

DERBY BOARD OF ALDERMEN/ALDERWOMEN SPECIAL MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020

6:00 P.M. or immediately following the Community Relations Committee Meeting

Via ZOOM – Meeting ID:846 1506 6768 Password: 246574

MINUTES

The Honorable Richard Dziekan, Mayor of the City of Derby, called the Special Meeting via Zoom to order at 6:53 p.m. all rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Joseph L. DiMartino, Sarah Widomski, Camille Grande Kurtyka, Ronald M. Sill, Jim DiMartino, Robert Hyder, Thomas Donofrio, Charles Sampson

Excused: Barbara L. DeGennaro

Also Present via Zoom: Andrew Baklik, Chief of Staff, Dr. Matthew Conway, Superintendent of Schools, Chief Gerald Narowski, Derby Police Department, Marc J. Garofalo, Town & City Clerk, Vincent Marino, Corporation Counsel

PUBLIC PORTION

Mayor Dziekan asked three times if anyone wished to address the board. Hearing no requests, the public portion was closed.

CITY FIELDS, CITY FACILITIES, AND CITY PROGRAMS – DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION ON POTENTIAL FUTURE RE-OPENING

Mr. Sampson asked Mayor Dziekan if he could give an update on where the State is at and what the plan is for the City. He said baseball season is ready to kick off, they're talking about scheduling an actual season, but obviously that is going to be dependent on what the City is going to do.

Mr. Baklik said he knows that Dr. Conway has been on a lot of calls with the State Board of Education so he can share that information, but yesterday on the Governor's call they did reference re-opening of sports, which they will provide additional guidance on June 6th. He said right now there's a tentative date to re-open select youth sports as of June 20th but they haven't quite said what those sports are and what the protocols will be to open those sports. Mr. Baklik said based on the conversation and specific questions he's assuming baseball, Little League may be on that list, but we really don't know at this point. He feels the State is being very careful to not pre-emptively announce something that could change a week later and they're keeping the Phases about four weeks apart to see what the results of each Phase are. If the outdoor restaurant openings result in a crazy increase of COVID cases we're not going to see us get to Phase 2. On the same token they did make a reference to the group size - right now it's five or less for a social gathering and that number may soften – it's all contingent on the analysis of where we stand.

Mr. Baklik said the reason he asked President Joseph DiMartino to put this on the agenda is there have been several questions about City properties and Dennis O'Connell (Parks & Recreation Director) also had concerns. He said he has made a list of the City properties and activities:

- Pool at Community Center
- Little League
- Use of the Derby Green from different groups
- Playground Program at Bradley School
- July 4th Fireworks
- Picnic Grove rentals
- Track & Field at J.R. Payden Complex
- Softball Field at Bradley School – Adult and Youth Leagues

Mr. Baklik said he doesn't think the decision to open or close should come out of the Mayor's Office necessarily and we wanted to hear some input from the Board. He said obviously the July 4th fireworks, based on money and the gathering size, is off with most communities also cancelling. Mr. Baklik said he thinks it's time to open up the track with the understanding that we're still not allowing gatherings of more than five people. He told the Board there will be more guidance from the Governor's Office on June 6th and asked Dr. Conway to share the document that he received regarding CIAC (CT Interscholastic Athletic Conference)sports.

Dr. Conway told the Board at the bottom of the document are several links to groups that helped the CIAC prepare this document. Even with the loosened restrictions that we're expecting at least by June 20th the CIAC is taking a very conservative approach and they are really limiting any interaction at this point. Any sports involving contact are not scheduled until Phase 4 or 5, whenever that may be, but they're not even being considered throughout the summer months. Dr. Conway said he will get the document to all the Board members and he thinks it will be very informative and help form your decision. He said the document was developed with a tremendous amount of input from CIAC, CAPS (CT Association of Public-School Superintendents) as well as the Department of Public Health, the Governor's Re-Opening Committee, and the consultants that they advised with. Dr. Conway said it's a good set of guidelines when we're developing our own policies in Derby.

Mr. Sampson said to expedite matters suggested taking the items in Mr. Baklik's list one at a time. Mayor Dziekan said he would like to see the track opened. Ms. Widomski asked if there is a reason why the Board didn't receive the list prior to the meeting so we could review it and prepare our thoughts and comments. Mr. Baklik said he just jotted down sites and activities off the top of his head knowing there's myriad of City-owned properties that are under the jurisdiction of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen. He said that's why he believes it has to be a conversation with everyone. Mr. Baklik said he likes Mr. Sampson's suggestion to discuss it one at a time and then entertain a motion to open immediately, stay closed pending further guidance or forward to the next Board meeting for additional consideration. I think

once we start to have that conversation those items will be pretty clear to us based on the State and CDC (Centers for Disease Control) guidance. Mayor Dziekan said we also know the areas that will be used. Ms. Widomski said at our last meeting the Board addressed not receiving documentation prior to the meetings. Mr. Baklik apologized and said it was his fault. Mr. Donofrio said he understands what Ms. Widomski is saying and also thinks we should talk about this, let us digest it, and then put it on the June meeting agenda so we can think about what's going on and see what the State says about opening up certain areas. Mayor Dziekan said he thinks that's a great idea and suggested that we review the list of specific areas tonight. Mr. Baklik said he also agrees as it relates to a lot of City-owned properties. On the other hand, he thinks it's prudent to make a decision on the fireworks. Mr. Donofrio said it was already in the paper that the Mayor cancelled them. Mr. Baklik said the paper reached out to the Mayor for a comment and he believes other communities have also cancelled. Mayor Dziekan said if the Board wants to run the fireworks then so be it noting that the fundraising this year is done – he can't ask businesses for donations and also it is too late to place the order. Mr. Sill said he feels that once again it is a lack of communication and we all need to be on the same page.

Mr. Sampson suggested reviewing each item one at a time and decide tonight whether to take action or to bring it back to the next Board meeting. Mr. Sill said if we were to open the track we need to have guidelines such as wearing a mask and group size. Mr. Sampson said that is incorrect – the State is not mandating wearing a mask unless you cannot socially distance and stay six feet apart - that's what the State guidance is. Mr. Donofrio said he would like to table all the items tonight and just gather information for the next Board meeting – Ms. Widomski agreed.

The items up for discussion:

- Pool at Community Center
- Little League
- Use of the Derby Green from different groups
- Playground Program at Bradley School
- July 4th Fireworks
- Picnic Grove rentals
- Track & Field at J.R. Payden Complex
- Softball Field at Bradley School – Adult and Youth Leagues

Dr. Conway told the Board that per the CIAC fall and winter sports can begin conditioning during Phase 2 – outdoors only. Conditioning could take place with all social distancing being practiced, temperatures taken, wellness checklist, and the information recorded into a database for contact tracing. Dr. Conway said they would make use of the fields in late June if the fall/winter coaches want to begin conditioning and if the Board of Education approves.

COMMUNITY CENTER – POOL & GYM

Mr. Sampson asked if we have guidance from the State for this type of facility. Mr. Baklik said the general consensus is they are not ready to open at this moment noting

the State is not concerned with spreading COVID in pools they're concerned about social distancing. He told the Board that Mr. O'Connell has expressed concerns about opening the pool.

Chief Narowski said all the things you're discussing tonight there are State guidelines until June 20th. Mayor Dziekan said we should just be following the Executive Orders. Mr. Sampson agreed, but he is in favor of opening the track. Mr. Baklik said he feels that is actionable as it is really no different than the Greenway. He also noted that we're receiving a lot of calls asking when it will open. Mr. Donofrio asked if we open up the field who is going to police the people walking on the field, playing football because the kids are going to do that. Mayor Dziekan said the Police Department will handle that and said they already done so.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sampson with a second by Mr. Hyder to take no action regarding opening the Community Center until further guidance is received. **Motion carried.**

USE OF THE DERBY GREEN

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sampson with a second by Mr. Donofrio to not allow gatherings on the Derby Green until further notice.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

Mr. Hyder asked Dr. Conway if there is a program planned on the Derby Green for (2) teachers per (1) student. Dr. Conway said the City was informed last Friday that beginning this Tuesday (2) teachers will be on the Green tutoring (1) student. All procedures will be followed – taking of temperature, medical questionnaire, etc. and will be recorded for contact tracking. The Green was selected as it is outside, and the student can walk to it.

Mr. Sampson asked to withdraw his motion.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sampson with a second by Mr. Sill to not allow gatherings on the Derby Green of more than five people as per Governor Lamont's Executive Order currently directs. **Motion carried.**

SOFTBALL AT BRADLEY SCHOOL

A MOTION was made by Mr. Donofrio with a second by Mr. Joseph DiMartino to keep the field closed. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Sill asked Mr. Baklik if Parks & Recreation has jurisdiction and not the Board. Mr. Baklik said he believes Parks & Recreation has the say for programs, but the use of the property would fall to the Board. Mr. Sill said Parks & Recreation was not informed about this being discussed and this is why better communication is needed.

BRADLEY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND PROGRAM

A MOTION was made by Mr. Joseph DiMartino with a second by Ms. Widomski to not have the Playground Program at Bradley School as there would be more than 5 people.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

Mr. Hyder said he has a question regarding the Governor's guidelines – he said that summer camps can open as long as they're not overnight camps. Bradley School's program is not an overnight camp and he wonders if this is something that we should re-visit at the June 11th Board meeting noting that the camp typically doesn't begin until after July 4th. Mr. Joseph DiMartino said he would amend his motion.

Mr. Jim DiMartino told the Board that up to now he's been on mute and doesn't understand why but he is opposed to the softball and baseball field.

Mr. Baklik told Mr. Hyder that he agrees as we have guidance regarding summer camps, and it comes with a ridiculous amount of protocols. There is a large group of kids and a small group of counselors. The Parks & Recreation Director believes it is infeasible to have the camp and it seems to be what a lot of the other communities are doing. He said it's probably worthwhile to re-visit it at the June 11th meeting. Mayor Dziekan said he thinks we should continue following the State guidelines. I feel we're doing the right thing right now and as Mr. Baklik pointed out there are changes every day.

PICNIC GROVE

Mr. Baklik said the picnic grove is closed through June 30th, so we don't have to do anything at this moment. Mr. Donofrio asked Mr. Jim DiMartino if anything is scheduled for the month of July. Mr. Joseph DiMartino said there are about 6 or 7 rentals. Mr. Donofrio said he feels these people need to be contacted to start looking for an alternate site. Mr. Joseph DiMartino said everyone with a booking in July has been called and told that it's not definite that the picnic grove will be open before then due to COVID. Mr. Baklik stated the group size is not going to be very forgiving in allowing for too many of these things until at least after July 20th as any increase will be contingent on the infection rate. Mr. Jim DiMartino questioned how he (Governor) can make a decision on something that is going to happen in July. Mr. Baklik said that's the point. Mayor Dziekan again stated that we're following the Executive Orders and there were rentals in May and June that also had to be cancelled – now it's July – it may open up July 20th and then we can do it but he believes being cautious is the right thing to do and he said that Public Works is doing a great job.

TRACK AND FOOTBALL FIELD

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sampson with a second by Mr. Sill to allow the track to be utilized following CDC guidelines.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

Mayor Dziekan said regarding Mr. Donofrio's earlier concerns any calls received regarding the track go to the Police Department. He said it's happened a few times in

the last two weeks and the Police went and dispersed. Mr. Sill asked when this would go into effect. Mayor Dziekan instructed Mr. Garofalo to post the notice on the City's website that the track will be open starting tomorrow,

MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Baklik said Mr. DiCenso just messaged him about Witek Park and if kayaking and walking is allowed, noting that the upper fields aren't open.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Donofrio with a second by Mr. Joseph DiMartino to keep the gate locked so the field is not used. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Joseph DiMartino said Dr. Conway would like to address the Board.

Dr. Conway told the Board that he received a request last night and explained that each year on Senior Day banners are posted around the field for the Senior Day Game for all sports and due to COVID we were unable to play those games. The banners were ordered for softball, baseball, and track. Dr. Conway said the banners would normally go up for the game and then taken down after the game. He would like to ask for permission to leave the banners up until the end of the school year.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sampson with a second by Mr. Donofrio to grant permission for the banners to remain up until the end of the school year.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

Mr. Hyder asked that the banners be hung on the fence along the track for everybody to see. Dr. Conway said they will be on the track and along the baseball/softball field fence facing Chatfield Street.

MOTION CARRIED.

There was then a brief discussion regarding the Board receiving communications. Ms. Widomski said she would like to make a motion to require recommendations from the Mayor's Office in advance of future meetings with backup.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Widomski with a second by Mr. Donofrio to require recommendations from the Mayor's Office in advance of future meetings with backup.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION


Mr. Jim DiMartino said he doesn't really know what Ms. Widomski is requesting. Ms. Widomski said she would like the Mayor's Office to provide the Board with information for future meetings. We had no information for today's meeting. Mayor Dziekan said Mr. Baklik can disperse the Governor's decrees and Executive Orders to the Board along with the information that was discussed this evening. Mr. Sampson said he doesn't think we need a motion for this – it should just be sent. Mr. Baklik reminded everyone that every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. there is a call from the Governor's Office noting yesterday's call was over an hour. He will provide that information. Mr. Baklik

also reminded everyone that all the State information is available on the State's website. He will send out the links that are constantly updated as everything changes rapidly. Mr. Baklik stated that he committed to sending out a report to the full Board everything Friday and he has done that.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sill with a second by Mr. Joseph DiMartino to adjourn the Special Electronic Meeting at 7:32 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,


Patty Finn
Recording Secretary

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF
ALDERMEN/ALDERWOMEN AT THEIR NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING.**