

**CITY OF NORWALK
OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 20, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: Alan, Dutton; Chair, Richard Dellinger; Vice Chair, Denise Brown; Treasurer, Gary Leeds, Geoffrey Sweitzer, Mary Verel (7:05 p.m.) Robert Stowers (7:16 p.m.),

STAFF: Mark Gartner, Controller, Jim Holliday; General Manager, Paul Alexander; Golf Professional, Jim Schell; Superintendent (7:22 p.m.)

OTHER: Jerry Crowley; Supporters of Oak Hills Park, John Lloyd; Odeen's

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dutton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Dutton called the roll as indicated above. A quorum was present. He noted Ms. Verel would be joining the meeting late.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: February 20, 2025

**** MR. LEEDS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

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

Mr. Dutton requested Ms. Verel's name be moved from the category of *OTHER* because she is an Authority member.

**** THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR**

AND ONE ABSTENTION (MR. DELLINGER).

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public who wished to comment.

V. REPORTS

Ms. Verel joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

A. Chair

Mr. Dutton informed the meeting participants that they would be having an executive session.

Mr. Dutton noted they didn't get into the Connecticut Partnership Fund. The reason was that the fund didn't think the Park Authority was part of the city of Norwalk. He noted that the Authority and the city of Norwalk are in negotiations to see what can be done about it. He indicated he would let the authorities know when he hears more. Mr. Dutton added they will have health insurance for their employees.

Mr. Dutton stated they would be working on budgets over the next couple of months. He listed the various expenditures they currently have.

Mr. Gartner added to be prepared for a big year of spending.

B. Restaurant: John Lloyd

Mr. Lloyd said now that they're entering spring the restaurant has begun serving food to the golfers. He indicated they would have a phased opening to introduce their new services. He said they expected some false starts but were looking forward to the 2025 season.

In response to Ms. Brown, Mr. Lloyd stated they had a good winter season of live music every Saturday, and occasional Sunday performances of the jazz quintet. He mentioned they had booked Tangled Vine for an upcoming Saturday. He went on to say, by and large, they are receiving some good reviews and repeat business. In response to Mr. Dellinger, he stated they plan to continue the live music nights throughout the summer.

C. Nature Advisory: Mary Verel

Ms. Verel opened her report by saying they had had their first clean-up. She noted they will have a path rejuvenation on Tuesday, March 25th. She mentioned they called Tulip Tree Design, and they remediated the dangerous area by the dumpster. She said they put up two new bluebird boxes. She defined for Mr. Gartner what makes a bluebird box different from other types of bird boxes. Ms. Verel said she wanted to tour the tennis area to see what they could do there. She also noted she still wanted to remediate the path to the Fountain Garden to make it more user-friendly.

Ms. Verel stated she created the long-range plan and submitted it to Mr. Gartner. She then mentioned she had the Bot Scouts coming. She noted they were looking for community or corporate groups to come by and lend a hand. She listed events like Earth Day that they were participating in. She also mentioned the master tree plan workshop.

Mr. Stowers joined the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Ms. Brown asked about attracting hummingbirds. Ms. Verel said it was a lovely thing to do. Mr. Leeds disagreed, saying it was too intensive.

D. Tennis: Denise Brown

Ms. Brown said the plan was to open the courts by May 12th. She noted the completion of the fencing job around courts one and six. She described issues with the Hard True court and a sunken area on court one. She discussed a meeting she had with Friends of Tennis about hosting the tournament in honor of Arthur Goldblatt in late September.

Mr. Schell joined the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

E. Supporters of Oak Hills Park: Jerry Crowley

Mr. Crowley stated he had no report this evening.

F. Long Term Planning: Gary Leeds

Mr. Leeds expressed the need to look at what they wish to accomplish in the long and short term. He read some ideas that Ms. Verel sent him for both long and short-term projects.

G. Golf Professional: Paul Alexander

Mr. Alexander stated the course opened on Monday, March 10th. On the 15th the greens and tee

boxes were opened, followed by the carts becoming available on the 19th. He noted they had 179 golfers on opening day. He said presently the Golf Shop' hours are 7:20 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the course hours as of next week will be 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mr. Alexander went on to give the number of staff and discuss items. Such as memberships, annual passes, and golf outings. And the new POS and Tee sheets.

Mr. Leeds wanted to know if all the outings were required to use Odeen's. Mr. Alexander said that we encourage the outings to use the restaurant, but that we can't force them to do so.

However, no outside food or beverage will be allowed this year.

Mr. Leeds asked about shotgun starts for the outings. Mr. Alexander stated that all outings except very small ones have a shotgun start. He stated he tries to leave the course open for golfers as often as possible.

H. Superintendent: Jim Schell

Mr. Schell described the condition of the course and described work that was done in preparation for the opening. He reported the parking lot drain has been repaired. He discussed the staffing indicating there are a couple of seasonal positions that still need to be filled.

In answer to Mr. Stowers, Mr. Schell said they are staggering when the various employees start and they are laid off. The first week in December.

I. Controller: Mark Gartner

Mr. Gartner stated that February generated \$0 in greens fees but they still beat the budget on the net income line. He stated for March though slightly off at present. They should beat the budget by the end of the month. He said he's expecting \$7000 on Saturday this weekend.

Mr. Dutton commented on the cost of utilities notably electricity. Mr. Gartner stated that should start to improve around May.

J. General Manager: Jim Hollyday

Mr. Hollyday stated, information about repairs can be found in the written report. He noted he was gathering information on how other municipal courses run their operations. He discussed the insurance situation as it currently stands. He also discussed other contracts they shopped out. He also went over some opportunities for sponsorships and a mobile app. He also discussed improvements to the tennis center.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business discussed.

In response to Ms. Brown, Mr. Gartner stated they have to be careful about needs and wants for the next year to prevent the budget from blowing up.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The members of the Authority went into executive session at 7:53 p.m.

Upon returning from executive session Mr. Duitton stated there was no need to take a vote on any of the issues discussed.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. DELLINGER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
**** MR. LEEDS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services

UPCOMING MEETINGS

April 17, 2025

**CITY OF NORWALK
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MARCH 20, 2025**