

**CITY OF NORWALK
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
January 13, 2021**

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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.org to provide written comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Darlene Young, Chair; Thomas Keegan; Kadeem Roberts; John Kydes; George Theodoridis; George Tsiranides

STAFF: Nick Roberts, Director, Parks and Recreation

OTHERS: Michael Reilly; Jerri Toni; Jeff DeWitt

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Young called the meeting to order at 7:04PM and stated that a quorum was present.

II. MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2020.

**** MR. TSIRANIDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2020 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation this evening.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH NORWALK MILITARY & VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE USE OF VETERANS PARK FOR THE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021 FROM 9:00AM-11:00AM. SET UP TO BEGIN MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021 A 7:00AM AND TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 11:00AM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 500.

Mr. Dewitt said they are very hopeful that the parade will be able to go on in May and that the template is the same as it has been for many years and will begin at Vets Park continue down Van Zant Street to East Avenue and end at the green. He said Vets Park will be used for staging and the Show Mobile will be needed at City Hall.

Ms. Young said one of the things we need to be mindful of is that we are still in a pandemic and there are still many things that are unknown but are going through the approval process with the hopes that things will slowly improve. The City of Norwalk reserves the right to cancel any events for public health or safety reasons as determined by the City of Norwalk and its sole discretion and the City of Norwalk shall not be liable for the canceling of any events.

Mr. Roberts said he wanted to begin with the approval process for some of the events especially the larger annual ones that there is a past relationship with because they need a commitment in advance with the contingency that we do not know what the circumstances are going to be once the date of the events get closer. He said once the restrictions begin to get lifted that the approval process will begin for the smaller events.

Mr. Kydes asked if the deposits are refundable. Mr. Roberts said “yes” and last year a full refund was given to for all of the events that were cancelled due to the pandemic.

****MR. ROBERTS MOVED TO APPROVE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH NORWALK MILITARY & VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE USE OF VETERANS PARK FOR THE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021 FROM 9:00AM-11:00AM. SET UP TO BEGIN MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021 A 7:00AM AND TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 11:00AM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK MILITARY & VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE USE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR A REMEMBRANCE EVENT TO BE HELD SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021 FROM 12:00 NOON -2:00PM. SET UP TO BEGIN SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021 AT 9:00AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 2:00PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 100.

Mr. DeWitt said for a long time the third Sunday in May was reserved for a remembrance event at the Shea McGrath Memorial and there are plaques there that represent every Norwalk resident that had died during a war. This is an event that the veteran community really appreciates and puts Norwalk ahead of other communities for taking the time to recognize the veterans.

The members of the committee thanked Mr. DeWitt for all that he does.

**** MR. TSIRANIDES MOVED TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK MILITARY & VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE USE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR A REMEMBRANCE EVENT TO BE HELD SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021 FROM 12:00 NOON -2:00PM. SET UP TO BEGIN SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021 AT 9:00AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 2:00PM. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 100.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK SEAPORT ASSOCIATION FOR THE USE OF VETERANS PARK FOR THE OYSTER FESTIVAL TO BE HELD FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 FROM 6:00PM-11:00PM, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2021 FROM 11:00AM-11:00PM, AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2021 FROM 11:00AM-8:00PM. SETUP TO BEGIN FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 2020 AT 8:00AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 5:00PM ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2021. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 30,000.

Mr. Reilly said the event is a critical fundraising event for the Norwalk Seaport Association and are hoping the event will happen this year.

Mr. Roberts asked if the site will be accessible on the Wednesday before the event just in case a food distribution event will need to be held. Mr. Reilly said “yes” and would be best if it can be done on the side that the Covid-19 testing is currently being done or near the boat ramps. Mr. Roberts requested once they get closer to the event that Mr. Reilly send him a site layout.

Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Reilly if they are taking into account that there may be a limitations on how many people can attend the event and asked if there is insurance to cover such an instance. Mr. Toni said “no” and will have to be very cautious as we proceed closer before any funds are released and will be meeting with the key vendors as we get into the spring season.

Mr. Roberts asked if there is a “go or no go” timeline that a decision on the holding the event will need to be made. Mr. Toni said “yes” but they do not yet know what that is.

Ms. Young thanked Mr. Reilly and Mr. Toni for all they do for the City of Norwalk and the seaport is one of the things that Norwalk is known for and that is due to the hard work of the Norwalk Seaport Association.

