

West Hartford Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes of Board Meeting held Monday, March 21, 2022 at 5:30 pm

Roll Call – Shawna Kitzman, Greg Shimer, Tanja Low, Robin Collins, Kate Eikel, Steve Garneau, Anna Park, Steve Kutcher, guest Ted Goerner, staff Helen Rubino-Turco

Absent: August Melita

Shawna Kitzman called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Tanja Low volunteered to take the minutes.

1. Roll Call
2. Adoption of January 24, 2022 meeting minutes – adopted unanimously
3. Old Business
 - a. Spring/Summer Program Registrations
 - i. The registration site went live on February 1 and received over 3,000 registrations in 31 minutes, valued at over \$500,000.
 - ii. The RecDesk system can now add program sections and manage waitlists.
 - iii. There are significant cost savings by not printing and/or mailing paper copies to 35,000 households.
 - b. Mayflower Property Update
 - i. The architecture firm, Tecton, was hired to do the feasibility study and community engagement. The study should be completed by Thanksgiving. The town will then put out an RFP to architects for building and facility design.
 - ii. It is not known if the existing building will be knocked down, but it is likely, due to the presence of lead paint, PCBs, and asbestos.
 - iii. A formal request for participation in the planning process will go out to the general public from the Town Manager’s office.
 - c. Capital Improvements Update
 - i. Buena Vista Tennis courts
 1. The tennis courts are being renovated and will be 2 full tennis courts and 6 pickleball courts. They should be ready for use by this summer.
 - ii. Eisenhower Pool
 1. This will be a time intensive project over the next 12 months. They may use the existing footprint of the building, but that will be decided in the coming weeks.
4. New Business
 - a. West Hartford Tree Project – Guest Speaker Ted Goerner
 - i. The project is in its second year. The goal is to restore and preserve the tree canopy in West Hartford. Big trees have been coming down for a variety of reasons and need to be replaced.
 - ii. Last year the group raised \$1,000 to buy evergreen seedlings from the North Central Conservation District. The seedlings are bareroot, 1-3 years old, and 6”-8” tall. 800 seedlings were given to residents for use on private property and

400 seedlings were planted on town property (Westmoor, Wolcott Park and Spicebush).

- iii. This year they will be giving away deciduous native trees and shrubs. They will be purchased as well as donated by Eversource.
- iv. The Project is working with an arborist from Eversource as well as John Phillips, Director of Public Works.
- v. Residents have until April 21 to make a request. The trees/shrubs will be picked up on April 23. Any remaining seedlings will be planted on town property (including along the new Trout Brook Trail).
- vi. Requests can be made through the Project's [Facebook page](#), as well as volunteer to help with distribution and planting on town property.
- vii. There are many benefits to improving tree canopy, including savings in heating and cooling costs, increase the number of native birds and animals, water runoff reduction, cleaner air, noise reduction, and privacy screening.
- viii. There were questions and discussion about tree equity and the group is looking into grants and funding to work toward tree equity.

- b. Helen Rubino-Turco told the board that there is a draft ordinance change before the Community Planning and Economic Development committee of the Town Council. The change would prohibit smoking and/or vaping products of any kind in public parks.

5. Friends of West Hartford Parks

- a. Steve Kutscher shared that the group is planning to meet in the coming days.
- b. There will be an invasive plant cleanup at Spicebush on Saturday from 9-12, and another will be held on April 22.

6. Public Comment – none

The next meeting will be May 16, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. Location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.