

**NEWINGTON PARKS & RECREATION  
BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
IN NEWINGTON, CT  
2021 MAR 25 PM 3:08

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Jay Bottalico called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Board Members Present: Jay Bottalico, Bill DeBlasio, Mike Karanian, Ed Marchion, Nicole Pane, Jennifer Win-Johnson, and Don Woods.

Board Members Absent: Roberta Byron-Kolej, Eileen Francolino, Anthony Kulowski, and Matthew Kulowski.

Council Members Present: Tim Manke

Staff Present: Bill DeMaio, Superintendent, and Kelly Dickinson, Administrative Secretary

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2021 MEETING**

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Don Woods to approve the minutes of February 16, 2021. Bill DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

NONE.

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Mike Karanian to add action item: Installation of Lighting at Legends Field to the agenda as New Business item 9.d and to move item: Beacon Park Improvements from Reports to New Business item 9.e on the agenda. Bill DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**VII. SUMMARY REPORTS**

The Monthly Report and Tree Warden Report for February of 2021 were given to the Board to review. Bill DeMaio stated that there was nothing unusual to report regarding the Monthly Report. He added that the Department has been receiving tree complaints almost daily and the Parks Division is addressing them as time permits, despite not having a dedicated tree crew. Jay Bottalico asked if all the trees listed on the Tree Warden's Report were on Town property. Bill DeMaio responded that generally any trees 10 feet from the road into the front yard of the home or 10 feet from the street to the sidewalk (if there is a sidewalk) is considered a Town Tree. There were no further questions.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

NONE.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Motorcycle Madness Letters of Agreement**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department has secured four sponsors for the Motorcycle Madness event and they are thrilled to have loyal sponsors returning despite the difficulties many businesses are currently facing. He also gave credit to Bob Serra for bringing the Motorcycle Madness idea to him six years ago. He added that the event has become an annual event and this will be its fourth year, since the Department was unable to host last spring.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Ed Marchion to accept the four Motorcycle Madness Sponsorship Letters of Agreement as presented. Bill DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**b. Extravaganza Booth Fee Waiver-Sustainable Newington Team**

Bill DeMaio reported that Patty Foley and the Sustainable Newington Team typically request the Extravaganza booth rental fee to be waived each year and this was being presented in anticipation of the request for consideration.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Don Woods to waive the booth rental fee for the Sustainable Newington Team for the Life. Be in it. Extravaganza in the amount of \$50.00. Jennifer Win-Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **c. Tennis Letter of Agreement**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Board was given a copy of the agreement regarding Bob Dean and the Tennis Center. He stated that this is an agreement that get negotiated every year with contractor Bob Dean and that he does a great job at the tennis courts at Mill Pond Park. He added that the terms of the agreement were negotiated to a 78/22 split of the gross income because Bob Dean performs a great deal of maintenance which results in many extra hours of his time. He added that this agreement is mutually beneficial to the Town and to Bob Dean.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Michael Karanian to approve the Tennis Letter of Agreement with Bob Dean as presented. Ed Marchion seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **d. Installation of Lighting at Legends Field**

Bill DeMaio reported that for the past six years he has tried various different ways to secure funding for the installation of lighting at Legends Field at Clem Lemire Sports Complex. He stated that the Town Manager has included this Capital Improvement Project (CIP) in his Proposed Budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. He stated the project will cost approximately \$350,000.00 and that the Department's 2021-2022 CIP request of \$235,000.00 combined with the Department's 2022-2023 CIP request of \$125,000.00 will be enough to complete the project. He stated that if the Town Council approves the proposed budget, and everything goes according to plan, the project would start in April of 2022. He also noted that with any project, unexpected expenses come up and he wanted to be prepared just in case any issues arose. He added that if there was any money left over from the project he would use it to put lights in the parking lot at Legends Field for safety.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Bill DeBlasio to approve the installation of baseball lights at Legends Field at Clem Lemire Sports Complex. Jennifer Win-Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **e. Beacon Park Improvements**

Bill DeMaio reported that he has concentrated park improvements in the past few years to Mill Pond Park, Churchill Park, and Clem Lemire, now he would like to focus on improving the neighborhood parks. He added that the goal is to install a new handicapped accessible playground at all of the parks. Initially, the Department planned for Beechwood Park to be next for improvements, but the plans changed to Beacon Park to work in conjunction with the Public Works Department's plans to install new pathways at Beacon Park since they are in disrepair. Also, the playground is not up to federal ADA standards. He stated the proposed Beacon Park Improvements CIP project will include a new handicapped accessible playground, new pathways, bocce ball courts, and possibly a sand volleyball court. Jay Bottalico inquired if Beacon Park deals with vandalism. Bill DeMaio responded that vandalism happens at all the parks, and Beacon Park is no worse than any of the other parks. Ed Marchion inquired where the accessories and equipment would be stored. Bill DeMaio responded that residents are expected to bring their own equipment.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Don Woods to approve the installation of new handicapped accessible playground, new asphalt paths, bocce ball courts, and a sand volleyball court at Beacon Park. Ed Marchion seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **X. REPORTS**

### **a. Town Hall Community Center Update**

Don Woods, a member of the Building Committee, stated that there is no new information report. The only update regarding the project was that there is still more work that needs to be done to the Police Department. Bill DeMaio reported that the partition door in the gym has been unofficially approved by the Town Manager and the Department has requested the keys to operate the door in anticipation of being able to run spring programs. He added that Department staff were able to cut the cheerleading mats down to fit the requirements of the storage units in the ceiling. He added that the Department organized all the storage closets and installed shelving to maximize the space. Jay Bottalico asked what the status was of the contractor for the gym. Bill DeMaio replied that the Town Attorney is filing the paperwork in New Britain to pursue a law suit today.

### **b. Spring Program Commencement Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that since Newington is still in considered red on the governor's map for COVID-19 cases, the Department must wait until Newington is considered yellow in order to start running spring programs. He added he is hopeful that this will happen in the next few weeks.

### **c. Budget Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that the budget meeting for the Department was scheduled for Saturday March 20 and that the Town Manager appears to be in support of many of the projects. Jay Bottalico inquired if the Department will be able to host some of the big special events that draw in large revenues this summer. Bill DeMaio responded that the Department is planning to host Motorcycle Madness, Food Truck Friday, and St. Patrick's Day Party in the Park. He

added that he believed these events will help support the Department through end of the fiscal year in June, in addition to sales for summer pool passes and summer camp registration.

**d. Water Lantern Festival Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that the event is tentatively scheduled for September 25 and that last year's event brought in approximately \$15,000.00 which would help in recouping losses for the Department if they are able to host. He added that the Water Lantern Festival is based in Utah and due to the COVID-19 cases they are not able to travel at this time, but once the restrictions are lifted the company very much wants to have the event.

**e. Touch a Truck Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that he is strongly recommending that the Department does not host the event this year due to COVID-19 safety concerns and the nature of the event with children being encouraged to touch all the trucks and equipment. He added that they were not able to host the event last spring for the same reason.

**f. Extravaganza Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department has scheduled concerts in the park for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights the week of Extravaganza and that this year's event will be a scaled back version due to COVID-19. He added that the Department has a company interested in participating in some of the events that sprays 3 ft. of colored foam that people can dance in, play in, and touch as an added attraction. He added that the foam will be turned green for the St. Patrick's Day Party in the Park and will also be used for summer camp. He stated that if the Governor's guidelines change then the Department would host the event, but that if they are unable to host the children's carnival, then they will also not host the fireworks show. However, he is optimistic that the Department will be able to host the summer concerts and other smaller special events safely with social distancing and sanitizing.

**g. Town Beautification Program**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Parks and Grounds Division has installed "Welcome to Newington" flags on Garfield Street and has plans to install more flags in the downtown area and on Main Street to tie the new Town Hall to downtown. He added that the flags have been very well received by town residents. He stated the Department has also built a greenhouse to grow seasonal flowers at the Parks Garage. He went on to say that he has plans to make an American flag design with red, white, and blue flowers in the area of the closed end of Mazzoccoli Way so it will be visible to all traffic on Cedar Street. He added that the Town Manager is in full support of beautifying the new municipal area with plantings, flowers, etc. He stated that if approved there will also be irrigation in the new municipal area. He added that the daffodils from the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that were planted all over town in the fall should be coming up the next few weeks.

**h. Children's Train Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that they are waiting for a custom cover for the train and then it will ship. He added that the Department plans to debut the train at the soccer tournament at Newington High School and use it to transport people from the parking lot to the soccer field.

**i. Miniature Golf Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department received the shipment for the miniatures golf set, but that when they opened it the turf was damaged and ripped so the shipment was refused. He added that the company will be sending another shipment within two weeks.

**j. Spring Registration Statistics**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department received approximately \$40,000.00 in sales for the first week of spring program registration which indicates that patrons are very anxious to get back to in person classes. He added that the Department will be offering free exercise classes at the new AARP/FitLot Fitness Center at Clem Lemire Sports Complex, through a \$15,000.00 grant from AARP.

**k. Badger Field Renovation**

Bill DeMaio reported that there are renovation plans to install new irrigation and Duraedge infield materials at Badger Field.

**l. NHS Softball Field Training and Spring Preparation**

Bill DeMaio reported that Championship Turf will be providing training on field maintenance and laser grading for the Parks staff at the NHS softball fields. He added that the Parks staff will learn and work along side them to get valuable hands on training from a professional turf business.

**m. John Paterson Softball/Adult Football Field**

Bill DeMaio reported that Jim Trommer, Little League President, requested more field availability for practices. He added that his solution was to fix up John Paterson softball field and the Parks staff will paint half of a football field in the outfield so that both Little League and Adult Football can use the field. He added that the Connecticut Brawlers and the Newington Bulls may practice there one night a week. He stated he also has plans to improve Anna Reynolds field. He went on to say that the Parks staff is working on the roof at the dugouts at John Wallace baseball field.

Furthermore, four new gates at Clem Lemire Legends Field and Volunteer Field are being installed. Jay Bottalico asked if the rules and regulations for the youth sport groups were ever put in writing indicating the responsibilities of the groups and the responsibilities of the Town. Bill DeMaio responded there was no policy he was aware of for this. He added that he made an agreement with Little League that they will pay for the materials and the Department would provide the labor for the current project. He added that for the batting cages project, he made an agreement that the Department would pay for one batting cage and that Little League would pay for one batting cage. He added that he try's very hard to work together and keep peace with all the youth groups and to do what is best for our town. He gave another example that for the new sound system at Clem Lemire, all of the groups contributed towards the equipment and installation. He noted that he handles each project on a case by case basis. Jay Bottalico suggested putting a policy in place for future. Bill DeBlasio noted that various different groups including Babe Ruth, American Legion, Little League, and the Town split the cost of the batting cages at Legends Field recently which lessens the burden on each group when sharing costs. Bill DeMaio confirmed that statement.

**n. Anna Reynolds Little League Field**

This item was discussed in the Reports section, item: m. John Paterson Softball/Adult Football Field.

**XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

NONE.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Jennifer Win-Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Don Woods seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Kelly Dickinson*

Kelly Dickinson