

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2024**

This meeting was held via Zoom.

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

OTHERS: Tatiana Urena, Parks Department; Brett Caulfield, Superintendent of Parks; Luann Conine, Recreation Department; Luis Burgos, Parks Department; Lee Nastu, Parks; Atty. Mark Anastasi; Aaron Curry, Public Facilities Deputy Director; Council Member Scott Burns, Marilla Giacobbe, Chineka Haye, 203-873-7615, 203-395-3190

OPENING CEREMONY / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Labrador called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. He then led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

There was a quorum present.

NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion on changes to the color, price, and shape of Day Pass Park stickers.

Commissioner Labrador said that he had been told that there were some meetings held about changing the color of the stickers and changes for the prices for day passes and seasonal stickers. Commissioner Labrador said that the Park Commissioners should have been informed because the issue would eventually have to come before the Commission for approval. These meetings also ignore the Charter requirements. When Commissioner Labrador asked about who was holding the meetings, the answer invariably is “they”.

Commissioner Labrador also explained that the administration was looking to end the purchases of park stickers at the entrance booths and limit it to credit or debit cards. The only cash purchases would be handled at Quarry Road. This would entail having the Parks Office open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Commissioner Labrador had concerns about the issue of not having the price on the stickers which would indicate what the sticker was for. He added that he had been given the impression that the Parks Commission did not have a say in these issues. However, Commissioner Labrador said that he felt that the Commissioners should be aware of these issues.

Commissioner Hosier asked Mr. Curry, the Deputy Director of Public Facilities, for some clarification on these matters. Mr. Curry greeted the Commissioners and explained that the City was looking to do the annual park stickers, which are changed every year with a new color and design. He said that the department was looking to move forward with the stickers. The only thing that is different is the design.

Commissioner Hosier asked if the pricing was included on the sticker. Mr. Curry said that there was no rhyme or reason for having the price on the sticker, and it was subsequently removed from the sticker design.

Commissioner Hosier noted that the Commission had not been previously involved in the sticker design. He asked about the change regarding where the stickers would be sold. Mr. Curry said that they had discussed selling the stickers at Quarry Road but noted that if they felt that there would need to be a change regarding that during the season, they could change it. He went on to say that this decision was made because of different events that happened at the parks and a management decision was made to avoid the misuse of the stickers and to insure it was being properly applied. When the stickers are sold at Quarry Road, the staff will go out and apply the sticker directly to the windshield.

Commissioner Hosier noted that in 2023, the Parks Department generated \$518,000 in sticker sales at the booths. The Quarry Road location generated \$31,000 in sticker revenue. Secondly, that the residents are used to going to the kiosks to get their stickers. He questioned how they would notify the residents about this change and also pointed out that the students or employees at the booths would have to deal with irate residents. Commissioner Hosier said that he did not think that there was enough space or staffing to handle the change.

Mr. Curry said that Commissioner Hosier's concerns had been mentioned at the meetings regarding the sticker distribution. He explained that each location would have a police officer present. Discussion followed about parking at Quarry Road.

Commissioner Grisby said that this could be a means and method to control the stickers for those who are not residents. He asked what issues had happened with the stickers. Mr. Curry said that there had been issues with people having fake stickers made and internal staffing issues. There has been misuse of funds and sticker being sold improperly. The inventories are off.

Mr. Curry said that the upper management wanted to update the system. He added that there had been discussions about including the stickers as part of the car taxes. They want to eliminate the cash transactions. Having software would limit the stickers to debit and credit card sales. There is one company that handles the stickers for surrounding towns and also interfaces with the Tax Department.

Mr. Curry said that he receives directives from the upper management and his job is to implement those directives.

Ms. Urena displayed three different stickers in different colors, along with a number of different designs on screen. Commissioner Taylor-Moye said that she thought that they were rushing this and noted that the Commission were just now hearing about it.

The discussion moved to how and where the stickers would be sold. Commissioner Grisby said that he lived near Quarry Road and it is often difficult to get out of his road because of the traffic that is already there.

Commissioner Hosier asked what control the Commission had over this. Mr. Curry said that he had been handled this down from the administration and it was his job to make it happen.

Commissioner Wade said that they would be taking jobs away from the younger people. Mr. Curry said that he was planning on hiring more people. Commissioner Wade disagreed.

Commissioner Hosier said that he felt this would be a disaster and it would cause problems at the kiosk. He disagrees with the entire proposal. However, the administration wants to run a trial for a month.

Commissioner Grisby said that people will become impatient and simply park on the nearby streets and walk into the park, particularly at Beardsley.

Commissioner Taylor-Moye said that she felt that the Park Commission should have been at the table when this was originally discussed. Mr. Curry said that when he was at the original meeting, he was told that it was a brain storming meeting. Commissioner Wade said that the Commissioners should have been in on the meeting from the start. Mr. Curry agreed and explained that his directives come from the administration.

Commissioner Labrador said that the administration often waits until the last minute before presenting the item to the Park Commissioners. If someone had the decency to come to the Park Board meeting, they would not be in the position the Commission finds itself. The Commissioners are tired of this and the administration is not respecting the Commission. It seems like the administration has no regard for the Board of Park Commissioners because they are shoving this down their throat.

Mr. Curry said that anything that pertains to the parks, he brings to the Commissioner, but there are times when the upper management does things.

Commissioner Labrador said that when they are being treated like this, he would like to know

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO MAKE A NON-BINDING MOTION TO STATE THAT THE COMMISSION DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE PLAN TO SELL PARK STICKER FROM QUARRY ROAD OR THE PRICES BEING ON THE STICKERS.**

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

Mr. Curry said that he would promise to share anything items that about the parks to the Commission. He added that there has not been any purchase order made for the stickers, but would let the Commissioners know if anything happens.

Commissioner Labrador said that Mr. Curry was working hard to keep the Commissioners in the loop and the upper administration ignores the Charter where it has to do with the parks.

Commissioner Cotto said that he had worked as a police officer for 39 years and there have been problems with the upper administration about the parks.

Commissioner Labrador said that they were not going to allow the administration to make decisions for the Parks Commission.

Mr. Curry asked if there were any issues with the color of the stickers. Commissioner Labrador said that they would like to have multi-colored stickers.

Commissioner Wade said that the Commission should have been involved with this

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER Hosier MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** COMMISSIONER Wade SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services