

Park and Recreation Commission

John Bittmann, Chairman
Ronald Sill
Bruce Sill
Heather Beauton
Jose Rivera (BOAT)
Michael Kelleher
vacant

Minutes

(meeting recorded)

Monthly meeting: Monday, February 10, 2025 – held at City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

By roll call, members present: John Bittmann, Ronald Sill, Bruce Sill, Heather Beauton, Jose Rivera (ZOOM) and Michael Kelleher (ZOOM).

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell and Athletic Director Jenn Moffat (arriving at 7:30 pm) were present.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:

MOTION made by Heather Beauton and second by Bruce Sill. MOVE to add 8C to the agenda to be Discussion of Field Use by City and Private Pay programs and accept the agenda, as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION made by Ronald Sill and second by Bruce Sill. MOVE to approve the December 9, 2024 minutes, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION made by Heather Beauton and second by Bruce Sill. MOVE to approve the January 13, 2025 minutes, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Mr. William Harris read into the record the following letter requesting that, with the five year requirement, the Commission consider naming the soccer fields at Witek Park after Mario Tessitore, a resident integral to the Youth Soccer Program for decades.

William and Laura Harris

511 Roosevelt Drive Derby CT 06418

Phone: (203) 305-4557

► Derby Parks and Recreation Committee

1 Elizabeth St, Derby, CT 06418

(203) 736-1476

Dear Committee Members,

Below is a copy of letter a sent to you requesting the naming of the soccer fields at Witek Park in honor of Mario Tessitore. At that time, we were advised that per the City of Derby's ordinances, 5 years must pass before such requests can be considered. This April that condition will be met, so we are resubmitting the letter for your consideration and suggesting that any renaming ceremony be held in May of 2025 which would be near the start of spring soccer as well as favorable weather.

On behalf of the Tessitore Family we thank you for considering this request.

Regards,

William and Laura Harris

2/10/2025

The purpose of this letter is to propose naming the soccer fields at Witek Park in the memory of Mario Tessitore, who passed away in April 2020. Mr. Tessitore is well known throughout the City of Derby as a founder of Derby Youth Soccer and as its leader for nearly 40 years. Memorializing these fields is justified by his lifelong advocacy of the "beautiful game" in our community and recognizes his many contributions to the City of Derby, its children, and their families.

Since 1981, thousands of children in the City of Derby have learned to play soccer and more importantly, benefit from life lessons taught participating in this sport. During Mr. Tessitore's tenure as the president of Derby Youth Soccer, enrollment has been consistent and continues to thrive even with all the competing attractions available for youngsters today. The popularity of the game in our community led to the establishment of Girls and Boys Soccer programs at the Derby High School in the 1990's. The construction of the soccer fields at Witek Park facility is further evidence of the popularity of the sport that Mr. Tessitore introduced to our city.

His positive influence is not defined only by his contributions to the City of Derby. Mr. Tessitore was a long-time referee for the State of Connecticut and has officiated Connecticut Junior Soccer Association games throughout the Valley and surrounding communities. He was especially active in Ansonia and Oxford and was often complimented by spectators on his fairness and even-tempered officiating, even by parents of the losing team. He was a member of the Connecticut Soccer Officials Association, officiating at many high schools in the State of Connecticut.

For these reasons, the naming of the Witek Park Soccer fields in memory of Mario Tessitore is proposed to recognize his personal commitment to a sport that Derby's children love to play. On behalf of the Tessitore family and the Derby Youth Soccer Board, we thank the Park and Recreation Committee for your consideration of this proposal.

Regards,

William and Laura Harris

12/20/2022

Members recalled Mr. Tessitore's dedication and the matter will be placed on the April agenda.

No one else spoke and public portion was closed.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Mr. O'Connell indicated that Dr. Conway had recently approached him about a request he had received from the YMCA to hold a summer camp at Bradley School. It would be ten weeks and would be a full day program at a cost of \$290.00 per week for each participant. The participants would be up to the age of thirteen. Besides the school uses, they would be going for swim at the Orange YMCA and field trips once a week. They are seeking use of the playground, the gymnasium, a classroom and the cafeteria and Dr. Conway had suggested a charge of \$1,500.00 per day, subject to negotiation. They

were at the Holy Rosary Church in Ansonia last year. This was an initial contact with no indication what direction the city or the Board of Education would take on the matter.

Mr. O'Connell indicated that he had limited details at this time but this request would intrude on the current summer playground program that the City has run for many years. He was uncertain whether there was any way that the current program could merge with this request. Derby's program is from 9am to 2pm, is free and is a drop-in arrangement. Last year there were 130 participants total with varying attendance each day. Members decided that more information was needed and possibly the YMCA should be invited to our meeting if there is further interest in the proposal.

Mr. O'Connell next reported on water damage at the Payden Field House. Ms. Moffat reported to Mr. O'Connell that on Monday, January 27th, when she entered the fieldhouse she found water flooding the locker rooms. First it was thought to be a pipe break but it was determined that the damage came from an air handler that seems to have frozen. To date costs for restoration is at \$17,000 and the insurance policy has a \$25,000 deductible.

At the Derby Veteran's Community Center, the pool was shut down for three days as the water testing showed too high a chlorine level.

High School Athletic Director's Report:

Ms. Moffat stated that the winter programs are finishing up. Working on the spring schedules.

Athletic Updates

- Senior Football Player Jayzair Barbera was recognized at the CHSCA Football Banquet on Jan 12th at the Aqua Turf
- Cheerleading team returned to competition on Jan 18th and placed 2nd at the "Bring it on for Nina" Competition at Seymour Middle School
- Our senior nights for Winter sports have been scheduled:
 - Wrestling 1/30
 - Girls Basketball 2/18
 - Boys Basketball/Cheer 2/21
- Indoor Track competed at the NVL Championship Meet on 1/31 (Results not available at time of submission)
- CIAC Battle of the Fans submission video was sent in.
- There was a major leak in the baseball, softball and football locker rooms at the fieldhouse that was discovered on 1/27/25. Park and Rec was advised. There is concern that there will be mold issues in the Spring/Summer from the incident
- The Football Albarella Banquet is planned for Feb 16th at the A.M. Club. Doors will open at 12pm and the program will begin at 1pm

NEW OR OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Budget:

Mr. O'Connell stated that he is scheduled to meet with the Finance Director to develop the budget.

B. Little League/Pop Warner field house:

Mr. Marcucio indicated that Pop Warner has committed to catching up with the shared expenses for this budget year. They have expressed disagreement with these costs being paid by the programs. Mr. O'Connell is seeking that the costs for maintenance and utilities be paid by the City in the upcoming budget year. He will be reviewing the issue with the Finance Director.

C. Field Use by City and Private pay programs.

It was indicated that the Commission had submitted updates to the fee schedule more than a year ago. The Commission is awaiting further actions from the Board of Alderman and Alderwoman.

MOTION made by Ronald Sill and second by Heather Beauton. MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.

2025 MAR 11 AM 9:45