****MR. TSIRINIDES MOVED TO APPROVE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK SEAPORT ASSOCIATION FOR THE USE OF VETERANS PARK FOR THE OYSTER FESTIVAL TO BE HELD FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 FROM 6:00PM-11:00PM, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2021 FROM 11:00AM-11:00PM, AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2021 FROM 11:00AM-8:00PM. SETUP TO BEGIN FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 2020 AT 8:00AM WITH TEAR DOWN NO LATER THAN 5:00PM ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2021. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE 30,000.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. APPROVE THE RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING DATES FOR 2020: JANUARY 13TH, FEBRUARY 10TH, MARCH 10TH, APRIL 14TH, MAY 12TH, JUNE 9th, JULY 14TH, AUGUST 11TH, SEPTEMBER 8TH, OCTOBER 13TH, NOVEMBER 10TH, DECEMBER 8TH. CURRENTLY ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD VIA ZOOM.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING DATES FOR 2021: JANUARY 13TH, FEBRUARY 10TH, MARCH 10TH, APRIL 14TH, MAY 12TH, JUNE 9, JULY 14TH, AUGUST 11TH, SEPTEMBER 8TH, OCTOBER 13TH, NOVEMBER 10TH, DECEMBER 8TH. CURRENTLY ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD VIA ZOOM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. DISCUSSION

1. Fees and Charges for the Department of Recreation and Parks for the 2021-22 Season. Set a date and time for the Public Hearing next month.

Mr. Roberts said that last year there were changes made to the parking passes at the beach and that we looked at the parking rates at the beach and did a comparable with the other municipalities and realized we were below the market rate and did the same thing this year with the boating ramps. He said that non-resident launches are currently \$30 for weekdays and for non-resident boat launches and on weekends and holidays is \$35. He said he is proposing instead of changing the rates to have a flat rate of \$40. He also said currently we do a daily launch but do not charge an exit pass at the end of a season and he is recommending a flat rate of \$40 any day of the week.

Mr. Roberts said the current rate for the season for resident boat stickers is \$20 for residents and \$15 for seniors and he is grossly under market from surrounding towns so his minimum recommendation would be \$30 for residents and \$25 for seniors.

Mr. Roberts said the non-resident season launch passes are currently \$175 and he is proposing an increase to \$275. He said the increase is still low to the surrounding towns but he feels that it is fair.

Mr. Roberts said the reason he would like to have the same rate for weekdays and weekends and for residents and non-residents is because it will encourage residents to buy a season pass because it is cheaper.

Mr. Roberts said that it was determined last year that we did not have a rate for commercial operators launching customer's boats out of our docks, and the way it currently works is that the staff at the boating center would sell the operators a non-resident pass at \$175. He said the marine operators pick up customer's boats and launch them from our ramps and for a boat less than 20' the market rate is \$150 and for boats that are more than 20' the rate is \$250 so each time they launch a boat or pick a boat up from our marina they are charging customers \$150 to \$250 and they are doing this with a pass of \$175 for the season. He said he is proposing a business sticker for Norwalk businesses only and charge a seasonal rate of \$750 for the entire season and that he had contacted the Stamford Parks Department and they charge \$550 for the season but it is only used a few times a year and it strictly used for sales, and in Norwalk there is much more usage and more operators and that is why he is proposing the higher rate.

Mr. Keegan asked if someone would be charged each time they launched a boat using the marina business pass. Mr. Roberts said "no" and last year because there was no rate there was a charge per boat but this pass would be for the entire season for as many launches and exits as they choose.

Mr. Kydes asked if there is a reason not to have a resident day pass at a lower rate. Mr. Roberts said because he was trying to encourage people to utilize a pass as opposed to a daily rate. Mr. Kydes asked if it would make sense to remove the daily resident pass and just offer season passes. Mr. Roberts said he would be okay with that. Mr. Tsirinides said he also agrees with that and that it would help to streamline the process.

Mr. Kydes suggested for the resident boat stickers an increase to \$25 for residents and \$20 for seniors. Mr. Roberts said the rate was reduced a few years ago and said if we are going to change the rate suggested to change it one time to something that is reasonable as opposed to incremental increases each year. Mr. Tsirinides agreed with adjusting the residential rate and he thinks \$30 is a very reasonable rate for the resident boat stickers for unlimited use of the boat launch but suggested not increasing the senior rate. Mr. Kydes agreed and suggested \$30 for residents and leaving the senior rate of \$15.

Ms. Young suggested increasing the non-resident pass to \$300. Mr. Kydes suggested that the rate increase be based on statistics. Mr. Roberts suggested to increasing the rate to \$300 and he will provide the statistics for next month's meeting and based on those statistics the rate can be adjusted downward if need be. He also said at the next meeting he will have a total number of non-resident passes sold as well to total number of passes there were for the other launch fees, but the only numbers he will not be able to provide are the marina business passes or commercial launches that were done last year because last year they were sold as individuals and not as a business.

It was decided that the proposed rate increases would be:

- \$30 for the resident pass and \$20 for a senior pass.
- Eliminate the daily resident rate of \$40.
- \$300 for a non-resident season pass.
- \$40 for a non-resident pass daily pass.
- \$750 for a marina business pass.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ROBERTS MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd