



## ***Parks & Recreation Committee - Board of Representatives***

Jennifer Matheny, Chair

Daniel Sandford, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Wednesday, March 23, 2022

**Time:** 7:00 pm

**Place:** This meeting was held remotely

The Parks & Recreation Committee met as indicated above. In attendance was Chair Matheny, Vice Chair Sandford, and Committee Member Reps. Bewkes, de la Cruz, and Gilbride. Excused was Rep. Nabel. Absent was Rep. Saftic. Also present were Reps. Boeger, Cottrell, Jean-Louis, Mays, Moore, Sherwood, Tomas, and Watkins; Kevin Murray, Parks & Facilities; Lauren Meyer, Mayor's Office; Erin McKenna, Land Use Bureau; Melanie Hollis, Parks & Recreation Commission; Randy Collins, BETA Group; State Rep. Hubert Delaney; Jennifer Katz, Friends of Barrett Park; Jill Tomasello; Mathew Perkins; and four members of the public.

Chair Matheny called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
11. <a href="#">PR31.005</a>	RESOLUTION; Requesting that the City Administration and Stamford's State Delegation Actively Resist Current Proposals in the Connecticut State Legislature to limit local control of Beach and Beach Parking Access 03/14/22 – Submitted by Reps. Watkins, Fedeli, de la Cruz, and Bewkes	<b>Approved 5-0-0</b>

Rep. Watkins explained why he put this item on the Agenda. The two proposed bills currently in the State would invalidate Stamford's residential parking permit program that are very important to residents who live on streets near the beaches. It has taken several years to come up with a parking permit program and fees for the parks and beaches. These bills could wipe away all of this effort between the City and residents. It is vital to send a message to the State Legislature that this is an issue of local business and Stamford is equipped to handle it appropriately.

Ms. Meyer reviewed this item:

- These bills have already been at a public hearing, and formal testimony can no longer be submitted. She has been in frequent contact with the State delegation and has conveyed that the current language of these bills has raised concerns.

---

<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:01:15

- On Friday March 25<sup>th</sup> or Monday March 28<sup>th</sup> the State Planning & Development Committee is tentatively meeting to discuss the bills, and we will then know whether or not these bills get voted out of the Committee.
- Even if the bills are passed language is often changed many times before it is finalized. Ms. Meyer can relay the information about tonight's Parks & Recreation Committee meeting to the delegation tomorrow.

There was then discussion on this item:

- Rep. Cottrell noticed much more parking on local streets after the beach fee was raised to \$69.00 for non-residents.
- There needs to be better ways to share our beaches in Connecticut. Fees for non-residents should be reasonable, but still allow residents to find parking when they come to the beaches.
- The beaches and coastal points are very different in every municipality. How can the State possibly regulate this?
- This could invalidate the free parking for veterans that was submitted by former Rep. Giordano and passed by the BOR.
- People do not always have to pay to get to Stamford's beaches. You can take ride sharing or public transportation.
- Nothing in these bills facilitates care about the environment.
- This is an issue of the State wanting control over local properties.
- Why was the Administration not visible in the public forums on this topic?
- Some representatives expressed concern that language changes are not the issue, but rather, these bills should not be passed at all.

A motion to approve Item #1 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, Bewkes, de la Cruz, and Gilbride in favor).

<sup>2</sup>. [PR31.003](#) REVIEW; Barrett Park Capital Improvements Project.  
02/17/22 – Submitted by Reps. Boeger, Gilbride, Pollack, and Tomas

**Report Made  
and Held 5-0-0**

Ms. McKenna and Mr. Murray reviewed this item, and there was discussion.

- The City has been meeting with Friends of Barrett Park since last year.
- A landscape architecture firm, BETA Group, has been hired to develop a conceptual phase master plan for improvements, repairs and upgrades to existing elements. The fee is \$20K.
- A Capital budget request has been made for playground replacement.
- Community surveys showed that people value the park and open space, and are also concerned with traffic and parking issues surrounding the park.
- Thus far the process has been: A community meeting was held to gather input. It then went to the designers (BETA) who will be presenting playground ideas at the second community meeting tomorrow. The City will then create a priority list of improvements, including drainage, upgrading the baseball field, bleachers, and figuring out parking on Burdick Street. A third community meeting will be held to present the final plans.

---

<sup>2</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:46:25

- There is neighborhood concern with selection of materials for the project. The initial project scope says rubberized court material will be used, which can contain toxicities, and get hot in the summer. These materials are currently in use at Chestnut Hill Park and Strawberry Hill School.
- Possibly engineered wood fiber should be used. This material takes almost daily maintenance, and has to be replaced every year. There is a liability with fall zones. If not properly maintained it can effect fall attenuation and ADA accessibility.
- There is no cost estimate yet for the entire park project.
- The only item that the City has identified to pursue paying for in the near future is the playground, as that is the priority need in the park. A Capital budget request has been made, and the City is identifying other funding through grants.
- If funding allows for it, the final design plan could be done by July 2022, with the playground possibly ready to install in the Spring of 2023.
- The playground needs to go out to bid, but there are smaller things that could be done such as bleacher repair and new benches if there are available funds.
- Public-Private Partnerships are a possibility and have been discussed within the Friends of Barrett Group.

A motion to hold Item #2 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, Bewkes, de la Cruz, and Gilbride in favor).

- <sup>33</sup>. [PR31.004](#) REVIEW; Progress of Tennis and Pickleball courts. **Report Made**  
03/09/22 – Submitted by Reps. Matheny, Mays,  
Nabel and Gilbride

Ms. Tomasello, Mr. Perkins, and Mr. Murray reviewed this item and there was discussion.

- Pickleball is becoming increasingly popular and is the fastest growing sport in the United States. Although it started with retirees, all ages are very involved now. It is a family friendly, social game. People of all levels can play in the same game.
- Lines can be added to tennis courts so that there can be dual use.
- Stamford could have travel teams and tournaments and generate revenue.
- Pickleball lines have been added to the tennis courts in Cummins Park.
- Plans are in the works for Scofieldtown Park to get pickleball courts. There will be a meeting with the vendor on April 15<sup>th</sup>. It will cost \$1,700 to line the two game courts.
- There are plans to add lines to the courts in Dorothy Heroy Park, after the game court upgrade.
- Many game courts in Stamford are in dire need of upgrades, and if the cracks are too severe, pickleball lines cannot be added, such as at Cove Island Park and Scalzi Park.
- The Scalzi Park 12 tennis courts are very popular for tennis all year long.
- The past budgets have not had enough Capital support to upgrade the courts properly.

---

<sup>3</sup> Video Time Stamp: 02:00:44

- The plan is to have a City-wide repair of game courts, then create dual use tennis and pickleball courts.
- The Capital request for 2022-2023 for Scalzi Park is \$1.4M for general upgrades of the courts. Currently \$200K was approved for the project.
- Nets could be possibly be stored in a job box, with a lock/passcode.
- The BOE would have to adopt the dual use plans at the school tennis courts.

Chair Matheny adjourned the meeting at 9:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Matheny, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).