



CITY OF NORWALK
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2025.
REGULAR MEETING
7:00 PM.



Members of the public may call in to participate. Callers will not be able to see the meeting participants. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial *9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to “view the meeting live” and/or “provide live comments” can 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. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to provide public comments are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please email Dilene Byrd at dbyrd@norwalkct.gov with the subject line “Public Comment” to provide written public comments prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE:	Darlene Young, Chair; Nicol Ayers; Nicole’ Eaddy; Heather Dunn; Lisa Shanahan; Johan Lopez; Jalin Sead
STAFF:	Robert Stowers, Director, Recreation and Parks, Ken Hughes, Superintendent of Recreation and Parks
OTHERS:	Sue Gordon; Anna Breault, Marveda Tyson; Mellodye Green-Ragin; Danny Loftus George

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Young called the roll, and all those listed in the attendance were present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: May 14th, 2025

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Ball said that as a founding member of Skip the Plastic Norwalk, she is here to express her opposition to the proposal to install an artificial turf field at Broad River Park, located in an aquifer protection zone just 700' from the Norwalk River. Norwalk wants to maintain its reputation as a leader in sustainability by making the city safer and healthier for all. In that case, artificial turf and ecological, environmental, and human health hazards are not the answer. 2023-24 were the hottest years on record, and because turf fields are made of plastic, they don't biodegrade. As they degrade, they shed microplastics, posing serious environmental and health challenges, which players can inhale on the field. While some worry that natural grass is too temperamental due to weather conditions, we venture to say that fake grass is worse. Artificial fields were out after 10-12 years, and disposing of them is difficult. Plastic is essential to the structure of artificial grass. Still, happily, Norwalk has a choice, and choosing real grass would be keeping in Norwalk's commitment to reducing plastic pollution for environmental and health reasons. Let's reject plastic turf fields and opt for the real thing.

Louse Washer

Ms. Washer spoke on behalf of the Norwalk River Water Association regarding the proposed turf field. She said that her group has already submitted comments regarding their concerns about the threats posed by the artificial fields. This is an exquisitely sensitive area and merits protection from the hundreds of chemicals and pollutants, including PFAS and microplastics, that come with artificial turf. It is in a state aquifer protection zone, and there are only 80 in the state, meaning that all the water used in that area is drained into a drinking water aquifer serving over 1,000 people. That water is also piped directly into the Norwalk River. She asked the committee to consider the specificity of this as a hazard to water. She asked if more information is available to the public regarding the removal and disposal costs of the turf fields, as they last 8-10 years. The NRWA had asked Dr. Sarah Evans from Mount Sinai to attend tonight's meeting, and she is a children's health expert who focuses on exposure to chemicals. Her comments on artificial turf fields and their health effects are available on YouTube on the NRWA website, and she encouraged the Council members to look at it.

Tyler Fairbanks

Mr. Fairbanks said he and the Norwalk Youth Baseball wholeheartedly support the hybrid model. It would be an artificial turf infield and an all-natural grass outfield on each of the three fields, allowing them to play when it rains, which has been a real challenge this spring. If this is a traditional clay infield that requires more frequent maintenance than synthetic turf, it can be challenging to maintain. The Parks Department has been incredibly helpful in preparing the fields, but they are not appropriately maintained. More frequent maintenance requires more city resources and if the fields go in as all natural and not synthetic turf to make them playable as they should be the weeds need to be eliminated and pests that destroy the grass which presumably introduce chemicals into the dirt and soil which is equally as concerning somebody that is concerned with synthetic turf fields. If the weeds are not properly treated, the field will remain in the sorry state they are in now. It is a real shame to throw millions of dollars to redo a field that will certainly within 12 months look like it looks now. Suppose the committee is not going to support the hybrid option. In that case, they will need to find hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to provide the proper staff to maintain those fields and rebuild them when the inevitable washes away, if there is a clay infield. The hybrid option would be an excellent opportunity to give our kids a consistent playing surface and a consistent playing season, where we are not getting rained on.

Rachel Precious- Westport, CT.

Ms. Precious said she lives in Westport but has a business in East Norwalk. She was an oyster farmer with Cops Island for a few years and now owns an oyster catering business. She seconded the concerns posed to the local oyster populations and pointed out that, besides PFAS, there are high amounts of zinc in turf runoff, which is highly toxic to oysters. Norwalk has a vast and rich history in the oyster industry, and it would be a shame to disregard how vital the

industry is to Norwalk for the sake of sports. Sports are very important in many ways, but they should not come at the cost of harming other industries.

Ms. Ayers joined the meeting at 7:05 PM.

Diane Lauricella

Ms. Lauricella said she does not think this item should be voted on tonight because this committee does not have enough information to make an informed choice, which would have included a neutral party evaluating the pros and cons of synthetic turf, clay, or natural turf. She is disappointed that her suggestion of what the actual cost cradle to grave will be, including the disposal, which is not reflected in the most recent Stantec report, which is selectively highlighting synthetic turf and downplaying clay and natural turf, and because the committee is layman, they need reliable and neutral party information. She said she is sure that Norwalk Youth Baseball does not want to add harm to the children's health. She is sure none of the parents would like to harm their children. The City of Norwalk has to start taking this seriously and ask if the health department has weighed in. As a resident and taxpayer, she thinks the health department should do its due diligence because of this health issue. She agrees with his parents that the staff need more funds and assets to maintain the field, which will have fewer problems with the new drainage. She also said she does not support how the agenda items for this item were laid out on the agenda and that they should have been under one action item. If the committee must vote, please vote for natural turf first, then clay, and do not allow synthetic turf for our children's and the environment's health.

Cynthia Yusuf

Ms. Yusuf said she is a longtime resident of Norwalk. She has recently been made aware of the Broad River complex project. One of Norwalk's natural beauties is the water, and having more artificial turf leach into the waterways would have a negative impact. This concerns her, and she strongly recommends the natural turf option.

Diane Cece

Ms. Cece said she is opposed to the turf fields, especially in Broad River, for all the reasons the past speakers have mentioned, and the committee should err on the side of caution, as we don't know the long-term impacts of this. She also said she wants to learn more about the Black Heritage Parade and suggested it be tabled until the next meeting. She asked what the immediate surrounding grounds meant and what the nature of the parade would be. She questioned why a three-day carnival at Veterans' Park is needed to support this event, presumably for 100 people.

She questioned why the parade would be from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM and serve liquor; she asked for clarification regarding the donations and whether people would need to pay to attend the event. She wondered if the \$570 fee for this event is being paid to Recreation and Parks or if other components will also be paid.

Richard Harris

Mr. Harris said he has done a lot of research on this piece of property, and it is the most polluted with PFAS from any area that has been checked, and the worst two compounds are very high. The Kellogg water field, just 700' from this site, has had trouble in the past, and three wells had to be shut down one summer. The field must stop adding to the pollutants and can't clear up what is already there, but it can stop adding to it. Medical science is finding all kinds of issues related to PFAS, and the fields have only been good for eight years. These are considerations the committee has to be aware of, and again, he said it is the worst site he has tested.

V. OLD BUSINESS

B. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF WASHINGTON STREET PLAZA AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THE CITY OF NORWALK FOR THEIR SONO SATURDAY MARKET TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JUNE 28TH, JULY 26TH, AUGUST 30TH, AND SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2025 FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M. SET-UP TIME BY 9:00.A.M. WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 1:30 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 75 PEOPLE.

Ms. Breault provided a brief overview of the event and said this is the first time the event will be held, and that there was a huge desire from local makers and restaurants for space to do their business. The street will not be closed and will be staying strictly within the Washington Street Park, and there will be over 30 vendors, and 75% to 80% of them are Norwalk small businesses. The events will be held on the last Saturday of each month in the summer.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

C. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF NATHANIEL ELY SCHOOL FIELD AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY PROJECT 9 FOUNDATION COMMUNITY COOKOUT TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 16TH, 2025 FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 6:00 P.M. SET-UP TIME BY 7:00 A.M. WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 7:00 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 75 PEOPLE.

Mr. Stowers provided a brief overview of the event. He said it has taken place over the past few years, and there has been no negative feedback, which he supports.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

D. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF MATHEWS PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY TYSON TOURS FOR THEIR BACK TOGETHER AGAIN WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 17TH, 2025 FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M. SET-UP TIME BY 11:30 A.M. WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 8:30 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 300 PEOPLE.

Ms. Tyson provided a brief overview of the event and said this is the second time it will be held. It is a big family and friends' reunion; vendors and live music will be present.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

E. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF WASHINGTON STREET PLAZA AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY SONO ENTERTAINMENT FOR THEIR BLACK HERITAGE PARADE TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2025 FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 9:00 P.M. SET-UP TIME BY 7:00 A.M. WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 10:45 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 100 PEOPLE.

