

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
December 2, 2024
Elmwood Community Center, Room 24**

Special Meeting called to order by Anna Park, Chair at 5:31 PM.

1. Roll Call:

In Attendance: Steve Garneau, Narayan Paudel, Lisa Karam, Anna Park

Absent: Shawn Daly, Nancy Gierlich

Staff in Attendance: Helen Rubino-Turco, John Phillips

There are three open board positions to fill.

2. Adoption of October 28, 2024 Minutes – passed (Steve and Narayan abstained).

3. Old Business:

- **Capital Improvements Update**

- Wolcott Park–The restroom project is nearing completion and should be completed by end of December.
- Rockledge Driving Range– Project delays continue as plans are being developed to install ground improvements due to unstable fill.
- New Community Center– This project is in the schematic design phase. Architecture firm GWWO should have schematic designs ready for review in January.

- **Tree Canopy Study & Tree Inventory** – PlanIt Geo’s completion of the Urban Tree Canopy Study is expected in January. The tree inventory is underway, with training sessions on the inventory software being held for Tree Action Group volunteers soon. The goal is to have a core group trained on the software over the winter, and the bulk of the community effort will take place between April and June. A community presentation is planned for Celebrate West Hartford.
- **Community Development Block Grant**– Community input has been collected for the Town’s Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The members present agreed that continued improvements to ADA access to parks and facilities was an important priority, including ramps, curb cuts for ADA parking, and accessible docks in the public parks and trails.

4. New Business:

- **Food Scrap Collection**– John Phillips, the Director of Public Works, presented a new program to collect food waste. Due to the higher cost of curbside collection, a program will be introduced that features satellite collection sites in Town – beginning with four locations: Brixton Street (DPW headquarters), Norfeldt Field (corner of Boulevard and Trout Brook Drive), Town Hall lot, Eisenhower Park (Sheep Hill Drive parking lot). The Town Hall site will provide great exposure to help educate the public, and may be moved to Wolcott Park in the future. Through this free program, residents may drop off food scraps into a sealed, hardened metal container, which will be emptied once or twice per week. Participants use a QR code to unlock the container. This technology will record the number of participants, and will allow for targeted communications and updates with participants. The bear-resistant containers would be affixed to a concrete pad. Each unit costs \$1,900 plus the concrete pad, and are paid for through the “nips fund.”

The scraps will be collected by Quantum BioPower, a regional trash-to-energy company. Manchester is reporting good results with their program. Middletown is using a simpler system, and looking to expand their program.

John explained best management practices for waste management statewide. The food scrap collection may not significantly reduce waste costs (tonnage) at this time, but will introduce the concept to the community, and will, over time, help manage waste more efficiently.

- **Proposed Fee Increase** for Golf Clubs– Fee increases for the 2025 golfing season at both facilities were reviewed and endorsed.
- **Upcoming/Underway Capital Improvement Projects**–Post-tension concrete is being installed at the Eisenhower basketball courts. The Sedgwick baseball field is also being redone. New irrigation heads will be installed at the Beachland soccer field. A new sidewalk has been installed at Glover Field to improve access from parking lots to the main entrance. Parking has been a major safety issue when people park illegally in the drop off zone. Dugouts and fencing will be installed at softball fields at Norfeldt and Sterling fields.

5. Friends of West Hartford Parks Report

- Lisa Karam reported that the group is planning several events in 2025, including to movie nights in parks, a spring clean-up in a park, and a fall Walk In The Park.
6. **Request for AEDs:** Member Steve Garneau requested that the Town consider adding AEDs to middle school gymnasiums. Helen will follow up with Fire Department.
 7. **2025 Meeting Dates** – dates were proposed and approved.
 8. **Public Comment**–none. Meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 27, 2025 at ECC.

Minutes submitted by Helen Rubino-Turco.