



Parks & Recreation Committee - Board of Representatives

Dennis Mahoney, Chair

Raven Matherne, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: This meeting was held remotely

The Parks & Recreation Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Mahoney, Vice Chair Matherne and Committee Member Reps. de la Cruz, Giordano, and Wallace. Excused were Reps. Pavia, Policar, Pratt, and Saftic. Also present were Reps. Cottrell, Sherwood, and Zelinsky; Mark McGrath, Director of Operations; Frank Petise, Interim Transportation Bureau Chief; Kevin Murray, Parks & Facilities Manager; Julie Giglio, Mayor's Office; Bill Napolitano, Tax Dept.; Melanie Hollas, Parks & Recreation Commission; and two members of the public.

Chair Mahoney called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. PR30.068	RESOLUTION and <u>Approval of Public Hearing</u> ; Concerning Beach and Park Pass Fees for Residents in light of PR30.066 Discussions. 09/09/21 – Submitted by Reps. Cottrell, Sherwood, and Zelinsky	Approved as Amended 5-0-0

The beach permit data was reviewed by the invited guests and there was discussion.

- Permit revenue: \$662,810 for 2021; \$687,969 for 2020; and \$711,770 for 2019.
- If beach passes had been free, lost revenue would have been: \$472,928 of permit fees plus \$68,000 in resident citations for 2021; and \$429,204 of permit fees plus \$99,000 in resident citations for 2020.
- Lost revenue is 55 to 60 percent of the cost of running the beaches.
- There is no clear signage at the beaches informing residents on how to obtain a full season pass. The signs only state the cost of a daily pass.
- Residents pay high taxes and should enjoy the beaches for free.
- In addition to the cost, there is a complicated process to obtain a beach pass.
- There is no cost to visit the Mill River except for special events and the carousel.
- There is a tax increment financing district that finances improvements to the Mill River, and it receives private funding and funding from the City.
- The funds for free entrance to the beaches has to come out of somewhere in the budget. If it were to be spread across residents' property tax bills, it would be a small fee, approximately under 0.1 percent.

- Non-resident citation revenue in 2020 was \$146,600 and in 2021 was \$176,160.
- The beaches are currently running at approximately a \$250,000 loss. If resident beach passes were eliminated it would be approximately a \$500,000 loss.
- The City of Norwalk requires residents to be current on taxes in order to obtain free entrance to the beach, and this does not include non-commercial vehicles. This could motivate residents to pay their taxes.
- Last year Norwalk residents who were current on taxes could print their beach pass at home. This year there are now plate readers and printing a pass is no longer necessary.
- To ensure enforcement, the Tax Department would have to upload the list of license plates and who is current on taxes.
- Most car tax bills are due July 1st, and residents have until July 30th to pay. If someone was current before July 1st, but then delinquent after August 1st, what happens? There should there be a grace period since payments do not always show up right away.
- This resolution is written to take effect in 2023 to allow ample time to figure out the necessary systems and staff, and required budget.
- Ms. Giglio will look into what is meant by a “Summer Resident.”
- The amended resolution will be sent to the Legal Department for review.

A motion to amend Item #1 to add the wording “with non-commercial vehicles, who are current on their respective car tax obligations” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Mahoney, Matherne, de la Cruz, Giordano, and Wallace in favor).

A motion to approve Item #1 as amended was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Mahoney, Matherne, de la Cruz, Giordano, and Wallace in favor).

Chair Mahoney adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Mahoney, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)