



Parks & Recreation Committee - Board of Representatives

Jennifer Matheny, Chair

Daniel R. Sandford, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, April 20, 2023

Time: 7:00 p.m.

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. de la Cruz, Gilbride, and Weinberg. Rep. Bewkes was excused and Rep. Saftic was absent. Also present were Reps. Cottrell, Fedeli, Mays, Miller, Shaw, and Tomas; Matt Quinones, Director of Operations; Kevin Murray, Director of Parks & Recreation; Scott Kassouf, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation; Mike Toma, Legal Dept.; Anita Carpenter, Grants Officer; Chris Passamano, Stamford High School Athletic Director; Hidalgo Nagashima, Superintendent of Greens; Paul Newman, Melanie Hollis, and Jessica Katz, Parks & Recreation Commission; Andrew Dyjak, Regional VP, FieldTurf; and 10 members of the public.

Chair Matheny called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Items #2 and #3 were taken up out of order while a technical issue with Item #1 was resolved.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
12. PR31.016	RESOLUTION; <u>and approval of public hearing;</u> Establishing Fees for E. Gaynor Brennan Golf Course 2023. 03/21/23 – Submitted by Director Murray	Approved 5-0-0

Mr. Nagashima reviewed this item.

Rates have not been raised in two years, and the proposed increases are small. It's two dollars for 19 holes and one dollar for nine holes, and a two dollar increase for cart rental. The cost of fuel, electricity, water, and plant protectants have driven this.

This golf course is the best value in the area, all other nearby golf courses cost much more. He is trying to balance revenues with expenditures and be at net zero. This will have a July 1, 2023 effective date.

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

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:04:15

- ²³. [PR31.017](#) RESOLUTION; and approval of public hearing; **Approved 5-0-0**
Establishing Fees for Summer Camp Programs.
03/21/23 – Submitted by Director Murray

Director Murray and Mr. Kassouf reviewed this item.

It has been six years since last fee increase. The proposed increases are due to rising utility costs, the higher minimum wage for staff, and supplies and transportation costs. This is one of the least expensive camps in Fairfield County even with the increases.

There are currently 1,030 registered campers, and 340 of those are at the reduced fees. The reduced fees cut down on a lot of revenue. These fees will bring in an additional \$87K. Camp programs will not break even but will be at about a 90% return on revenue.

Fee increases would be effective for Summer 2024.

A motion to approve Item #3 was made, seconded and approved by a voice vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, de la Cruz, Gilbride, and Weinberg in favor).

- ³¹. [PR31.015](#) RESOLUTION; and approval of public hearing; **Approved as**
Approving Fees for Use of Ballfields. **Amended 5-0-0**
03/21/23 – Submitted by Director Murray

Director Murray reviewed this item.

The proposed fee increases are for: Charity Tournaments; Field maintenance, (covers the cost for maintenance workers); Sports Pass; Youth tournaments; and Youth tournament maintenance.

Effective date would be July 1, 2023. Anything approved previously, such as tournaments, would be at the old rates.

Rep. de la Cruz would like research to be done on the cost of electricity at the fields, vendors, and reducing electricity consumption. Director Murray will work with the Facilities Dept. and Engineering Dept. to get that information and will follow up with the Committee. Director Quinones stated that any recommendations regarding electricity could be incorporated into this resolution at a later date. He will work with the City's energy consultant to get an analysis and recommendation.

A motion to amend Item #1 to include the correct fee chart was made, seconded and approved by a voice vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, de la Cruz, Gilbride, and Weinberg in favor).

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

² Video Time Stamp: 00:11:10

³ Video Time Stamp: 00:20:40

Under a Suspension of the Rules

47. [PR31.020](#) RESOLUTION; and approval of public hearing; **Approved 5-0-0**
Establishing Fee Schedule for Terry Conners Ice
Rink.
04/17/2023 – Submitted by Director Murray

A motion to take up Item #7 under suspension of the rules was made, seconded and approved by a voice vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, de la Cruz, Gilbride, and Weinberg in favor).

Director Murray and Mr. Smith reviewed this item.

Rates have not been increased in three years. The proposed increases are for: private hockey lessons; high school hockey tickets; meeting room rentals for non-Stamford/TCR groups; ice rental (biggest revenue source), and advertising. Even with fee increases, the rink rental is less expensive than surrounding areas.

Electric and gas costs have increased this year by almost \$70K, and there was debt service taken on due to pending capital projects. The rink will be getting a new roof and the design is almost complete.

There is space for 20 advertising banners and they currently have four. The rink is more aggressively seek advertising this year and could bring in possibly \$20K more revenue.

The amount of revenue generated with teams varies widely depending on how well the teams are doing.

Tickets for high school games are one flat rate now for adult, child, and student. Senior Citizens are no charge.

A motion to approve Item #7 was made, seconded and approved by a voice vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, de la Cruz, Gilbride, and Weinberg in favor).

55. [PR31.019](#) RESOLUTION; Waiving the Requirements of **Approved 5-0-0**
[Section 21-3.B of the Code of Ordinances](#) in Order to
Rename Chestnut Hill Park to Susan Nabel Park
at Chestnut Hill
04/05/2023 – Submitted by Reps. Morson, Matheny
and Curtis.

Rep. Weinberg reviewed this item. Susan Nabel has made countless contributions to the BOR and the City of Stamford over the last 20 plus years. The BOR would like to express their appreciation and honor her name now so she can hear the esteem that so many people have for her. This waiver would be for this situation only.

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

⁴ Video Time Stamp: 00:37:55

⁵ Video Time Stamp: 00:51:35

- ⁶6. [PR31.018](#) RESOLUTION; Renaming Chestnut Hill Park to Susan Nabel Park at Chestnut Hill **Approved 5-0-0**
04/05/2023 – Submitted by the 31st Board of Representatives

A motion to approve Item #6 was made, seconded and approved by a voice vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, de la Cruz, Gilbride, and Weinberg in favor).

- ⁷4. [PR31.011](#) REVIEW; Design Standards and Potential Ordinance Relating to Artificial Turf Fields **Recommended to Steering 5-0-0**
10/13/22 – Submitted Reps. Jacobson and de la Cruz
11/14/22 – Moved to Pending

There was a lengthy discussion on this item.

Director Passamano discussed the benefits of the turf field project at SHS:

This came out of the school governance council look at what to do to improve the school grounds and make them more user friendly to the student body. This is about creating a multi-sport surface for baseball, soccer, lacrosse and possibly field hockey. SHS has a smaller footprint for fields, so a multi-sport surface is important.

Players have to practice at West Beach, Trinity, or Rippowam. An off-campus site is not optimal as there is no security, administrators, or trainers. Transportation is both costly and time consuming. These trips could be drastically reduced with this new turf field.

It is not about one particular sport but about getting as many students access to the fields for sports.

There are currently no design plans until the City approves the project.

Annual cost savings would be about \$35-40K conservatively for custodial maintenance.

The Boyle Stadium turf is in its 15th year and there have not been any big problems. Repairs are usually small patchwork.

He welcomes any Representatives to tour the fields with him if they would like.

Mr. Dyjak reviewed turf fields:

Field Turf has installed approximately 25,000 fields in the last 20 years. The company has installed fields at Lione Park and West Beach. They have also done several projects in neighboring towns, and all Division I and II fields in Connecticut.

He discussed the heat island effect. Heat is not as big of an issue in the Northeast as it is in the South or West, since it usually gets cooler in the evenings. There is a top dressing system that can be put on a field which drops the heat 30 to 40 degrees. It is 60 cents per square foot.

⁶ Video Time Stamp: 00:56:00

⁷ Video Time Stamp: 00:57:00

There is a recycling program when the company removes old turf fields.

The Committee requested several documents from Mr. Dyjak which he will get as soon as possible, including testing reports and maintenance procedures.

Commissioner Newman stated that a special meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was held on October 6, 2022. There were several presentations regarding the safety of turf fields and these can be found at https://www.stamfordct.gov/government/boards-commissions/parks-and-recreation-commission/-folder-1569#docan3921_6604_367.

Cheshire and Madison school districts, and Springfield Massachusetts had organic grass fields. It was found that these fields can withstand passive recreational use but cannot always withstand athletic recreational use. Cheshire has removed two of them, Madison now has four turf fields, and Springfield is currently replacing two grass fields with turf.

Connecticut has very strict guidelines on what can be used to maintain organic grass fields.

One turf field is equivalent to four natural grass fields.

Mr. Toma spoke to the legal aspects of a possible ordinance:

The BOR has legal authority to pass an ordinance that is intended to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents. If the BOR came to the determination that artificial turf is a danger, the BOR has the legal ability to limit the use. If it were banned completely, there needs to be a rational basis to do so. There does not have to be scientific proof, but evidentiary support.

Mr. Toma stated it would be the responsibility of the BOR to determine whether or not there is enough evidence to back an ordinance, either in favor or against turf fields.

Director Quinones stated that there can be a middle ground between banning and not banning. The BOR can look at different opportunities for regulating design standards, with careful consideration and oversight.

A motion to recommit Item #4 to Steering was made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Matheny, Sandford, de la Cruz, Gilbride, and Weinberg in favor).

Chair Matheny adjourned the meeting at 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Matheny, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)