

Parks & Recreation Committee - Board of Representatives

Jennifer Matheny, Chair Daniel

• Daniel Sandford, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date:Thursday June 30, 2022Time:7:00 pmPlace:This meeting was held remotely

The Parks & Recreation Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Matheny and Committee Member Reps. Bewkes, de la Cruz, and Nabel. Excused were Reps. Gilbride and Sandford. Absent was Rep. Saftic. Also present were Matt Quinones, Director of Operations; Kevin Murray, Manager, Parks & Facilities; Melanie Hollas and Jessica Katz, Parks & Recreation Commission; and three members of the public.

Chair Matheny called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
¹ 1. PR31.008	REVIEW; Overview of Park Strategic Plan Initiative. 06/08/22 – Submitted by Matt Quinones and Rep. Matheny	Report Made
2. PR31.006	REVIEW; A Study of all City Parks including How to Utilize the Parks More Efficiently and How the Parks are Maintained. 04/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Curtis and Stella	Report Made

The Committee took up Items #1 and #2 together.

Mr. Quinones reviewed the Park Strategic Plan Initiative.

- \$50K has been funded for a consultant to facilitate a strategic plan process.
- This will allow the City to assess the usage of all City Parks, and create a vision and strategy for all parks including beaches (excluding Mill River Park).
- It has been difficult to disseminate funding resources and prioritizing projects.
- Community engagement is crucial to determine how each park is used.
- This is a five-part plan:
 - Researching and understanding what is the current state of Stamford's park usage. Getting national perspectives of other cities' park systems.

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:01:20

- Stakeholder engagement. All 20 districts need to be engaged, along with certain boards and commissions.
- Building a preliminary concept plan. There will be an advisory committee to guide the process, there will be representation from BOR and Parks & Recreation Commission.
- Financial projections and phasing to align the plan with a realistic financing approach.
- Completion of the five-year strategic plan.
- The scope of work must align with existing initiatives of the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- There will be a comprehensive viewpoint of usage and individual neighborhood needs. The idea is that the vision for the parks comes from the community.
- It needs to be figured out how to leverage private funding.
- An advisory committee will be formed. This will be a large inclusive group that will help facilitate outreach and committee discussion on a regular basis.
- Timeline of this project will be six to 12 months:
 - RFP is almost ready to go live.
 - There will be a 60 day window to get bids.
 - An RFP Committee will be organized, access the bids, and award the contract.
 - The plan process is expected to launch in October.
 - It should take about six months, but no longer than 12 months.

There was discussion:

- It was requested that Mr. Quinones find out from the Purchasing Department about who will be on the RFP Committee.
- A sustainability plan for all the parks would be good idea.
- It is important for the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parks & Recreation Committee to collaborate.
- A good source of information is the Trust for Public Land <u>www.tpl.org</u>.
- City leaders need to play a collective role.
- Operations Department is currently transitioning Parks and Recreation into one department. Previously Parks and Facilities were one division. This will separate the facilities component and allow for more of a focus around park maintenance.

² 3. PR31.007	REVIEW; Extending the Times when Park	Report Made
	Bathroom Facilities are Open to Yearly.	
	04/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Curtis, Moore and	
	Stella	

Reps. Moore and Stella explained their reason for putting this item on the Agenda. There are limited bathroom facilities in many parks even during the park season, and they are not open all year long. Some parks do not have any bathroom facilities. The portable bathrooms are often dirty and many women do not like using them, and most are not handicap-accessible. The bathrooms should coincide with the timing of the

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league permits that are given. Leagues are often playing yet there are no facilities available. With climate change, the warmer weather season is getting longer.

Mr. Murray reviewed this item:

- He is on board with having bathrooms open longer, but this is a funding issue and will have to be put into the 2023-2024 budget.
- Thirty-five seasonal employees open, close, clean, and maintain the bathrooms at the parks from May 1st to Oct. 15th, seven days per week.
- The bathrooms would need to be sealed from weather and have electrical upgrades. They would need to be heated otherwise the pipes could freeze.
- To extend the bathroom facilities season, six employees would be needed between Oct. 15th to Dec. 1st at a cost of about \$28K in salaries.
- There is one City plumber for 58 parks and 78 buildings. He was on medical leave for two years so an outside vendor had to be hired.
- There is an ADA bathroom at Cove Island East Beach and West Beach, and at Cummings Park.

There was discussion:

- This should be part of the strategic plan for parks.
- If the City cannot put permanent bathrooms in every park other options should be explored such as ADA portable bathrooms.
- Parks that are more heavily trafficked like Scalzi and Cove Island should be looked at first.
- Bathroom facilities would not need as much maintenance during the winter months, as there would be less usage than warmer months.
- The City should look into composting toilets like the national and state park system uses. These require no water hookup and no heat.
- There is a plan for a composting toilet on the master plan for Scofield Park but it has never been funded.

Mr. Murray will come up with a plan on what is needed, what can be done, and the costs involved, and will include it in the next Operations budget request.

As a Secondary Committee (on the Public Safety Committee 6/23/22 at 6:30 p.m.):

4 PS31.023 REVIEW; The Public Safety of the Parks and Beaches. 05/06/22 – Submitted by Rep. Stella

This item was discussed at the Public Safety Committee Meeting on 6/23/22.

Chair Matheny adjourned the meeting at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Jennifer Matheny, Chair

This meeting is on video.