Ms. Green-Ragin provided a brief overview of the event and addressed Ms. Cece's concerns. She said the surrounding grounds were also mentioned in two items before hers, and there were no questions. Still, she said they will march from Webster Lot and end at the Washington Street Plaza, including the neighboring communities and businesses. There will be vendors and live

music, and the companies in the area will support the event, which hasn't happened for 27 years, and she thinks it is essential to show the diversity in Norwalk. She said the four police officers have been hired, which is part of what the donations will be used for. She said the event is new, so the hours listed give vendors ample time to break down.

Ms. Ayers said we always want to encourage community members to sponsor events representing their heritage, pride, and the history of Norwalk. Our extensive historical society in Norwalk speaks to a lot of work and efforts made for this community population. Those people who have had connections with black heritage. When this item was heard a few months ago, two people had spoken, which is their right to do, but their language and mannerism in addressing these two events are insulting. We have competent, honest, diligent city workers who spend equal time on all requests and contracts from citizens and entities to have events in Norwalk. She said she would have loved to hear the same concerns regarding the Oyster Festival, where liquor is also served, and there is an entrance fee. We need to be mindful as we are neighborly to each other and can't forget in one moment that Norwalk is diverse and, at the same time, wants to find ways to stop things that someone may not understand. It's not okay and if there are concerns or questions they should be for every entity and a particular organization should not be picked on that is trying to do something to celebrate not only their heritage but what they have done in the City of Norwalk and thanked Ms. Green-Ragin for her efforts and city staff for working with her to be sure her application met every requirement.

Mr. Lopez asked for clarification on the number of attendees. Ms. Green-Ragin said approximately 200, but she is unsure of the exact number since this is the first time the event will be held.

Ms. Young agreed with Ms. Ayers' statements, and we must consider how we approach different events. We can have our concerns, but they need to be the same for the same types of events in the city. We commend Ms. Green-Ragin for all her hard work and effort, and she hopes this becomes a regular event for the city moving forward. She also commented on the staff at Recreation and Parks for supporting Green-Ragin and her efforts.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

F. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF MATHEWS PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THE NORWALK CONSERVATORY FOR THEIR BROADWAY IN THE PARK TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 23RD, SATURDAY, AUGUST 30TH AND SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH FROM 4:00 P.M. TO 6:00 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 400 PEOPLE.

Mr. Loftus George said he is the president of the Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts. He provided a brief overview of the event and said it is the fourth annual Broadway in the Park concert. Each year, it highlights its students' pursuit of degrees. It is a significant event in which they sing Broadway tunes for the community, attracting many Norwalk residents and residents from different towns.

**** MS. EADDY MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

G. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF BRIEN MCMAHON FIELD AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY EJ'S HEART FOR THEIR WALK FOR ELIJAH TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JULY 12TH, 2025 FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 125 PEOPLE.

Mr. Stowers said that the staff are in favor of supporting as many walks as they can. It is part of their mission for health and safety, particularly runs and walks, so staff favor this event. The applicant has applied for all their permits, and everything appears to be in order. They are recommending approval for the event.

Ms. Young said that Mr. Gilmore and his wife have done an amazing thing by starting this walk for their son Elijah, who had passed away, and it is a great event to keep his memory going by doing something that promotes heart health and keeps the awareness up in the community.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

H. SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEM: AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO GRANT AN ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITY EASEMENT TO EVERSOURCE IN THE VICINITY OF WILLIAMS STREET, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT.

Mr. Hughes said these items were approved at the March meeting, but after further discussion with the Corporation Council, they would like to hold a public hearing. Staff are requesting to schedule the public hearing on July 9, 2-25, at 7:00 P.M. and send the request to the Planning and Zoning Commission for the Planning and Zoning referral.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

1. REFERRAL TO PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR C.G.S. § 8-24 REVIEW AND REPORT: AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO GRANT AN ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITY EASEMENT TO EVERSOURCE IN THE VICINITY OF WILLIAMS STREET, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- I. SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEM: AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO GRANT AN ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITY EASEMENT TO EVERSOURCE IN THE VICINITY OF CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

1. REFERRAL TO PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR C.G.S. § 8-24 REVIEW AND REPORT: AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO GRANT AN ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITY EASEMENT TO EVERSOURCE IN THE VICINITY OF CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT.

Mr. Hughes said this is the same as the previous item, but this one is just outside Nathan Hale Middle School, and the other item was on the corner of Calf Pasture Beach Road in the area of Marvin School. Staff also request that the public hearing be scheduled for July 9, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

J. AUTHORIZE MAYOR HARRY W RILLING TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS WITH FRIENDS OF THE NORWALK RIVER VALLEY TRAIL RELATED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE NRV T TRAIL BETWEEN UNION PARK AND NEW CANAAN AVENUE.

Mr. Stowers said this request came from the mayor and the legal department. Staff have been negotiating a contract with the NRV T for maintenance, which will not cost the city any money and is simply an internal operational document. They have been advised that the committee authorize the mayor to sign the document.

**** MR. LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF WASHINGTON STREET PLAZA AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY GORDON FINE ARTS FOR THEIR SONO ARTS FESTIVAL TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 2ND AND SUNDAY, AUGUST 3RD, 2025 FROM 9:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. SET-UP TIME BY 6:00 A.M. SATURDAY WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 5:00 P.M SUNDAY. APPROXIMATELY 1000 PEOPLE.

Ms. Gordon provided a brief overview of the event and said she is here to address any committee concerns. Her past track record shows that things have gone relatively smoothly.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE COMPLETION OF A HYBRID MODEL BASEBALL FIELD DESIGN FOR THE NEWLY PROPOSED BROAD RIVER BASEBALL COMPLEX. IT WOULD FEATURE A GRASS OUTFIELD AND SYNTHETIC TURF INFIELD FOR EACH FIELD.

Mr. Stowers said that a public hearing was held last month, and it is the staff's position that it is now the committee's responsibility to move one of the three options forward. When he arrived, the funding for this item had already been approved, and a whole synthetic field was the initial design. Still, listening to the community's concerns, staff had discussed this internally and

decided to put the hybrid option forward, which they thought would be the best compromise for the citizens of Norwalk. Synthetic fields were initially discussed because sports are now year-round, and to play year-round. Staff are not pushing any particular design, but are giving the committee the option, and the synthetic field seemed to be the best option based on the concerns. There are three options before the committee tonight, but staff is not recommending the grass-on-grass field because tournaments would not be able to be held, so staff is recommending one of the other two options, which would be the clay and grass or the synthetic field.

Ms. Shanahan said that she agrees with Ms. Lauricella that we haven't priced the cost of buying, maintaining, and picking up the turf and disposing of it, and asked if any more research has been done on the cost annually. Mr. Hughes said that the black rubber infill was an issue, so they used a cool plate material at the West Rocks field, which lowers the temperature of the turf, so heat is not an issue. They are now looking to use an all-natural product and are avoiding the rubber infill. Hence, the watering down of a field is a thing of the past. He said disinfectant would also not be used so the fields would be groomed, but no chemical would be used as a disinfecting agent.

Mr. Hughes discussed the maintenance costs for the synthetic and clay fields. He said the estimated annual cost for maintaining three fields with a grass outfield and a clay infield would be approximately \$170,760 plus a \$95,000 one-time charge to have a maintenance building on the field. The estimated cost for an artificial turf infield would be \$21,952 per field, costing \$65,856 for the three fields. If the complex has a clay infield and a grass outfield, the way to do it properly would be to have a staff member assigned just to that site. Hence, maintenance is maintenance-intensive, which is the biggest complaint they receive, as they have had a hard time keeping the fields that they have, especially with the weather conditions over the past couple of weeks, especially not having staff dedicated to one site.

Mr. Hughes said the last turf field replaced was at Norwalk High School in 2017, and the total project cost was \$401,000, including removing the existing turf but bagging and salvaging the existing infill, so there were cost savings there.

Ms. Eaddy said she did not see the pros and cons of the grass infield and outfield. Mr. Hughes noted that staff are not recommending that, and baseball fields don't work with an all-grass infield, and tournaments cannot be held on those. Ms. Eaddy said if the clay option is chosen, she agrees to getting funds for staff, and she would be looking to those who opposed the turf fields to be able to help through fundraising, etc. She said she does not favor turf fields, not only for the environmental effects, but also because of the injuries.

Ms. Ayers said one of her concerns is the quality of our fields and asked what they would need to give up. She hears both sides of the argument, but does not ever hear anyone offering a solution for how it will be paid for. Mr. Hughes said that maintenance is included in the current budget since the site exists, but the level of maintenance will be higher on the new complex.

