

NEWINGTON PARKS & RECREATION

BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
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Town Clerk

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Jay Bottalico called the meeting to order at 7:14 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Board Members Present: Jay Bottalico, Roberta Byron-Kolej, Eileen Francolino, Ed Marchion, Jen Win-Johnson, and Don Woods.

Board Members Absent: Bill DeBlasio, Mike Karanian, Anthony Kulowski, Matthew Kulowski, and Nicole Pane.

Council Members Present: Tim Manke.

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

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES APRIL 20, 2021 MEETING**

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Jen Win-Johnson to approve the minutes of the meeting on April 20, 2021. Ed Marchion seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill DeMaio stated that he was very thankful to Kelly Dickinson for her efforts on the meeting minutes. He added that he appreciates her detailed style and that the minutes are very efficient and informative.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

NONE.

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

**a. Joyce Thorner Summer Camp Scholarship Donation**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department received a \$200.00 Summer Camp Scholarship donation from Joyce Thorner. He added that the Department has received a total of approximately \$1,900.00 in scholarship donations this year.

**VII. SUMMARY REPORTS**

The Monthly Report and Tree Warden Report for April of 2021 were given to the Board to review. Bill DeMaio stated that there was nothing unusual to report regarding the Monthly Report. He noted that the Parks and Recreation office has been very busy since the building opened to the public. Jay Bottalico inquired how the Department's hiring process was going. Bill DeMaio responded that the Department is still in need of more Camp Counselors, he added that there are 13 young adults in the Lifeguard course and that he was hopeful most of them will pass the course and be hired. He went on to say that the Parks division is still currently hiring Seasonal Maintainers for summer. Ed Marchion inquired what the minimum age for Camp Counselors is. Bill DeMaio responded that they need to be at least 16 years old, he added that the Department also offers a program titled Leaders in Training (LIT) for young adults ages 13-15 that teaches them how become Camp Counselors. Don Woods asked if the Department expected both pools to open this summer. Bill DeMaio responded yes. He added that Churchill Pool has been painted and the Department hopes to paint Mill Pond Pool this coming week, weather permitting. He went on to say there are major drainage issues at Mill Pond Pool and that the pool was recently drained for painting and as a result pond water started seeping through into the pool. Jay Bottalico asked how could this issue be fixed. Bill DeMaio responded that it is a difficult process, but the water is pumped out as fast as possible and then the pool will be painted. However, some of the paint sticks and some does not. Eileen Francolino asked what the minimum age requirement is for Parks staff. Bill DeMaio replied that to his knowledge, 18 is the minimum age required. Eileen Francolino asked if that requirement is from the Union. Bill DeMaio responded that requirement is per the Department of Labor and Town Manager. Jen Win-Johnson added that the press release that went out recently stated the minimum age required was 18 with a valid Connecticut driver's license. Bill DeMaio confirmed that statement was correct. He went on to say that the Department has not received many applicants and they are very much in need of Seasonal Maintainers.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

NONE.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Handicapped Accessible Parking Spaces**

Bill DeMaio reported that since the building has opened to the public, it has come to his attention that there are several handicapped parking spaces in front of the Town Hall entrance, but no handicapped parking spaces in front of the Mortensen Community Center entrance. He added that this would cause a problem in the future since entrance doors to the Town Hall are only open between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and the Department hosts most of its programs/events on weeknights or weekends. He went on to say that to get into the Mortensen Community Center, there is no handicapped accessible parking spaces and no ramp. He added that he brought this to the attention of the Town Manager and IT/Facilities Director and they are considering some type of adjustment. He stated that there are 7 parking spaces in front of the Mortensen Community Center that could easily be converted to 4 or 5 handicapped accessible spaces plus 1 wheelchair accessible space. He added that there are program participants who need the Department's assistance getting into the building from the parking lot with the current status. He went on to say that the Federal ADA law states that a handicapped accessible parking space has to be adjacent to the building's door. He added that the solution is simple, it's just a matter of funds. Ed Marchion asked how the building was completed with this oversight. Bill DeMaio responded that it was unknown to the architect that people would not be able to enter the Town Hall doors after office hours to get to the Community Center, which is mostly likely why all the handicapped accessible parking spaces are in front of those doors. Eileen Francolino asked how does the Department know how many spaces they need. Bill DeMaio responded 1 handicapped accessible parking spot is required per every 25 spots and the spot must be adjacent to the doors.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Jen Win-Johnson to replace existing parking spaces in the new parking lot with 4 or 5 handicapped accessible parking spaces plus 1 wheelchair accessible parking space next to the entrance of the Mortensen Community Center. Eileen Francolino seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **b. Memorial Day Elementary, Middle, & High School Lacrosse Tournament**

Bill DeMaio reported that Corrigan Sports Enterprises of Maryland contacted the Department and is interested in hosting a national lacrosse tournament Memorial Day weekend at the Newington High School fields. He added that the Department has drafted an agreement that should meet their needs and the Parks staff is grooming/lining the fields in preparation of the tournament. The draft of the letter of agreement with Corrigan Sports Enterprises was shared with the Board for their review. Corrigan Sports Enterprises is also considering adding another High School tournament to their schedule on the Friday and Saturday night of Memorial Day weekend. This tournament will bring in revenue for the Department and will also host food trucks. Corrigan Sports Enterprises will pay the costs for Police, portable toilets, and dumpsters. He went on to say that this tournament will yield approximately \$30,000.00 in revenue for the Town and that he believes the groups will be staying at hotels in Newington as well. He added that there will be a minimum of 48 teams participating in the tournament, and the fee is approximately \$1,800.00 per team and they each will receive 20 tickets to the NCAA tournament.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Ed Marchion to accept and fully endorse the Corrigan Sports Enterprises National Lacrosse Tournament at Newington High School's eight lacrosse fields with all details outlined in the letter of agreement as presented. Don Woods seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **c. ADA Proclamation**

Bill DeMaio reported that the ADA proclamation has become an annual tradition for the Department to honor the Federal ADA Law that was signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President Bush. The ADA law gives freedom, independence, and equality to persons with disabilities. He asked the Board to consider endorsing this proclamation and to encourage the Town Council to consider town wide adoption. He added the Department will be hosting an ADA Celebration and concert by The Daily Planet in Mill Pond Park on Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> and if the proclamation is endorsed Mayor DelBuono will read it aloud at the event. He went on to say that the ADA Coalition of Connecticut (ADACC) will be sponsoring free ice cream to the first 150 people who attend the concert, in the amount of \$500.00, in celebration of the 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the ADA.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Eileen Francolino to fully endorse the ADA Proclamation as presented and wish to forward this proclamation to the Town Council for their consideration for town wide adoption. Jen Win-Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **d. July is Recreation & Parks Month Proclamation**

Bill DeMaio reported that the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) celebrates the month of July as National Recreation and Parks Month across the country each year. He asked the Board to consider endorsing this proclamation and to encourage the Town Council to consider town wide adoption, bringing notoriety to Newington.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Eileen Francolino to fully endorse the July is National Recreation and Parks Month Proclamation as presented and wish to forward this proclamation to the Town Council for their consideration for town wide adoption. Jen Win-Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **X. REPORTS**

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

Don Woods reported that the project is basically complete, aside from converting some of the parking spaces in the new parking lot to handicapped accessible spaces and a few finishing touches. Bill DeMaio confirmed that overall the project was success and the Department is very happy with the new community center.

### **b. Mill Pond Pool Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that all the surveys and Geotech analyses are complete and the Mill Pond Park Master Plan has been updated to include the findings. The architect has sent the updated 145-page plan to the Department as a DropBox link, which was shared via email with the Mill Pond Pool Building Committee and will be discussed at the next meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup>. He added that the placement of the pool will be on Garfield Street due to the water table and the wetlands area. The deep end was moved east due to the water table being 6.5 ft. in the initially intended area. He went on to say that the pool project will cost approximately \$8,000,000.00 and the total park project will cost approximately \$13,000,000.00. He added that the Department is very pleased with the design. There will be solar panels that will heat the pool for free and the exterior walls of the pool were designed to match the new Mortensen Community Center. He added that Custom Aquatics has been contracted to work on Mill Pond Pool currently. The contractor shared with Bill DeMaio that there are several hollow points, there is more patching than solid concrete, and the drains do not meet the new NPSI safety standards. He went on to say that the drain system is currently being replaced at cost of \$15,000.00 and a vacuum sealed breaker is being installed in the filter room. He concluded that these issues pose a dangerous situation and the pool in dire need replacement. He added that if we don't act to move the project forward now, the Town may be forced to go without a pool for some future summer seasons. Eileen Francolino asked if the location of the pool is closer to the residential side of the park. Bill DeMaio responded that the pool will be parallel to Garfield Street between the two crosswalks. He added that this plan includes a splashpad that can be used in spring, summer, and fall seasons and that some of the recycled water will be used for irrigation.

### **c. Clem Lemire Playground Shade Structure**

Bill DeMaio reported that the shade structure is complete with the exception of installation of four chess/checkers tables that should be arriving in about 8 weeks. He added once they arrive the contractor will surface mount them. Jay Bottalico asked if the shade structure will provide protection from foul balls. Bill DeMaio responded yes it will provide some protection. He went on to say that he participated in an interview with the weatherman from WFSB Channel 3 News, that was filmed at Clem Lemire Sports Complex that will be airing on May 24<sup>th</sup> and he was hopeful the news coverage will draw people from all over to the park.

### **d. Veterans Memorial**

Bill DeMaio reported that there was a total of 110 names included on last year's memorial which can be viewed one last time at the Memorial Day Ceremony at Fire House Co. 1 on Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. He added that the Department will have staff at the event who will be handing out copies of the registration form for the next year's memorial. He added that name renewals can be purchased for \$15.00 each or new names can be purchased for \$30.00 each for one year of recognition. He went on to say that Hinding Tennis generously sponsored the memorial for the second year in a row in the amount of \$5,000.00. He added that the money raised will be split between fireworks and local Veteran groups who sell the name spaces as a fundraiser.

### **e. Kindness Counts Program**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department has received 400 nominations so far and they have 100 more signs available. He encouraged the Board Members to nominate their kind neighbors or friends. He added that the program has been very well received and he congratulated all the nominees.

### **f. Volunteers Needed for Special Events June 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department is looking for more volunteers to assist in upcoming events for the St. Patrick's Day Party in the Park on June 10<sup>th</sup>, the Food Truck Festival on June 11<sup>th</sup>, and Motorcycle Madness on June, 12<sup>th</sup>. He added that if members volunteer, it helps the Department save on staffing costs. He went on to say that the Department received a sponsorship from the Flood Law Firm in the amount of \$2,500.00 for the Food Truck Friday event and the Craft Beer Tasting Event. He added that many of the food truck companies that have participated in special events in the past have gone out of business, so as an economic impact, the Department and the Flood Law Firm will be offering to waive the \$300.00 food truck vendor fee for any Newington restaurants that would like to have a booth at the Food Truck Friday event on June 11<sup>th</sup>. He added that the band BooYah! will be performing at the

Food Truck Friday event and will be sponsored by AJ Bafundo & Co. LLC. Happy Harry's Wine and Liquor Warehouse will be sponsoring the beer and wine tent. He also reported that the Miniature Golf Tournament and children's train rides were a huge success on May 15<sup>th</sup>, the fee for train rides was \$3.00 per person, however the Department decided to allow people to ride the train as many times as they wanted between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. as an added bonus.

**g. Beacon Park Update**

Bill DeMaio reported that the bids came in high and he is still trying to negotiate within the Department's \$250,000.00 budget. He hopes construction will start July 1<sup>st</sup> and be completed by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Then, when Tilcon returns to pave the roads in Newington, the paths at Beacon Park will be paved at Newington low prices.

**h. NHS Softball Field Renovations**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department had plans to renovate the two softball fields at NHS, but when the Championship Turf Company was ready to begin work in March, the Athletic Director at NHS asked that the Department consider not performing those renovations at that time, due to the first upcoming home game scheduled for the following week and anticipated parents would be upset. The Department is now planning to renovate the two fields and remove the infield clay and replace it with DuraEdge infield material, replace the sprinkler heads, cut back the lips and sod between 2-6 ft., and perform laser grading.

**i. Badger Field Renovations**

Bill DeMaio reported that Badger Field will be renovated in the same way as the NHS Softball fields starting approximately the second week of August.

**j. Extravaganza**

Bill DeMaio reported that after consulting with the Health Director, the Department is much more optimistic about the ability to host the event and is moving forward with plans. He added that new updated guidelines from the Governor were expected to be released by the end of the week, and then he would know more. He anticipated many of the restrictions would be lifted. He went on to say that the Department has a plan in place with the fireworks company, as well as with the carnival company, and that he was hopeful the event will take place.

**k. Creative Playtime Preschool Graduation on Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Creative Playtime Preschool Graduation ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at the Data Mail Pavilion in Mill Pond Park. He invited all the Board members to attend if they are available. He noted there are 11 children graduating and moving on to Kindergarten in the fall and that the preschool staff has requested to use the children's train to transport the class through the park to the pavilion.

**l. American Flag on Mazzoccoli Way**

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department is trying a new idea of making two American flag displays with red, white, and blue flowers in the area of the closed end of Mazzoccoli Way. One display will be visible to all traffic on Cedar Street and the other display will be visible on Mazzoccoli Way. He noted the Department has purchased 2,000 petunias for this project. He commended Parks staff members Steve Tofeldt, Will Nichols, and Joe Waluk for their work on these displays. He added that there will be 50 white petunias for the "stars" of the flag, purple petunias for the "blue" and red/white petunias for the "stripes." He went on to say that once these flowers grow in and spread more, the display will look ever more beautiful, and it is truly a work of art. He also commended Clay Pedigo and the entire Parks staff for all their hard work on the new greenhouse. Bill DeMaio reported that Joe Harvey has printed the VIP tickets for the St. Patrick's Day Party in the Park event and Craft Beer Tasting event, and he asked if the Board members wouldn't mind helping the Department sell the tickets for \$25.00 each in advance. He specified that there is no obligation to sell these tickets, but if possible, he would appreciate their help promoting these events.

**XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

NONE.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Eileen Francolino made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ed Marchion seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Kelly Dickinson*

Kelly Dickinson