

**CITY OF NORWALK
OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APRIL 16, 2026
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

ATTENDEES: Alan Dutton, Denise Brown, Gary Leeds, Jennifer McAllister, TJ Trimboli, Robert Stowers.

STAFF: Jim Hollyday, John Lloyd, Arlen Domoney, Jerry Crowley, Nick Novak, Jim Schell, Mark Gartner.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dutton called the regular meeting of the Oak Hills Park Authority to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom virtual meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Dutton conducted roll call. Mr. Dutton, Ms. Brown, Mr. Leeds, Ms. McAllister, and Mr. Trimboli were present. A quorum was established. Mr. Stowers joined the meeting shortly thereafter.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

****MR. LEEDS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 19, 2026 REGULAR MEETING.**

****MS. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS CORRECTED.**

Mr. Dutton noted two corrections needed on the minutes: add Mr. Novak to the staff listing on page one, and correct the spelling of “Odines” on page three, paragraph two. Ms. Brown noted that Mr. Domoney should be added under “others” as he had attended the prior meeting. Mr. Dutton confirmed the spelling as D-O-M-O-N-E-Y. There was no further discussion.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Hollyday reported that no members of the public wished to speak. Public participation was closed.

V. REPORTS

A. Chair

Mr. Dutton thanked Mr. Dellinger for filling in for him at the previous meeting, noting it was the first meeting he had missed in almost five years. He reminded the Authority that the meeting would include a discussion of assumptions for the upcoming 2026-2027 capital and operating budget. Mr. Dutton reported that a team consisting of Mr. Novak, Mr. Hollyday, and a representative from Odine's had begun meeting individually with the approximately fourteen groups scheduled for outings at Oak Hills Park. Four meetings had already taken place and were proceeding successfully. He noted that of the remaining ten groups, two were expected to push back on the requirement to use the food and beverage services: one long-standing group of twenty-one years and one newer social club. Mr. Dutton emphasized that Oak Hills Park is the Norwalk public golf course and must continue to support Norwalk entities such as police, fire, EMS, City Hall, and 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. He noted that several such groups had chosen not to return this year. Mr. Dutton stated that the one-on-one meetings would continue over the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Leeds commented that while the Authority wants to support nonprofits and long-standing groups that are essentially grandfathered, new groups coming in should be expected to use the restaurant as part of the outing package now that a more reputable restaurant operation is in place. Ms. Brown agreed and added that Norwalk-based organizations should support Norwalk facilities including the restaurant, noting that beachside soccer, a new group, was already planning to use the restaurant. Mr. Leeds also suggested developing a policy regarding minimum player numbers for shotgun starts so that the entire course is not closed for smaller groups. Mr. Gartner confirmed that management had previously discussed a minimum of approximately one hundred players and that this would be reviewed with Mr. Novak. Mr. Hollyday noted that groups with fewer than eighty players had been required to pay for eighty and that the individual meetings were helping clarify expectations. Mr. Dutton agreed with the direction being taken by the team.

B. Restaurant: John Lloyd

Mr. Lloyd reported that the turn hut is now staffed daily due to favorable weather and that hut hours will be 8:00 a.m. to at least 6:00 p.m. beginning in May. The restaurant is open daily with adjusted hours: 10:00 a.m. Monday through Thursday and 9:00 a.m. Friday through Sunday. A concession fridge has been placed in the pro shop with simple golf snacks and soft drinks, with plans to expand if demand increases. A new television has been installed on the deck outside the pro shop, with a second planned. Private parties continue to be successful, with the restaurant able to keep deck service open during indoor events. Mr. Lloyd noted recent weddings, a funeral, Comedy Night, speed dating, trivia nights, and upcoming bands. He invited everyone to check the website for the monthly calendar.

C. Nature Advisory: Mary Verel

Mr. Dutton read the report from Ms. Verel in her absence. The Nature Advisory Committee will have a table at the City of Norwalk Earth Day celebration on April 25th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the green. Work continues on the Alternative Lawn with assistance from A&A Landscaping and Artscaping. The food forest project around the Great Lawn is in progress, supported by one grant received and another pending. A small composting demonstration area is

being installed with guidance from Mr. Schell. A brush hog flail mower has been located and will be used to prepare the area by the power lines behind the workshed. Thanks to Mr. Stowers and the City Parks and Recreation Department, a BioBlitz Citizen Science event is scheduled for September. Path maintenance and vine removal continue, with thanks to Mr. McGoldrick. The Norwalk Garden Club will continue maintaining the Fountain Garden, where daffodils are currently in bloom.

D. Tennis: Denise Brown

Ms. Brown reported that seven new benches have been delivered and will be assembled by volunteers from the Friends group. Mr. Hollyday has ordered a dividing curtain and eight new nets. New screens are scheduled for installation. Additional hard tru and clay have been added to the courts by Oval to address thinning from the previous vendor. Ms. Brown noted that the Friends group is working on seating for the pergola and new flower pots. Mr. Domoney then provided an update on the courts. He stated that Oval completed work on April 4th, adding an extra ton of clay per court. The courts could last another four to seven years with proper maintenance before full reconstruction, estimated at approximately \$55,000 per court or roughly \$440,000 to \$500,000 total including irrigation. Mr. Domoney reported seventy-three tennis memberships signed to date, anticipating approximately seventy-five more, with 56% currently non-Norwalk residents. Court preparation is underway with watering and rolling. Programming is scheduled to begin the week of May 4th or May 11th, with an opening event on May 9th and a Mother's Day event on May 10th. Adult clinics and junior camps are filling, and marketing to local schools will increase. Mr. Domoney also noted collaboration with Mr. Novak on combined golf and tennis camps. Discussion followed regarding future court resurfacing funding possibilities, including USTA grants and state outdoor recreation grants, with Mr. Stowers offering to investigate eligibility. Mr. Leeds suggested incorporating court reconstruction into long-range planning.

E. Supporters of Oak Hills Park: Jerry Crowley

Mr. Crowley was present and offered brief supportive comments during the meeting.

F. Long Term Planning: Gary Leeds

Mr. Leeds participated actively in the capital and operating budget assumptions discussion (see Section VII).

G. Golf Professional: Nick Novak

Mr. Novak participated in the capital and operating budget assumptions discussion, offering ideas on player experience improvements and creative options for maintaining revenue during course work (see Section VII).

H. Superintendent: Jim Schell

Mr. Schell participated in the capital and operating budget assumptions discussion, providing details on planned projects (see Section VII).

I. Controller: Mark Gartner

Mr. Gartner participated in the capital and operating budget assumptions discussion, providing financial context (see Section VII).

J. General Manager: Jim Hollyday

Mr. Hollyday reported that Mr. Novak’s development of the old pro shop into a performance center has required relocation of outside golf staff space. A temporary 8x14-foot shed will be installed to the right of the current starter station at a cost of approximately \$7,500. The shed will house desks, shelves, and seating. Mr. Hollyday also noted ongoing tennis center improvements including new nets, windscreens, and court work. He highlighted general maintenance efforts and expressed anticipation for the busy season ahead.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Leeds inquired about the status of health insurance discussions with the City of Norwalk. Mr. Hollyday reported no update from the City. Mr. Stowers confirmed that the matter is still under review in the Chief of Staff’s office.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Capital and Operating Budget Assumptions Discussion

Mr. Dutton led a discussion on assumptions for the 2026-2027 capital and operating budgets. He reviewed the prior year’s approximately \$700,000 positive cash flow, noting payments to the City of approximately \$150,000 for debt service and \$150,000 to \$165,000 for commercial debt, leaving roughly \$285,000 available for capital after those obligations. Mr. Gartner reported that capital expenditures are currently projected at approximately \$380,000 and may come in slightly higher. Cash on hand was noted at approximately \$465,000 at the end of March. Mr. Dutton emphasized the need for a strong contingency in both capital and operating budgets due to unforeseen building maintenance and other expenses.

Mr. Schell discussed proposed capital projects including relocation of the cart path on hole two, new paths to the third tee and surrounding tees (estimated \$130,000, potentially lower with bidding), and associated drainage work on holes one, two, four, and six. Additional tee construction was also mentioned to provide more options and spread wear. Mr. Schell noted that these projects could be completed in approximately three weeks after October 15th, with the front six holes closed and play shifted to a twelve-hole format from hole seven, with possible adjustments to maintain revenue. Mr. Leeds stressed the need to account for any revenue impact in the budget and suggested similar work on holes fourteen through eighteen the following year.

Mr. Novak suggested creative routing options such as playing holes seven through thirteen twice to complete nineteen holes and finish near the parking lot, potentially minimizing revenue loss. Mr. Schell also updated on the existing well, noting it has already provided savings and peace of mind by delaying full reliance on city water.

Mr. Gartner and Mr. Hollyday discussed ongoing building maintenance challenges and rising operational costs, including higher wages for grounds staff (approximately \$19-\$20 per hour). Mr. Leeds noted that free cash increased by \$100,000 in the prior year after all capital and debt obligations and encouraged careful management of cash reserves while continuing to invest in course improvements. Mr. Dutton agreed that balance is needed between capital investment and maintaining comfortable cash levels. No formal action was taken; the discussion will continue at the next meeting with more detailed figures.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

****MR. LEEDS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

****MR. STOWERS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:31 p.m.

UPCOMING MEETINGS May 21, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary