

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 21, 2024**

This meeting was held via Zoom.

ATTENDANCE: Benji Labrador, Chair; Cruz Cotto, Vice President; Lee Grisby, John Mark Hosier, Lee Grisby, Lillian Wade

OTHERS: Tatiana Urena, Parks Department; Brett Caulfield, Superintendent of Parks; Lee Nastu, Parks; Luis Burgos, Public Facilities Director; Luann Conine, Recreation; Aaron Curry, Deputy Director; Beth Santa, Seaside Gateway Trail, Jocelyn Sanchez-Chavez, Bridgeport High School Student; Nelson Dones and Richard Zayas, Roberto Clemente Old Timers Softball League; Jonatan Soto, The Dominican-American Coalition of CT; Linda Mosel, New England South Youth Federation of Seventh Day Adventist Church; Harold Dimbo, Project Longevity; Bobbie Brown, 100 Girls Leading Inc; Jean Brown, Greater Bridgeport Area Prevention Program (GBAPP, Inc.); David Daniels, Bridgeport Jazz Festival Partners; Shakeema E. Romero, Bridgeport Vegan Festival; Shamar Freeman-Bey, TeachOurs Elders Association; Linda Mosel, Recovery Network of Programs, Inc.

OPENING CEREMONY / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Labrador. called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. He then led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Urena called the roll. There was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

• **April 9, 2024 (Regular Meeting)**

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 9, 2024 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 9, 2024 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM:

The public may call the Office of Parks and Recreation at 203-576-7234 and speak with Tatiana Urena or email her at tatiana.urena@bridgeportct.gov to sign up for Public Speaking.

There were no public comments to consider at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Beth Santa, Seaside Gateway Trail, Bridgeport, CT, providing a revised plan for the request of an irrigation system at Seaside Park on Waldemere Avenue.

Ms. Santa said that she sent some documents to Ms. Urena earlier in the week. Ms. Urena said that the Commissioners had not received the information in time. Discussion with Mr. Caulfield followed about who would maintain the garden and which plants would be used. Mr. Caulfield said that he did not have a problem with the proposed planting.

The discussion then moved to the details regarding the drip line. Mr. Caulfield asked if the Association would be responsible for the costs. Ms. Santa said that the Association would do so. She said that she would share the planting layout with Mr. Caulfield. Mr. Caulfield said that he appreciated the chance to be involved and will make sure it is done correctly.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM OB-1 BETH SANTA, SEASIDE GATEWAY TRAIL, BRIDGEPORT, CT, PROVIDING A REVISED PLAN FOR THE REQUEST OF AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM AT SEASIDE PARK ON WALDEMERE AVENUE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM OB-1 BETH SANTA, SEASIDE GATEWAY TRAIL, BRIDGEPORT, CT, PROVIDING A REVISED PLAN FOR THE REQUEST OF AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM AT SEASIDE PARK ON WALDEMERE AVENUE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW BUSINESS

1. Jocelyn Sanchez-Chavez, Bridgeport High School Student, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to approve a Skatepark Proposal located either at Seaside Park, Knowlton Park or Waterview Park.

Ms. Sanchez-Chavez greeted the Commissioners and explained that she wanted to have a skate park because there are many kids that use skate boards in Bridgeport. Skate boarding is a pretty good sport. She then described where she wanted to have the park in Seaside and indicated two areas where they could possibly located it. If not, there is a place in Knowlton Park.

Commissioner Labrador then reviewed the locations and explained that one of the sites might be where there were plans for a storm water retention park.

Commissioner Labrador asked if Ms. Sanchez-Chavez was aware that there had been a skate board park there previously. Ms. Sanchez-Chavez said that it had been removed in 2017. Commissioner Labrador said that when the skate board park had been there, it wasn't used very much and later became a target for vandalism and graffiti.

Commissioner Labrador said that there were other considerations such as having someone there to make sure that everyone wears a helmet and the area is secured at night. There will also have to be a discussion about who will maintain it and how much it will cost. He suggested another meeting with some additional information about the costs, insurance, safety and health issues.

Mr. Caulfield said that when Mr. Nadrizny was head of the Department, they had been considering it at B.J. Brown Park near the Boys and Girls Club.

Commissioner Hosier said that he applauded Ms. Sanchez-Chavez efforts. He said that he had a resolution that he would like to put forward.

Commissioner Wade said that she liked B.J. Brown Park for the park. Commissioner Labrador asked if Ms. Ms. Sanchez-Chavez could consider B.J. Brown Park. Ms. Sanchez-Chavez said that B.J. Brown Park was basically flat.

Commissioner Cotto expressed concerns regarding parking near the skate board park. Commissioner Labrador pointed out that to get into Seaside Park with a car a person has to have a park sticker. That isn't true with B.J. Brown Park. Discussion followed about meeting on site to review possible locations and potential costs.

The Commissioners emphasized that they were not denying the application, but that they need a little more information and some discussions regarding this project.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO STATE THAT THE PARK BOARD SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT OF THE PROPOSAL AND IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD, THEY WOULD LIKE A PROPOSED DESIGN, PLACEMENT, DURABILITY AND A PLAN FOR MAINTENANCE ISSUES.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Deborah Caviness, Juneteenth of Fairfield County Inc., 510 Barnum, Room #3102, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Juneteenth Concert to kick off the Juneteenth Festival at McLevy Green on Thursday, June 13, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with a setup at 3:00 p.m. and cleanup at 8:00 p.m. with a DJ, Vendors and Food Trucks for approximately 350 people.

Ms. Urena said that she had heard from Ms. Caviness and Ms. Caviness was cancelling the event because it was too close to the Juneteenth parade.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO DENY AGENDA ITEM 2 – DEBORAH CAVINESS, JUNETEENTH OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY INC., 510 BARNUM, ROOM #3102, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A JUNETEENTH CONCERT TO KICK OFF THE JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL AT MCLEVY GREEN ON THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2024 FROM 5:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP AT 3:00 P.M. AND CLEANUP AT 8:00 P.M. WITH A DJ, VENDORS AND FOOD TRUCKS FOR APPROXIMATELY 350 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO DENY PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Ramona Santelises, The Dominican-American Coalition of CT, Inc. 1021 Main Street, 2nd floor, Bridgeport, CT, requesting approval to add a petting zoo to their approved event at Seaside Park Diamond # 15 on Sunday, June 2, 2024 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for approximately 150 people. (This event was originally approved on the 3/12/2024 Park Board meeting)

Ms. Jonatan Soto greeted the Commissioners and said that while this event was previously approved, they would like to have a petting zoo. They will have rabbits and other small animals on site for two hours.

Commissioner Labrador said that he would like to know that the petting zoo staff would be responsible for the animals and that they would make sure the animals aren't running wild.

Commissioner Hosier asked if it was the same company that was used by a parade last year. Ms. Soto said that they do small parties for petting zoos. Commissioner Hosier said that he had seen them at that event and the animals were treated well.

Mr. Burgos said he wanted to thank Ms. Santelises for their involvement in the community. He said that the petting zoo staff does this for a living. Ms. Urena said that the information had been sent to Mr. Burgos and the Commissioners with pictures of the various animals that will be on site. She added that she would send a copy of that map to Mr. Burgos and Mr. Caulfield. Mr. Burgos said that he was not against the animals, but concerned about the logistics.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 3 – RAMONA SANTELISES, THE DOMINICAN-AMERICAN COALITION OF CT, INC. 1021 MAIN STREET, 2ND FLOOR, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING APPROVAL TO ADD A PETTING ZOO TO THEIR APPROVED EVENT AT SEASIDE PARK DIAMOND # 15 ON SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2024 FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 150 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER WADE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. Nelson Dones and Richard Zayas, Roberto Clemente Old Timers Softball League and Zayas Law Firm, 305 Boston Avenue, Stratford, CT, requesting to host a Concert at Went Field Park – Gazebo on Sunday, August 18, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a setup at 9:00 a.m. and cleanup at 7:00 p.m. for approximately 500 people.

Mr. Dones, the Roberto Clemente Old Timers Softball League president, greeted the Commissioners. He explained the group was looking to host a concert at Went Field Park. The sponsor is from Hartford and sponsors annual concerts in Hartford. Recently, the sponsor has expressed a desire to also have a concert in Bridgeport. There will be no food sold or vendors at the site.

Commissioner Labrador asked if it would be a free event. Mr. Dones said that it was a free event for the softball fans, for the community and anyone else who wished to come. The sponsor, Atty. Richard Zayas, is a musician and wants to bring the concert to the community.

Commissioner Labrador asked if the previous concerts had been held in Hartford near a church. Mr. Dones said that it was Atty. Zayas that had sponsored those events and that he had been doing it for 9 years now. Commissioner Labrador said that he had contacted an acquaintance who lives near the Hartford venue about the event. The feedback he received was that there had not been a problem and people found parking in the neighborhood and walked to the venue carrying beach chairs. Commissioner Labrador said that this park doesn't have too many events but mentioned the new playground and handball court there.

Commissioner Wade said that if she went to a concert there, she'd want something to eat. Commissioner Labrador reminded everyone that there were already food vendors that parked nearby for the softball games.

Commissioner Labrador said that there would be a package that Ms. Urena would give him for the permission from the Police and other departments. He asked about security. Mr. Dones said that they bring their own security. Discussion followed about the details regarding the stage assembly.

Commissioner Labrador asked about electricity. Mr. Dones said that he could get a generator, but if the City can supply the electricity it would be helpful. Discussion followed about having a meeting on site to review the logistics. Commissioner Labrador said that they would have to put the event on hold until the walk through took place.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 4 – NELSON DONES AND RICHARD ZAYAS, ROBERTO CLEMENTE OLD TIMERS SOFTBALL LEAGUE AND ZAYAS LAW FIRM, 305 BOSTON AVENUE, STRATFORD, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A CONCERT AT WENT FIELD PARK – GAZEBO ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2024 AT 2:00 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP AT 9:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 7:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 500 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

Commissioner Cotto noted that Mr. Dones had on a t-shirt with TEAM COTTO on it from the 2018 baseball championship competition.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. Harold Dimbo, Project Longevity, 1000 Lafayette Boulevard, 10th floor, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Community Outreach event on Saturday, June 22, 2024 at Beardsley Park after Aaron's Way from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a setup at 10:30 a.m. and cleanup at 4:30 p.m. with DJ and Vendors for approximately 150 people.

Mr. Dimbo greeted the Commissioners and said that Project Longevity was focused on gang gun violence. There are three aspects of it: law enforcement, service providing and community. This outreach is focused on bringing down gun violence. They have been holding this outing at Beardsley Park for the last nine years. They started with hamburgers, but the event has grown to the point where they can give away 70 bicycles and scholarships. This event brings people together from the North End, East Side, West Side and all over Bridgeport. This helps people talk to one another and they are actually seeing a decrease in gun violence. Last year, the City went from November to March without a homicide. Presently, the City had 4 homicides on books, but Bridgeport has the lowest number of homicides in the State right now.

There will a jazz band for the older residents, there is face painting and Mr. Dimbo mentioned a young girl who gives away gifts. Mr. Dimbo said that one of the former Pop Warner players who had gone on to Bullard Haven and played football to the point where he was able to get a scholarship. However, that scholarship was not enough to cover the cost of going to USC, but Project Longevity was able to provide a scholarship to cover the shortfall. The student went to USC and became a starting linebacker for the school. Now he has been awarded a full scholarship at the school.

Commissioner Labrador thanked Mr. Dimbo for his work in the City.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 5 – HAROLD DIMBO, PROJECT LONGEVITY, 1000 LAFAYETTE BOULEVARD, 10TH FLOOR, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT ON SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2024 AT BEARDSLEY PARK AFTER AARON'S WAY FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP AT 10:30 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 4:30 P.M. WITH DJ AND VENDORS FOR APPROXIMATELY 150 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER WADE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. Bobbie Brown, 100 Girls Leading Inc, 285 Hollister Avenue, Bridgeport, CT requesting to host the Mentorship Event for Girls of Color on Saturday, June 6, 2025 at McLevy Green from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and setup at 11:00 a.m. and cleanup at 6:00 p.m. with vendors and DJ for 100 people.

Ms. Brown greeted the Commissioners and said she was currently in Texas presenting at a convention. She explained that every year, the group hosts 100 girls in mentorship and they are the largest all girl organization in Bridgeport. They provide mentorships, interactive activities and scholarships for their participants. It's a free event and comes with a bagged lunch. The participants also receive a bag with goodies like hair brushes. She would like to schedule the 2025 summit date so it can be announced at the upcoming gathering in two weeks. The numbers have continued to grow each year.

**** COMMISSIONER WADE MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 6 – BOBBIE BROWN, 100 GIRLS LEADING INC, 285 HOLLISTER AVENUE, BRIDGEPORT, CT REQUESTING TO HOST THE MENTORSHIP EVENT FOR GIRLS OF COLOR ON SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2025 AT MCLEVY GREEN FROM 1:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M. AND SETUP AT 11:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 6:00 P.M. WITH VENDORS AND DJ FOR 100 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

7. Jean Brown, Greater Bridgeport Area Prevention Program (GBAPP, Inc.), 1470 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Backpack Giveaway and Health Fair on Friday, June 28, 2024 at McLevy Green from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with a setup at 10:00 a.m. and cleanup at 3:00 p.m. with a DJ, Vendors and Food Truck for approximately 0 – 50 people.

Ms. Brown greeted the Commissioners and said that this was an annual backpack give away event that they had held last June. There are health vendors and community partners present and give away the backpacks. There will be a DJ and a food truck. The group pays for the food, so the attendees receive the food for free. GBAPP, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization and has been around for many years.

Commissioner Wade asked if they were selling tickets. Ms. Brown said that they were not and it was a free event for the community.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 7 – JEAN BROWN, GREATER BRIDGEPORT AREA PREVENTION PROGRAM (GBAPP, INC.), 1470 BARNUM AVENUE, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A BACKPACK GIVEAWAY AND HEALTH FAIR ON FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 2024 AT MCLEVY GREEN FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP AT 10:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 3:00 P.M. WITH A DJ, VENDORS AND FOOD TRUCK FOR APPROXIMATELY 0 – 50 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER WADE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8. David Daniels III, Bridgeport Jazz Festival Partners, 325 Lafayette Street, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host the annual Bridgeport Jazz Festival on Saturday, August 30, 2024 at McLevy Green from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a setup at 8:00 a.m. and cleanup at 10:00 p.m. for approximately 500 people with DJ, Live Band, Vendors and Food Trucks.

Mr. Daniels greeted the Commissioners. He said that this would be their fourth year presenting the event. Commissioner Labrador reminded him that this was in a residential area. Mr. Daniels explained that this was why the event ends at 8 p.m. and the next two hours are spent cleaning up the park.

Commissioner Labrador said that it was a beautiful park that people often miss. He thanked Mr. Daniels for holding this event.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 8 – DAVID DANIELS III, BRIDGEPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL PARTNERS, 325 LAFAYETTE STREET, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST THE ANNUAL BRIDGEPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 2024 AT MCLEVY GREEN FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP AT 8:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 10:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 500 PEOPLE WITH DJ, LIVE BAND, VENDORS AND FOOD TRUCKS.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Daniels invited the Commissioner to attend.

9. Shakeema E. Romero, 435 Capitol Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Bridgeport Vegan Festival at Ellsworth Park on Saturday, July 13, 2024 from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and a setup at 9:00 a.m. and cleanup at 6:30 p.m. DJ, Vendors and Food Trucks for approximately 400 people.

Commissioner Labrador asked Ms. Urena if the park was available for that date. Ms. Urena confirmed that it was. Commissioner Labrador asked Mr. Natsu if there were any games scheduled at that time. Mr. Natsu replied that there were no games scheduled.

Ms. Romero greeted the Commissioners. She explained that the Bridgeport Vegan Festival was focused on merging plant based living with community spirit by encouraging the residents to embrace holistic wellness and community based choices. There will be vegan vendors along with other sustainably based vendors. There will be music and a yoga session as well.

Commissioner Labrador asked if this was their first event there. Ms. Romero said that it was. Commissioner Labrador cautioned her that parking was very limited in that area. Ms. Romero said that she was aware of this. He added that the attendees should be careful not to block residents in their driveways. This will help the group have a successful event.

**** COMMISSIONER HOISER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 9 – SHAKEEMA E. ROMERO, 435 CAPITOL AVENUE, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A BRIDGEPORT VEGAN FESTIVAL AT ELLSWORTH PARK ON SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2024 FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 6:00 P.M. AND A SETUP AT 9:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 6:30 P.M. DJ, VENDORS AND FOOD TRUCKS FOR APPROXIMATELY 400 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Labrador reminded Ms. Romero that she would have to have several permits approved. Ms. Romero said that she had received them from Ms. Urena already.

10. Shamar Freeman-Bey, TeachOurs Elders Association, 78 Cedar Street, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Community Event at Washington Park – Gazebo with multiple dates: Saturdays and Sundays June 1st and June 15th, 2024; July 6th and July 13th, 2024; August 3rd and August 17th 2024; and September 17, 2024 from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a setup time at 9:00 a.m. and cleanup time beginning at 4:00 p.m. for approximately 0-50 people with DJ and Vendors.

Commissioner Labrador cautioned Mr. Freeman-Bey that the police might not be able to cover July 6th date because of other activities around town. Commissioner Labrador asked if this was the first time the group would be holding the event at Washington Park. Mr. Freeman-Bey said it was. Commissioner Labrador asked if Mr. Freeman-Bey was aware of the permits that he would need for the food vendors along with the other permits. Mr. Freeman-Bey Parking is very limited. They will not be charging attendees.

Commissioner Labrador said there were two types of vendors. One type are those who have food trucks for profit and the second group are those who provide information and handouts. Mr. Freeman-Bey said that there are donations to set up a table.

Commissioner Labrador said that they will need a police officer on site and to have port-a-potties available. Mr. Caulfield agreed that the holiday week-end would be a challenge for the Police Department. Ms. Urena said that Washington Park was open on all the dates.

Commissioner Labrador said that the Commission could go day by day and as long as they don't get any feedback from the Police Department they can go forward. Commissioner Hosier said that he would not be in favor of the July 6th date. Commissioner Wade and Commissioner Grisby agreed.

Mr. Burgos pointed out that Mr. Freeman-Bey would have to get approval from the Police Department and it would be a very busy day for everyone. Commissioner Labrador suggested that Mr. Freeman-Bey strike the July 6th date and presented the remaining dates to the Police Department for their approval. He reminded Mr. Freeman-Bey that he would have to pay for the officers.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 10 – SHAMAR FREEMAN-BEY, TEACHOURS ELDERS ASSOCIATION, 78 CEDAR STREET, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A COMMUNITY EVENT AT WASHINGTON PARK – GAZEBO WITH MULTIPLE DATES: SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS JUNE 1ST AND JUNE 15TH, 2024; JULY 6TH AND JULY 13TH, 2024; AUGUST 3RD AND AUGUST 17TH 2024; AND SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 FROM 10:30 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP TIME AT 9:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP TIME BEGINNING AT 4:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 0-50 PEOPLE WITH DJ AND VENDORS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF JULY 6TH DATE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Labrador said that Mr. Freeman-Bey should get the permit packet from Ms. Urena and to deliver the dates to the Police Department for approval as quickly as possible. Mr. Freeman-Bey said he would.

11. Cecil Ward Jr., New England South Youth Federation of Seventh Day Adventist Church, 30 Signal Hill Circle, Springfield, MA, requesting to host an annual Youth Service gathering event at Seaside Park near the Sailors and Soldiers Monument on Saturday, June 1, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a setup at 8:00 a.m. and cleanup at 5:00 p.m. for approximately 130 people.

Ms. Urena said that Mr. Ward had contacted here earlier and explained that he would not be available for this call, but added that this event had been approved last year. Ms. Urena said that Mr. Ward had been surprised that he had to present to the Commissioners for this year's event.

Commissioner Labrador stated that people cannot just have events at the park, regardless of how many are involved, without permits. These events are not grandfathered in.

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO MOVED TO DENY AGENDA ITEM 11 – CECIL WARD JR., NEW ENGLAND SOUTH YOUTH FEDERATION OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, 30 SIGNAL HILL CIRCLE, SPRINGFIELD, MA, REQUESTING TO HOST AN ANNUAL YOUTH SERVICE GATHERING EVENT AT SEASIDE PARK NEAR THE SAILORS AND SOLDIERS MONUMENT ON SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2024 FROM 9:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP AT 8:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 5:00 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 130 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER GRISBY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO DENY PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

12. Stephanie Maiden, Recovery Network of Programs, Inc., 2 Trap Falls Road, Suite 405, Shelton, CT, requesting to host their annual employee picnic on Saturday, August 2, 2024 at Seaside Park – Grove area from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with a setup at 8:00 a.m. and cleanup at 3:00 p.m. with a DJ and Food Vendor for approximately 200 people.

Ms. Linda Mosel came forward and said that Ms. Maiden was not able to attend the call and she would be representing the Recovery Network Programs. She noted that August 2nd was a Friday, not a Saturday. This would be the annual employee picnic. The program has 26 programs in 14 locations, 12 of which are in Bridgeport. The organization has been holding their annual picnic at Seaside Park for over 10 years. It is a way to give back to the employees.

Mr. Burgos said that there had not been any issues with the event and many people are coming into Bridgeport. Ms. Mosel said that there are not 200 people on site because they are working, so they come and go.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 12 – STEPHANIE MAIDEN, RECOVERY NETWORK OF PROGRAMS, INC., 2 TRAP FALLS ROAD, SUITE 405, SHELTON, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST THEIR ANNUAL EMPLOYEE PICNIC ON ~~SATURDAY~~ FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 2024 AT SEASIDE PARK – GROVE AREA FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M. WITH A SETUP AT 8:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 3:00 P.M. WITH A DJ AND FOOD VENDOR FOR APPROXIMATELY 200 PEOPLE.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

13. Tyonna Robinson, 44 King Street, Bridgeport, CT, requesting to host a Birthday Party at Seaside Park - Left of the Arches on Saturday, July 27, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and setup at 11:00 a.m. and cleanup at 5:30 p.m. for approximately 0-50 people with two bounce house and two food trucks.

Ms. Robinson was not present on the call.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO DENY AGENDA ITEM 13 — TYONNA ROBINSON, 44 KING STREET, BRIDGEPORT, CT, REQUESTING TO HOST A BIRTHDAY PARTY AT SEASIDE PARK - LEFT OF THE ARCHES ON SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2024 FROM 2:00 P.M. TO 6:00 P.M. AND SETUP AT 11:00 A.M. AND CLEANUP AT 5:30 P.M. FOR APPROXIMATELY 0-50 PEOPLE WITH TWO BOUNCE HOUSE AND TWO FOOD TRUCKS.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO DENY PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS

1. Commissioner's Report – There was no report at this time.

2. Director's Report – Luis Burgos, Director of Public Facilities

Mr. Caulfield greeted the Commissioners and said that there was not that much to report in terms of the projects.

The Winfield Park Ribbon Cutting ceremony will be happening on Thursday at 11:00 a.m. There have been a number of delays due to notification issues.

Ellsworth Park improvements have basically been completed. They are waiting for some consistent weather to install the sod and get the grass seed germinating. There have been some issues with infield conditions and the drainage needs to be monitored. Mr. Caulfield will be following up with the contractor about this.

Discussions about installing a playground or a skate park in the future at B.J Brown Park are underway.

St. Mary's and the spit area are still concerns. The staff is working with the Ash Creek Land Trust, Land Tech, which is an environmental company, and the State DEEP regarding the protection of this area. It is impacting the barrier islands and there are historical photos showing what is happening to the area due to the Town of Fairfield dredging.

There are still plans to open Pleasure Beach for the summer season. Swimming will be allowed as well as fishing on the pier. The ferry service will begin on July 6th, which is the Saturday of the July 4th week-end. The representative from the State of Connecticut was present there earlier in the day to collect some base line samples for tick infestation. Mr. Caulfield said that he was pleased to report that the previous tick control work and maintenance has worked both at Pleasure Beach and Seaside West. The tick population has decreased at both locations despite the fact that the news is reporting that the tick population is increasing in other parts of the State.

Regarding overall parks maintenance, this is opening week-end. The staff has been working hard and they have been a bit behind with the maintenance this week but they expect to have everything completed and looking its best in time for opening holiday week-end. The beaches have been groomed and the beach rakes are being used on a daily basis.

Earlier in the day, the staff received notification that the horseshoe crabs have begun spawning at the far side of Seaside West and there will be notifications posted requesting visitors to stay out of the area. Horseshoe crabs are a protected species, so the staff is not raking that area of the beach. Last year, there was an unfortunate incident when this was done, so the staff is cooperating with the Connecticut Wildlife Association about this for staff training.

Commissioner Labrador said that there was an foul pole in the left field in Beardsley Park that needed to be fixed. He said that the fencing company needs to correct the problem. Mr. Caulfield said Mr. Burgos had informed him earlier in the day that the foul pole in right field had been corrected. He said that he would be happy to do an onsite visit with Commissioner Labrador to determine a potential solution for the foul pole in left field.

Mr. Caulfield said that everything else was up and running, including the ball machines. He said that they were considering purchasing another as a backup because the machines were site specific. The staff wants to provide the services that they can to the residents.

Commissioner Labrador asked if there was anything that they could help with. Mr. Caulfield said that the Commissioners had been great in terms of support. In terms of equipment, Mr. Caulfield said that he would speak to Aaron, Sam and others about the work.

Mr. Nastu said that the Recreations Department was getting ready for opening week-end, especially for Seaside and Beardsley. They have been selling day passes this week. The summer camp will begin at the end of June. Registration is still open for Bridgeport children.

Commissioner Labrador asked how they were doing with the lifeguard staffing. Mr. Nastu explained that Ms. Conine had to leave the call. Mr. Nastu said that Ms. Conine was ahead of the game and had more life guards compared to previous years. Everything should be ready to go at the end of June when they begin at Seaside and Pleasure Beach.

Commissioner Labrador asked if there were any concerns from the Commissioners. Mr. Curry, the Deputy Director asked Commissioner Labrador if it would be possible to add an item because they had recently put out an RFP for the Grove Concession Stand.

Last year, the West Beach concession stand was open and it was a big success. They went out to bid for the Grove concession stand and only one bidder responded. He was asking for approval from the Park Board to lease that location.

Commissioner Labrador asked for clarification as to the location. Mr. Curry said that it was directly behind UB's baseball field in the Grove. The West Beach concession stand is currently occupied and will be open. The same company that is handling that concession stand is the only one who bid on the Grove site as well.

Commissioner Hosier asked if the contract for West Beach was in effect now. Mr. Curry replied that it was and the contract had been presented to the Commissioners when Mr. Nadrizny was the head of the Department.

Commissioner Hosier asked how long the contract terms were for. Mr. Curry stated that it was for three years with two optional one year lease extensions. It will be up to the City if they wished to continue the contract.

Commissioner Hosier asked if this was the same type of contract for the Grove site. Mr. Curry said that it was.

Commissioner Hosier asked for confirmation that it was the same company that was operating the West Beach concession stand. Mr. Curry said that it was the Queen's Delight that was running the West Beach concession stand and they had applied for the Grove site.

Commissioner Hosier said that the Commissioners needed the actual contract to review. He said he did not know if it was necessary to approve it at this meeting or if they could wait to review the contract.

Mr. Curry said that he could send the contract to the Commissioners but they were hoping to have the stand opened for Memorial Day. If there needed to be contract revisions, it would not be a problem. The contract has already been through the complete procurement process. The City Attorney's Office just sent an email five minutes ago to Mr. Curry asking that Mr. Curry have it approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Labrador asked what type of food they would be providing at the Grove site. Mr. Caulfield said that Mr. Hladun, a former Parks and Recreation staff member, had put together a requirement that the menu had to include healthy menu options including salads and fruit dishes along with hot dogs and hamburgers. The applicants are a Bridgeport based minority business, which was in the RFP.

Commissioner Labrador asked what would happen if the Commissioners approved the contract and added that the operator would need to provide power to the shed that is located directly behind the concession. The shed stores maintenance equipment for the ball teams that use the fields. Mr. Curry said that many of the power lines were linked together for all of the utilities. Therefore, Mr. Catino had given the applicant a separate line item for all their utilities.

Commissioner Hosier said that he felt that they could tentatively approve the opening of the concession stand and review the contract. Commissioner Cotto said that they should be able to review the contract for approval.

Commissioner Labrador pointed out that the concession stand had been closed for so long and many people, including those who were at the games and other beach goers, would be interested in buying food from the applicant. He said that he was in favor of letting the concession stand open and if there are problems, they can reach out to Mr. Curry.

Commissioner Hosier said that his point was that the Commissioners should be able to review the contract. Commissioner Wade and Commissioner Grisby also agreed. Mr. Curry said that he would share this with them. The copies of the contract will go out ASAP.

Commissioner Labrador said that it would be important to let them know that the Commission hopes it works out because the site has been vacant for a long time and that part of the Park suffers. This will help the park goers who come into the park through the arches.

Commissioner Hosier asked if the applicant understood that there are food trucks that are in that area. Mr. Curry said that the applicants were fully aware of the food trucks being in that area. He added that Mr. Caulfield had done a great job of making sure everyone was in their designated spots. It will not be a problem for the new applicant.

Commissioner Hosier asked if the Commission would be reviewing the food truck agreements again soon. Mr. Curry said that they had been planning to repeat the same program as last year. He added that he and Mr. Caulfield could present the item to the Commission at the next meeting or just continue with the program. They had been looking to expand the program by charging the vendors that sell food at Veterans' Park on the outskirts. Commissioner Labrador said that garbage is created there and the City has to pay to clean up the area. The Commissioners need to consider that.

Mr. Curry said that the legal proposal has been sent to the City Attorney's and once the Commission approves the contract regarding the price they want to charge, they can enforce it. He said that they need to have a cost for the parcel. Commissioner Labrador said that often people make money off the City and the City bears the cost.

Commissioner Labrador said that he wanted to thank all the staff because without the staff on the front line, the Commission needs the information and support so they can do their job.

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO ALLOW THE CONTRACT FOR THE GROVE CONCESSION STAND TO PROCEED WITH THE STIPULATION THAT THE COMMISSION NEEDS TO RECEIVE COPIES OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE GROVE CONCESSION SITE FOR THEIR REVIEW ASAP.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Burgos said that Mr. Caulfield was doing a phenomenal job with the parks and he thanked the Commissioners for their continual approvals of events and projects along with the continued support of Bridgeport's youth. He appreciates that people are coming from different towns and states to Bridgeport. He was pleased that the parks are remaining beautiful for the residents and said thanked the Commission for their commitment to the parks.

Commissioner Hosier said that although Mr. Burgos now had a larger role in the City, he knew that Mr. Burgos' heart was in the parks. Mr. Burgos agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER HOSIER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COMMISSIONER COTTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Board of Park Commissioners
Regular Meeting
May 21, 2024