Mr. Lopez said he understands the eagerness for greater play opportunities and consistent play. Still, in this particular case, he needs to consider the exposure to potentially harmful chemicals, so he has approached this in a dispassionate but objective manner to ensure that we are not exposing our kids to anything harmful and not polluting anything nearby. Hence, he favors the clay and grass option and is offering to help enhance the field maintenance plan as we advance.

Ms. Shanahan said she completely supports the fields and knows they are under budget constraints. It breaks her heart and wishes they could find more money to be sure there was a dedicated staff member at any of these fields because sports are so important, but the science is clear that PFAS and the plastic fields extrude toxic chemicals. If she had known more when her children were playing sports she would never have let them be on one of those fields as is terrifies her to think about the exposure of these toxic chemicals to children in these formative years. There is also a lot of research that turf fields are dangerous to the kids, as concussions, knee injuries, etc., are all higher on artificial turf fields than on grass. She doesn't know why people want to see their children play on a less safe field. Even without that just looking at the safety of our water supply which is one of 80 important sensitive water places, and the EPA has said there is no safe level of PFAS so how we can consider putting this close to the water fields and on top of that the state will be requiring the water wells to be cleaned from PFAS.

Mr. Sead said we all want the best shot for our kids and the opportunities we didn't have, but more than anything, he wants them to be safe. He is highly concerned about PFAS; these chemicals are not a joke; they last forever. At the First Taxing District, they are directly engaged in this and are part of a class action lawsuit against PFAS manufacturers because these chemicals have made their way into our system. Going back 40 years, we thought it was a good idea to let the fire department do testing in this area, and are now finding PFAS in the well fields and water so much that five years ago, we, we had to shut down one of the well fields that is down the block from this location, so this is a real issue. PFAS are found in many things, not just turf, but he doesn't think we should add to the problem.

Mr. Stowers noted that the clay and grass fields will cost three times as much to maintain, which he has no problem with as long as they are funded to maintain them. We will need a higher-level maintenance person to recruit and pay.

Ms. Ayers said she is neutral about the items, but the committee members cannot say they do not want a turf field and are not committed to fully funding its upkeep.

Mr. Sead said he would be willing to commit to that. We are talking about funding, which is our job, but it is also our job to talk about the well-being of our city. We haven't discussed the human capital we are saving by making this investment and ensuring it is safer.

Ms. Shanahan asked if there is a way to create a Parks Foundation to help with the maintenance because we are taxing our citizens to what they feel they can afford, and she knows the city departments need more funds. Mr. Stowers said he has been talking to the mayor and Mr. Livingston about the Parks Foundation. However, the Parks Foundation is more interested in capital projects because they want to see something substantial and feel the city is responsible for operating dollars. He said they are working on increasing fees and have taken a step forward this year, but it is difficult when things have been free, so it will take some time to get there. We are also looking to recruit more sponsors.

Ms. Young said the technology is constantly changing and improving, and she thinks it would be worth doing an independent study at some point.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION FAILED WITH (2) TWO IN FAVOR- MS. AYERS AND MS. YOUNG, AND THREE (3) OPPOSED- MS. SHANAHAN, MS. EADDY, AND MR. LOPEZ.**

VIII. AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE COMPLETION OF A BASEBALL FIELD DESIGN FOR THE NEWLY PROPOSED BROAD RIVER BASEBALL COMPLEX. IT WOULD FEATURE A GRASS OUTFIELD AND CLAY INFIELD FOR EACH FIELD.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH (4) FOUR IN FAVOR- MS. YOUNG, MS. SHANAHAN, MS. EADDY, AND MR. LOPEZ AND ONE (1) OPPOSED- MS. AYERS**

IX. AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE COMPLETION OF A BASEBALL FIELD DESIGN FOR THE NEWLY PROPOSED BROAD RIVER BASEBALL COMPLEX. IT WOULD FEATURE GRASS OUTFIELDS AND GRASS INFIELDS FOR EACH FIELD.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION FAILED WITH (4) FOUR OPPOSED- MS. YOUNG, MS. SHANAHAN, MS. EADDY, AND MR. LOPEZ AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION- MS. AYERS.**

Mr. Stowers thanked the committee for listening and said that either way, we will have a good field and figure out how to take care of it.

VII. DISCUSSION

There was no discussion this evening.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd