



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

Jennifer Matheny, Chair      Daniel Sandford, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Thursday, October 27, 2022  
**Time:** 7:00 pm  
**Place:** This meeting was held remotely

The Parks & Recreation Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Matheny, Vice Chair Sandford, and Committee Member Reps. Bewkes, Gilbride, and Nabel. Excused was Rep. de la Cruz, and absent was Rep. Saftic. Also present were Reps. Adams, Mays, Stella, Summerville, and Tomas; Matt Quinones, Director of Operations; Kevin Murray, Manager, Parks & Facilities; Enzo Iorfino, Stamford Bocce League; and two members of the public.

Vice Chair Sandford called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
12. <a href="#">PR31.010</a>	REVIEW; Scalzi Park Bocce Courts. 09/07/22 – Submitted by Reps. Tomas and Boeger	<b>Report Made</b>

Item # 2 was taken up out of order.

Rep. Tomas stated he put this item on the Agenda because the bocce courts are in very bad shape, and wants to know what the City plans are to get them repaired.

Mr. Quinones and Mr. Murray reviewed this item and there was discussion.

- A five-year agreement was put in place in 2016, with a one year extension that expires this month. The goal now is for the Parks & Recreation Dept. and Administration to review future planning of the courts.
- Terms of agreements for the past 25 years have been:
  - Stamford Bocce League (SBL) shall pay a one time license fee of \$300.00, take care of all court replacement/repairs not to exceed \$3K per year, and provide an annual report.
  - City shall take care of mowing, trimming, garbage barrels and removal.

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<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:40:00

- The courts are past the life span of use. They can be upgraded through the Capital Program with part of the Scalzi Park upgrades, costing \$125K. The project has been prioritized.
- Interest in the sport very strong. Investment would be felt right away by the community.
- The SBL has been a longstanding partner with the City.
- These are the only public park bocce courts in Stamford.
- Special Olympics uses these courts, as well as other people besides the SBL.
- There are no regulation-size courts in the tri-state area. Making these courts regulation-size would allow for tournaments, and this would bring economic benefits to Stamford.
- There are currently eight courts. The SBL has about 350 members who play on three different nights. The season is from May to September, but there are other people who play outside of those times.
- Rep. Gilbride suggested that a public hearing be considered before the courts are upgraded, due to the sound from the games carrying quite far during summer months. This would allow nearby neighbors to voice any concerns.

<sup>21</sup>. PR31.009 REVIEW; Discuss the Status of the Current Year **Report Made**  
Park Repair/Upgrade Projects.  
09/07/22 – Submitted by Rep. Matheny

Chair Matheny stated she wants to get an update on park repair and upgrade projects. She has had calls/emails from constituents and other Representatives especially about the smaller parks, trail maintenance, noise issues, and activities that should not be going on in the parks. Additionally, how have funds been rearranged to prioritize certain projects?

Mr. Murray reviewed this item in detail and there was discussion.

There are three main categories in the Parks & Facilities budget:

- Budget for general repairs and maintenance
- General scheduled maintenance
- Prior list for capital projects.

Budget for general repairs and maintenance includes the following:

- Organic program for all athletic fields, including soil testing annually per mandate, as each field's chemistry is different
- Biannual soil testing at Scofieldtown Park (\$72,500K)
- Park maintenance at Scofieldtown Park (contracted out)
- Preventative maintenance programs for turf fields
- Fire system inspections and repairs
- Maintenance for Veterans Park and Columbus Park fountains
- Maintenance/repair for Dorothy Heroy Park pool and well
- Third party water testing at Dorothy Heroy Park
- Pool supplies for Dorothy Heroy park

<sup>2</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:38:05

- All park irrigations
- Pest control at five park buildings
- Overhead garage doors electrical repairs
- Security monitoring for the Shippan location where all parks equipment is stored
- Plumbing repairs of about \$25K annually in parks and beaches
- Operating line of up to \$35K for equipment rental, which includes portable toilets for “shoulder” seasons and for parks without permanent bathrooms
- Replenishment for 22 baseball and softball fields (bases and home plates)
- Landscaping materials for parks, beaches, flower beds, and medians
- Stipend given to Stamford Garden Club for Fort Stamford Goodbody Garden
- OSHA regulations up to \$5K for medical boxes at life guard stations and for park maintenance office staff
- Safety gear for employees per OSHA guidelines
- Building maintenance of \$100K
- Outside contractors for repairs not able to be done internally
- Flag replacement program for parks citywide
- Small equipment allowance of \$6K (small tools)
- Housekeeping supplies of \$40k per year, which includes janitorial supplies and mutt mitts at dog stations

General scheduled maintenance:

- Staff starts on March 15<sup>th</sup> to get athletic fields ready for the season.
- Field season is the first Saturday in April thru October 31<sup>st</sup>, weather permitting.
- Parks Dept. relies heavily on seasonal staff seven days per week.
- Employee days start early and bathrooms close at 10:00pm depending on location.
- Seasonal bathrooms close Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>. This year bathrooms have been extended to Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> for five big parks to align with league permits
- Each park is maintained and monitored on a daily basis.
- There are 83 park properties that are maintained, including small easements throughout Stamford.
- There are 15 full time parks maintenance workers. The department was granted two positions for the organic fields, which is very time consuming.

Capital list projects:

- There were 17 capital projects submitted for this year.
- The projects are very specific, detailing everything needed in a specific park.
- One such project is Scalzi Park, which will have the tennis courts upgraded with a 25 year warranty for \$1.3M. There is a pending State grant for up to \$750K if received. Additionally, there will be an LED retrofit for the stadium lights, and the aforementioned bocce courts upgrade for \$120K.

Further discussion included:

- If constituents are concerned about a park, it would be best if those concerns come to Mr. Murray through a Representative. He could then set up a site meeting along with staff, representatives, and the public, and come up with a

- plan. Mr. Murray does takes calls from constituents if they call him directly.
- Trail maintenance is difficult. The Parks Dept. relies on neighborhood groups to monitor the trails, and volunteers usually maintain them.
  - Fix It Stamford is the best way to keep track of issues and to build accountability. Having a record is very helpful in dispatching maintenance crews. Mr. Quinones stated the Operations Dept. is currently seeking a full-time position to replace the part time position for maintaining the Fix It system. This person will enhance the Fix It site and work towards making it more efficient through data analysis.
  - Perhaps Representatives could help constituents navigate Fix It if they are having difficulty.
  - Representatives can let Mr. Quinones or Mr. Murray know that a Fix It request has been made on a certain issue so they can prioritize it.
  - It would be helpful if constituents get some sort of periodic notification so they are kept informed on the progress of the issue once it has been reported.
  - There has been a Capital Budget request for approximately \$1M for upgrading the West Beach field. The turf is 13 years old. There are ongoing discussions about the surface type. Mr. Quinones has submitted a request to the Health Dept. to research different types of artificial turf. He has also requested a legal opinion on who has the authority to determine what kind of material will be used for fields. Chair Matheny stated that the Parks & Recreation Commission is actively working on this and recently conducted an information session.
  - Getting volunteer groups involved in partnering with the parks is important. We need more ambassadors to encourage volunteer groups to get involved.
  - For the Capital Improvement budget 2023/24: The Operations Department is trying to be more active in seeking private funding because not every request gets approved in the budget. Private funding could make up the difference.
  - Budget requests for parks are now specific and not generalized as before, stating what exactly the line item is for in a specific park.
  - There is not any way the public can track where capital project money has been spent. In the past, large scale projects have had a project website, but this is not done with most things.

Chair Matheny adjourned the meeting at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Matheny, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).