. Lee Nastu addressed the past experiences of field usage and the small number of people with keys.

Ms. Wade expressed her feeling that this is a good thing and a win-win for everyone.

Commissioner Labrador noted that they visited the site with the department and engineers, and they saw the location and are all comfortable with this going forward. He noted that they all understand the University is willing to continue keep the park look green and beautiful.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO APPROVE THE BATTING CAGES AT SEASIDE PARK AS OUTLINED BY THE UNIVERSITY AND LOCATION APPROVAL BY THE PARKS DEPARTMENT.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER HOSIER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Bryant Herrell, University of Bridgeport outlined renderings of the location of the proposal for additional parking. It was noted that creating more parking next to the showed the drawing existing building to the Health Science Center and to help with additional parking needed at the park. This would eliminate parking on the road and ensure greater safety of the area. They are requesting permission for surveys with actual approval of a plan to come back to this Board with specific plan with specifics of management and funding.

Commissioner Labrador suggested a sub-committee get together to outline the feasibility study for a plan for safety, cleaning, funding, timing for park use and City access.

Commissioner Grisby asked about the ownership of the property and it was outlined that it was the old Main Street entrance and currently the University takes care of this property, well patrolled and well taken care of. They are not looking for permission for a shovel in the ground but permission for engineers to do a study.

Commissioner Cotto asked where exactly this is and if this will be fenced in and monitored and managed. It was noted that the street along Bassick High School near Harvey Hubbel Gym.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO ALLOW A SURVEY OF THE LAND AT SEASIDE PARK FOR A PARKING AREA TO INCLUDE ELEMENTS OF SAFETY, SECURITY, AND AESTHETIC AND ACCESSABILITY AS OUTLINED BY THE UNIVERSITY WITH LOCATION APPROVAL AND APPLICATION REVIEW BY THE PARKS DEPARTMENT.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER HOSIER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Herrell reported that he will have Mark McGovern, University of Bridgeport to present the results of a study team. He outlined renderings of the location of the proposal for a Multi-Use Athletic Field Complex. The chronology of the past year of evaluation of site options and engaging consulting engineers and things did not progress.

He noted that here again they are requesting permission for surveys with actual approval of a plan to come back to this Board with specific plan with specifics of management and funding.

Commissioner Labrador reviewed the past meetings that were held at the University of Bridgeport without the Parks Dept. being invited or included in the discussions. There was discussion on how this item was brought forward with total lack of respect for the Board or the process without an application to the Commission. He noted that it is improper to decide what to do with our land and we will have to put a stop to projects like these.

Mr. Herrell apologized for the oversight with the invitation, and he will speak to the University to address the process. There was further discussion on the project, and it was agreed that a study was worth pursuing to determine the feasibility and options to possibly see what could work to further this proposal. Mr. McGovern asked to review the slide and he explained the outcome of the engineering study of potential of flooding of the area and in response to the Athletic Director to have fields without a track. They looked at other locations of schools and parks and asked engineers to come up with another concept at Seaside Park. He further outlined this would have advantages of proximity to UB athletic facilities and proposed parking infrastructure, no reductions in fields for community use; provide field or Bassick High School football and Knights field is too small and reduces demand on Knights field.

There was further discussion, and it was noted that they are only requesting permission for surveys and feasibility study of the concept. The actual approval of a plan will be an official application to come back to this Board with specific plan with specifics of management and funding.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO APPROVE A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO REVIEW THE CONCEPT OF AN ATHLETIC FIELD AT SEASIDE PARK AS OUTLINED BY THE UNIVERSITY WITH NO CERTAINTY OF APPROVAL.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER HOSIER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Labrador asked the University representatives to follow the process and to be aware of the application and procedures in place for the best interests of the City.

**3.Rosa Torres, 879 Elm Street, New Haven, CT, requesting to host a car show and music competition to raise funds for Mental Health Awareness on Saturday, May 11, 2024 at Seaside Park Casino Bath House parking lot from 10:00 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 to 100 people.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO TABLE THE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CAR SHOW ITEM FOR MAY 11, 2024 UNTIL THE JANUARY MEEETING BASED ON THE EMAIL TO COME BACK TO THE COMMISSION WITH THE DETAILS OF THE EVENTS FOR THE PLAN.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER HOSIER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION TO TABLE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. **Rosa Torres, 879 Elm Street, New Haven, CT**, requesting to host a car show and music competition to raise funds for Cancer Awareness on Saturday, October 12, 2024 at Seaside Park Casino Bath House parking lot from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a set-up at 8:00 a.m. and clean-up at 6:00 p.m. for approximately 75 to 100 people.

\* **COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM OF THE CAR SHOW FOR CANCER AWARENESS ON OCTOBER 12, 2024 UNTIL THE JANUARY MEEETING BASED ON THE EMAIL TO COME BACK TO THE COMMISSION WITH THE DETAILS OF THE EVENTS FOR THE PLAN.**

\*\* **COMMISSIONER HOSIER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

\*\* **MOTION TO TABLE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### NEW BUSINESS

**William R. Battaglia, National Association of Naval Veterans Port 5**, 69 Brewster Street, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host the Veteran’s Community “The Wall that Heals” event from Thursday, September 26, 2024 to Monday, September 30, 2024 at Seaside Park. Time depends on the arrival of the delivery escort of the Wall. Approximately 150 people in attendance with two (2) informational/educational trucks adjacent to the Wall.

\*\* **COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM UNTIL THE JANUARY MEEETING BASED ON THE EMAIL REQUEST TO COME BACK TO HE COMMISSION WITH THE DETAILS OF THE EVENTS FOR THE PLAN.**

\*\* **COMMISSIONER WADE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

\*\* **MOTION TO TABLE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. **Tamara Gonzalez, Making a Difference AC**, 17 8th Street, Derby, CT, requesting to host a car show and music competition on Saturday, June 8, 2024 at Seaside Park Casino Bath House parking lot from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a set-up at 8:00 a.m. and clean-up at 7:00 p.m. for approximately 75 to 100 people.

Tamara Gonzalez, representative of the Making a Difference, was in attendance and spoke of the event that was a renewal of successful events over the past few years.

Commissioner Labrador asked if all required information was provided to the Parks Department, and Ms. Gonzalez replied that reports have been provided.

Commissioner Grisby asked if the organization was a non—profit and if there were papers to document the status. M. Gonzalez replied that they are registered with the City and events have taken place over the past 5 years along with community outreach for families in need and other causes.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CAR SHOW AT SEASIDE PARK FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE AC, 17 8TH STREET, DERBY, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A CAR SHOW AND MUSIC COMPETITION ON SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2024 AT SEASIDE PARK CASINO BATH HOUSE.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER HOSIER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## REPORTS

1. Commissioner's Report – Report was not available at this time.

2. Director's Report – Park's Office Representation

Mr. Caulfield presented his report as follows:

He noted that before he gave his report, he wanted to apologize for the disrespect of the opening ceremonies with noises made during the national anthem and the fact that someone used this Board as their platform to show such disrespect is inexcusable. He asked Ms. Urena to work with him to isolate who was responsible for making the noise during the zoom call, and he will follow up or ban accordingly. He also wanted to apologize to the Naval Veterans that were not here tonight, but again, inappropriate display of disrespect.

Winfield Park is coming along well with fiber installed and bringing to completion to incorporate safe zones or fall zones and sidewalks for ADA and new gates with access points are being installed into area.

Elsworth Park is tabled until the spring with remaining portions arriving next week or show and putting off until spring the installation when weather is more compatible in line with opening season.

Seaside Park Memorial Arch is still a work in progress with grants and correct coding with contractor's procedures in accordance with protocols.

Seaside Park West Beach Playgound has been started with sand and infrastructure with soil-based preparation underway tentative completion date this Friday or early next week ahead of schedule depending on wind or weather and is ahead of schedule.

BJ Brown Park various designs looking to outsource to companies the City has not used in the past for a modern course for new ideas and options.

## **Commissioners Report**

Mr. Burgos reported the department is working hard to manage the leaves, park closures with maintenance to lock bathrooms and prepare for snow season.

Commissioner Labrador thanked all in the Parks Dept. for the hard work they do.

Recreation:

Ms. Chineka Haye reported that swim lessons are scheduled, and class is tomorrow. Horizons winter programs are registered and night registration seasonal employees is open and please send those interested our way.

Ms. Luann Co

Commissioner Labrador noted that the Board needs to make decisions that are true to the City of Bridgeport. There were lease agreements and emails back and forth that led him to questions. He would request that the Board be given a report monthly budget needed to fix machines, maintenance of trees. He was told there was a book where all the money is going, but he needs it to be known monthly or bi-monthly, the Board has a right where money is going versus budget and where we stand on what is left over, and how it is being budgeted and spent. It is disturbing to him as the department can use a lot of things rather than hand me downs and essential items needed to run the department for this City.

It will be important to continue to remain transparent and do what is best for the City.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the Parks Department has the priority to make Parks the best they can be.

Commissioner Grisby asked to bring up a new issue with the golf course where he was told two employees will be responsible for maintaining the entire course. He finds this unachievable, and there should be a discussion on how this came up and what the plan is to address maintenance of the course during the off season.

Mr. Caulfield noted that he is aware of his and he will keep the Board updated on the issue.

Mr. Don Wilson is back on the call and Commissioner Labrador said this is not the first time he has been late for his order of business. He noted that it was not fair to others and asked if the item should be tabled until next month.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM UNTIL NEXT MONTH FOR BRIDGEPORT YOUTH LACROSSE TO HOST THE SPORTS FOR PEACE WEEK 2024 & MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS LEAGUE FOR APPROXIMATELY 2,000 PEOPLE FOR THE DATES AS LISTED.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* COMMISSIONER WADE SECONDED.**

City of Bridgeport  
Board of Park Commissioners  
December 12, 2023

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Telesco Secretarial Services.