



CITY OF NORWALK
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 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; Nicole’ Eaddy; Johan Lopez; Douglas Sutton; Heather Dunn; Nicol Ayers

ABSENT: Lisa Shanahan

STAFF: Robert Stowers, Director, Recreation and Parks

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: September 11th, 2025**

**** MS. DUNN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1)
ABSTENTION- MS. AYERS**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Diane Lauricella- 21 Little Fox Lane

Ms. Lauricella said she is thankful for all of the work of the staff and this committee in making Norwalk a more fun place to live. She said she is here to speak on the Holiday Extravaganza and said she is happy that there are special events, but she believes it behooves this council to request that the staff do so as soon as possible to create a donor program so the high cost of this event could be offset with businesses that want to give money to offset the taxpayer burden. She also said she is a member of the Norwalk Tree Alliance and suggested that real trees be used for the events rather than rentals, which would enhance the look of 50 Washington Street and be better for the carbon footprint. She will approach the board of the Norwalk Tree Alliance as well as Ms. Cruz, regarding donating a tree.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **AUTHORIZE THE USE OF WOLFPIT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FIELD AND THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY WOLFPIT PTA FOR THEIR TRUNK OR TREAT TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25TH, 2025, FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M. RAIN DATE OF SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26TH. APPROXIMATELY 150 PEOPLE.**

Ms. Elise provided a brief overview of the event and said that it has been held for many years and is a safe event where the kids go from trunk to trunk to collect their candy.

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

- B. **AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH AND THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THE CITY OF NORWALK RECREATION & PARKS FOR THEIR JINGLE BELL 5K TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13TH, 2025, FROM 8:00 AM. TO 11:00 A.M.. APPROXIMATELY 200 PEOPLE.**

Mr. Stowers provided an overview of the event and said it has been an annual event for a few years; it is successful and fun, and they partner with Ripka's café, which provides hot cocoa and coffee for participants.

**** MR. SUTTON 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 WASHINGTON STREET PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY CITY OF NORWALK DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR THEIR HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 2025 FROM 1:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M. SET-UP TIME BY 9:00 A.M. WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 10:00 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 1500 PEOPLE.**

Ms. Breault provided a brief overview of the event and said this will be the fourth annual Holiday Extravaganza. This event has become a community favorite and will include a holiday market inside 50 Washington Street, but they are still awaiting confirmation that they will be able to use the space.

Ms. Eaddy asked whether donations to offset costs are possible, as well as getting a real tree rather than a rental. Ms. Breault said a sponsorship packet was sent at the beginning of the year, and Wegman's is already sponsoring the Halloween Night Fair. She said they are getting

sponsorships for their events, taking vendor fees, and have already collected \$12,000. She said this is the last year of the contract for renting the trees, and they are looking at other options for the trees for future events.

Ms. Eaddy expressed concern about Santa coming down the building.

Mr. Lopez asked whether there is a working list of potential sponsors to share with the committee, and whether there is anything the committee can do to attract sponsors on their end. Ms. Breault said she will share the sponsorship packet with the committee members, but currently, the only sponsorship they have is from Wegman's. They are trying to get more, and they would appreciate any help the committee can provide.

Ms. Dunn suggested including the library in the event.

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

**D. APPROVE THE USE OF VETERANS' PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING
GROUNDS BY NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS & CITY OF NORWALK
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS FOR THEIR 34TH ANNUAL NORWALK
RIVER FUN RUN TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 2025 FROM 10:00
A.M. TO 11:00 A.M. RAIN DATE OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH SET-UP TIME BY
9:00 A.M. SATURDAY, WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 11:30 A.M. APPROXIMATELY 350
PEOPLE.**

Mr. Madaffari provided a brief overview of the event and said this is the 34th year the event has been held and that it is a great event.

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

VII. DISCUSSION

Mr. Stowers said the joint use agreement was passed a few months ago and has now been signed by the mayor and the Superintendent of Schools, so he and Ms. Faioes will begin actively implementing and orienting the schools to the agreement. The agreement clarifies the use of school facilities. The schools, as well as their associated groups, have primary use of the facilities, and Recreation and Parks have second priority and will handle any sports- and recreation-related programs that use the facilities.

Mr. Stowers said they have been discussing entering into a cooperative agreement with Nuvance to partner with Recreation and Parks to develop a health program, attend events, and help develop signage for the parks, and he hopes to present it to the committee next month for approval.

Mr. Stowers said that mobilization has begun at the east side of the marina at Veteran Park, and there will be a groundbreaking ceremony on October 16th. A groundbreaking ceremony was held yesterday for the micro-forest at Meadow Street Park. Ms. Young said it will be a real health improvement in that community and will serve as a buffer from dust and truck traffic, and she thanked Ms. Shanahan and Louise Washer for spearheading it. Mr. Lopez agreed and said it is an exciting start. Ms. Eaddy agreed and said she hopes an herb garden can be incorporated into the micro forest.

Ms. Ayers said that Norwalk is a city on water, and she would love it if water were incorporated into many more of the designs and what we do throughout the city.

Mr. Stowers said Clyde Ripka will not continue as the concessioner at Calf Pasture Beach, and that an RFP has been developed and will be released next week, including improvements to the facility.

Ms. Dunn requested a tour of the new Recreation and Parks facility for the committee members. She also requested to see the patio at Oak Hills Park in the fall.

Ms. Ayers said a constituent reached out to her with concerns about the swim-and-learn program and its limited availability. Mr. Stowers requested that Ms. Ayers share his email address so he can discuss the possibility of additional open slots.

Ms. Ayers requested that some Recreation and Parks committee meetings be held at a community location and that the community be invited.

Mr. Stowers provided an update on the park foundation and said that he and Mr. Livingston have invited two consultants to prepare a proposal to establish a foundation.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. DUNN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd