

**CITY OF NORWALK
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023.
REGULAR MEETING
7:00PM.**

Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" will need to register in advance and use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.

Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via e-mail in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Dilene Byrd at dbyrd@norwalkct.gov to provide written comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Darlene Young, Chair, Jenn McMurrer; Nicol Ayers; John Kydes; Josh Goldstein; Bran Meek

ABSENT: Lisa Shanahan

STAFF: Robert Stowers, Director of Recreation and Parks; Ken Hughes, Superintendent, Recreation and Parks; Jessica Vonashek, Chief of Economic and Community Development; Anna Breault, Special Event Coordinator

OTHERS: Nick Kuhn

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Young called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

II. MINUTES OF JUNE 14, 2023

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation this evening.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

The City of Norwalk reserves the right to cancel the Event for public health or safety reasons as determined by the City of Norwalk in its sole discretion. The City of Norwalk shall not be liable for damages arising from the cancellation of the Event.

1. APPROVE THE USE OF RYAN PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY CITY OF NORWALK FOR THEIR SONO FARMERS MARKET EVENT TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2023, FROM 10:00 AM TO 3:00 PM. SET-UP FROM 9:00 AM WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 4:00 PM. APPROXIMATELY 100 + PEOPLE.

Ms. Vonashek presented an opportunity to host events in Ryan Park as part of a new initiative using ARPA funding. She introduced Anna Breault and said they have brought her on as the Special Event Coordinator for a two-year period and part of her responsibilities are to look at citywide events that are offered in the urban core and to also look at launching farmers markets and different events and understand how to activate the urban area and the streetscape. She said they have been working closely with Mr. Stowers and Mr. Hughes and their team as well as DPW to be sure they are not overlapping in anyway and sharing a calendar that makes sense for the city. She said they are requesting the use of Ryan Park on July 30, 2023, from 9:00AM to 4:00PM and presented a layout of the event. She said they would like to pilot the event and hold it every two weeks and have it grow overtime. Ms. McMurrer said that she loves that the city is thinking of doing events like this. Mr. Goldstein agreed but said there is not a lot of parking available, and

which could be a challenge and provided some suggestions, but otherwise he thinks this is a wonderful idea and Ryan Park is an underutilized park and he loves the idea of holding events in Ryan Park especially in the day and early evening hours. Ms. Young said she appreciates the responsiveness to what staff has heard from the community over the years about the development that has been happening in Norwalk and particularly in South Norwalk for almost two decades and a great start of a foundation of what is to come.

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** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. APPROVE THE USE OF SPRINGWOOD PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY PROJECT 9 A FOUNDATION FOR THEIR COMMUNITY EVENT TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2023, FROM 12:00 PM TO 7:00 PM. SET-UP FROM 10:00 AM WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 8:00 PM. APPROXIMATELY 100 PEOPLE.

Mr. Fuller provided an overview of the event and said it is a community event for the Roodner Court neighborhood and Project 9 in a non-profit organization that was put together by some people that were born and raised in Roodner Court to give back to their old community and would like to make it an annual event. Mr. Stowers said he supports this effort. Ms. Young wished Mr. Fuller much success and said it will be a great addition to the area.

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3. APPROVE THE USE OF MATHEWS PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THE LOCKWOOD-MATHEWS MANSION MUSEUM FOR THEIR OLD-FASHIONED FLEA MARKET EVENT TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2023, FROM 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM. SET-UP TIME 7:00 AM WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 6:00 PM. APPROXIMATELY 2,500 PEOPLE.

Mr. Stowers asked about the construction that is currently going on at the mansion. Mr. Hill said that the construction is all internal and the only external piece is the fence and they have factored that in and will adjust the map as needed.

**** MR. STOWERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE USE OF MATHEWS PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THE LOCKWOOD-MATHEWS MANSION MUSEUM FOR THEIR OLD-FASHIONED FLEA MARKET EVENT TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2023, FROM 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM. SET-UP TIME 7:00 AM WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 6:00 PM. APPROXIMATELY 2,500 PEOPLE.
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4. APPROVE THE USE OF TRACEY MAGNET SCHOOL FIELD AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY TRACEY MAGNET SCHOOL PTA FOR THEIR HARVEST

MOVIE NIGHT TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023, FROM 6:00 PM TO 8:30 PM. SET-UP TIME 3:30 PM WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 9:00 PM. APPROXIMATELY 450 PEOPLE.

Ms. Tiani provided an overview of event and said this will be the third annual event and is only open to the families at Tracey Magnet School and is a fun night for the families to get together. Mr. Stowers said it has been a very successful event.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE THE USE OF TRACEY MAGNET SCHOOL FIELD AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY TRACEY MAGNET SCHOOL PTA FOR THEIR HARVEST MOVIE NIGHT TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023, FROM 6:00 PM TO 8:30 PM. SET-UP TIME 3:30 PM WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 9:00 PM. APPROXIMATELY 450 PEOPLE.**

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5. AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO M. O'BRIEN & SONS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$87,377.04 FOR THE SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE OF A NEW PLAYGROUND FOR MARVIN SCHOOL, FROM ACCOUNTS # 0921/22/23-6030-5777-C0364, OFF THE MHEC MC15-B14 STATE CONTRACT.

Ms. McMurrer recused herself from this item.

Mr. Hughes said that in 2017 the larger playground was replaced in the back of Marvin School and this item is to replace the small playground that is on the side of the school which was built in 2007 and is the fourth oldest playground in the city. He said they worked with the PTO and the playground designer to come up with a design that the school likes and are ready to move ahead with the construction. Mr. Goldstein asked what the timeline is. Mr. Hughes said once they place the order approximately seven months for delivery so it will be done late winter-early spring. Ms. Young asked when the playground on Bouton Street will be replaced. Mr. Hughes said that the top half was done in 2012 and the second half is slated to be done this year through ARPA funding, and the next one to be replaced will be at Veterans Park and Ludlow Park and the next school playground on the list is Wolfpit School which was last replaced in 2011. He said that 15-18 years is the typical lifespan of the playgrounds.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO M. O'BRIEN & SONS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$87,377.04 FOR THE SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE OF A NEW PLAYGROUND FOR MARVIN SCHOOL, FROM ACCOUNTS # 0921/22/23-6030-5777-C0364, OFF THE MHEC MC15-B14 STATE CONTRACT.**

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VI DISCUSSION

Draft Master Plan Presentation and Discussion.

Mr. Stowers said that he has been pushing to complete the Master Plan and are at the point of looking at adoption and that it is in final draft form and are in the process of collecting comments and have had

several community meetings and have made some modifications. He said the goal is to have the consultant go through the plan and bring it to the committee next month which will include the comments from the public and the Common Council for adoption.

Mr. Kuhn presented and provided an overview of the Master Plan and said there has been a lot of great participation on the draft plan and there have been almost 850 hours contribution from the public from the residents for the development of the master plan. He said there were two surveys as part of this and he presented the top eight barriers which were not knowing what is offered; the lack of rest rooms citywide; not knowing the locations of the parks; lack of sidewalks and bike lanes; parks are too far; security is insufficient; programs/facilities not offered; and the parks are too crowded. He said the other question was the top eight actions residents are willing to support with tax dollars which were maintaining existing beach and parks/water access; develop new trails/connect existing trails; improve existing beach/parks; acquire more open space; acquire land and develop more parks; maintain existing school parks; and to develop new aquatic facilities. He said for the facilities there was a lot of focus on connectivity and smaller neighborhood parks and for program and activities there was also of focus on water related activities, aquatics, and nature enjoyment.

Mr. Kuhn said the top 10 vision goals were to provide high quality parks and facilities and address maintenance needs; access to parks within a 10- minute walk/15-minute bike ride; identify and secure funding sources; provide year round indoor recreation opportunities; provide inclusive and equitable programming; enhance the resiliency of waterfront facilities; meet existing and future staffing needs; promote collaborative partnerships with public schools/non-profit organizations/private entities; plan and develop a comprehensive a greenway and blue way trail network and to develop standards for urban solutions.

Mr. Kuhn said the implementation cost estimate is \$142.7 million in total proposed capital projects, \$43 million in reinvestment in existing parks and facilities, historic capital improvement funding trends may provide approximately \$46.25 million over the next 10 years requiring additional sources.

Mr. Kuhn said there are six strategies for implementation that include phasing projects; additional sources; grant stacking; cost recovery; complimentary providers and partners; and project prioritization.

Mr. Kuhn said the draft Master Plan was presented on June 8, 2023, and has been available online since May 30, 2023 for public review and comment and had great participation with 280 downloads of the report and over 440 reads and some of the comments were geared towards wanting to increase the emphasize on youth sports, more dog parks, and more aquatics which are addressed in the master plan quite well.

Ms. Ayers thanked Mr. Kuhn for the robust report and for presenting it in a very tangible manner. Ms. Ayers asked what additional work needs to be done to make the connectivity or to add new trails. Mr. Kuhn said the city has a new transportation plan as well which starts to address that as well in a more comprehensive way, but Recreation and Parks has a roll in addressing some of those needs such as looking at opportunities with the parks to provide additional opportunities for trails and how the department can contribute as a partner to the continued implantation of the Norwalk River Valley Trail and the Harbor Loop. Ms. Ayers asked if there are any other funding sources so that the projects don't have to be capital budget projects. Ms. Kuhn said it would be a combination of strategies such as state grants and the ARPA funding has been monumental in moving some projects forward, and to continue to be proactive in seeking alternate funding sources.

Mr. Stowers said they have recently received notice that they will be receiving a substantial grant for the trails and at the same time will also be receiving \$450,000 to do the trails and will be participating in some of the maintenance and planning on where the NRVt trail as well. He also said they have a grant for Cranbury to plan and develop a real trail system that is coordinated and planned by a professional trail

planner. He said over the last year they have received over \$12 million dollars in the capital budget and now can focus the capital budget on these items and now have a real strategic plan to not only do the maintenance but also for capital projects.

Ms. Young asked what the next step in the process is. Mr. Stowers said to review the comments and come up with a final draft and present it at the August meeting for approval. Ms. Young thanked Mr. Kuhn for his presentation and said that it is helpful as the committee tries to disseminate the information throughout the community.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd