

NEWINGTON PARKS & RECREATION
BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
IN NEWINGTON, CT
2023 MAR -3 AM 10:36


Town Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Jay Bottalico called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Jay Bottalico, Billy DeBlasio, Eileen Francolino, Tom Gill, Tim Hutvagner, Ed Marchion (virtual), and Don Woods (virtual)

Board Members Absent: Richard DaSilva, Anthony Kulowski, Matthew Kulowski, and Nicole Pane

Council Members Present: Tim Manke

Staff Members Present: Bill DeMaio, Superintendent, Sam Lostocco, Administrative Secretary, Hadeel Majdoub, Recreation Supervisor, and Melissa Miller, Administrative Secretary

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – January 17, 2023 Meeting

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Eileen Francolino to approve the minutes of the meeting on January 17, 2023. Billy DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

NONE.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Fee Waiver Request from Pamela Lavery for the Life. Be in it. Extravaganza and the 19th Annual Peter Lavery Memorial Ride

Pamela Lavery submitted a fee waiver request for these two upcoming events. A motion will be made during the New Business portion of this meeting.

b. Email from West Point Military Band

Bill DeMaio reported that the Department reached out to 13 or 14 military bands from across the country while planning for this year's Summer Concert Series. Unfortunately, we weren't able to book a military band for this year. We had some conversations and negotiations, but nothing materialized. We certainly laid the groundwork for next year's Summer Concert Series. We had a good conversation with West Point. Bill DeMaio thinks we will be able to schedule a concert with West Point, eventually. They are a high-quality, professional military band.

c. Letter from Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Lucy Robbins Welles Library sent the Department a thank you letter for the gift basket and donation of 12 boxes of wine, that were leftover from one of our events, for the Lucy Robbins Welles Library Winterfest event. We also let them use our refrigerator to store food items for the event.

d. Email from Terra Tigno Regarding the Track at Newington High School

Bill DeMaio wanted to share this information with the Board. He does not believe that this project is on anybody's radar at this time. Jay Bottalico asked Bill DeMaio if this project would fall under the Board of Education. Bill DeMaio responded that Capital Improvement Program (CIP) money is all Town money. From what he understands, the Board of Education has CIP projects, the Town has CIP projects, and it all goes to one Town Council approval. The Board of Education has put money into shared projects like the dugouts at the Newington High School softball field. It isn't clear-cut. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for all of the property, ten-feet from the buildings out. Jay Bottalico asked Bill DeMaio approximately how much the track project would cost. Bill DeMaio responded that depending on what material is used, he thinks it would cost between \$750,000 and \$1.2 million for the track.

VII. SUMMARY REPORTS

The Monthly Report and Tree Warden Report for January 2023 were given to the Board to review. Bill DeMaio reported the reports are self-explanatory. We do a lot of tree work in town and we have a good group of Parks staff now. It's going really well.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Preliminary Master Plan of Mill Pond Park

Bill DeMaio reported this is a response from the Board meeting on January 17, 2023. He apologized for not mentioning the two diving blocks, on each side of the diving board, in the preliminary master plan of Mill Pond Park. This will allow the aquatics staff to teach diving in the 12.5 feet deep area of the pool. Mike Fortuna, who Bill DeMaio invited to tonight's meeting, is the architect expert for TLB Architecture, LLC. He had reminded Bill DeMaio that the plan includes two diving blocks to teach diving and the other diving blocks, at 5.5 feet deep water, would be for competitive swimmers only; who already know how to dive.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

a. Fee Waiver Request from Pamela Lavery for the Life. Be in it. Extravaganza and the 19th Annual Peter Lavery Memorial Ride

Bill DeMaio reported that this will be the 19th year of the Peter Lavery Memorial Ride at Churchill Park. Mrs. Lavery is requesting for the rental fee of the three pavilions at Churchill Park to be waived for this event. The value is \$740.00 and the Board has voted to waive the fee for her in the past, for as long as Bill DeMaio remembers. It is a nice thing to do. She also requested a fee waiver for a booth at the Life. Be in it. Extravaganza, in the amount of \$55.00.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Billy DeBlasio to authorize the Newington Parks and Recreation Department to waive the \$55.00 Non-Profit/Civic Group Vendor booth fee at the Life. Be in it. Extravaganza on Saturday, July 15, 2023 and the \$740.00 non-resident facility rental fee for 3 pavilion rentals at Churchill Park on Sunday, September 17, 2023 for the 19th Annual Peter Lavery Memorial Ride. Eileen Francolino seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Spring 2023 Program Guide

Bill DeMaio reported the Spring 2023 Program Guide was emailed to the Board and there are a few copies here for the Board to view. The Department will be receiving the program guides from the printing company and more copies will be available for the Board at our next meeting. It will be distributed to 13,500 Newington households as an insert in the Newington Life Magazine. Bill DeMaio added there is going to be a nice article in the Newington Life Magazine about Elliot Markman, our intern and CRPA student scholarship winner, and Tony Palermino, CRPA Volunteer of the Year. It will be a great edition of the Newington Life Magazine!

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Tom Gill to accept the Spring Program Guide, including the fees and charges associated with each event, program, and facility. Billy DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. REPORTS

a. Newington Goes Country – June 8, 2023

Bill DeMaio reported planning is going well for this event. The Department staff had a meeting with Dave Johnson, from Geico, and he is gladly sponsoring the Newington Goes Country and Food Truck Friday special events this June. Dave Johnson had given the sponsorship, for all these years, for Motorcycle Madness and the Department decided we are no longer hosting that event. We also have a few other sponsors, in the works, for our upcoming events. Southern Voice is a country band, that plays at the Cadillac Ranch, and plays half the year in Florida and Nashville. The Department's line dancing teacher, Wendy Nielson, offered to teach line dancing steps to go along with three different songs. The band will then play the three songs live. Meg Sauder is going to bring her horse, Farrah. There will also be trackless train rides, hay rides, and Imagination Playground blue blocks for children to build with.

b. Food Truck Friday – June 9, 2023

Bill DeMaio reported we already have four or five food trucks committed to this special event. Cody Bondra & the Contraband will be performing at Food Truck Friday. He is now making it nationally; he has an album. The Department is excited about the high quality of entertainment that is coming our way!

c. Summer Camp Licensing Stance

Bill DeMaio reported the Department took a pretty strong stand against the proposed summer camp licensing, along with our Parks and Recreation colleagues from 169 towns in Connecticut. Hadeel Majdoub, Recreation Supervisor, did a

wonderful job testifying via Zoom. Bill DeMaio went on to say that he and Parks and Recreation Board Vice-Chairperson, Don Woods, also gave testimonies via Zoom. They tried to make an impact stating that we care about kids' safety, of course, but we are not going to accept the red tape, paperwork, rules and regulations that would hinder our program by going along with camp licensing. We'll see how it all shakes out. You never know with legislation.

d. Summer Concert Series at Mill Pond Park and the Municipal Parking Lot

Bill DeMaio reported we already have over thirty concerts planned for the 2023 Summer Concert Series. We have American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding and Data-Mail funding available to support the concert series. There is one more band to book for the month of August. Then, the Department will put the concert series information together on a nice flyer for the public. We have some really good bands booked this year and the Department hopes that Newington will be recognized as the music town of Connecticut. Eileen Francolino asked if there will be a Ukulele Festival planned as part of the Summer Concert Series this year. Bill DeMaio responded yes, there will be thirty-five ukulele players coming to Mill Pond Park on Thursday, June 15, 2023. Tom Gill wanted to confirm with Bill DeMaio that there was one concert slot still open. Bill DeMaio responded yes, there is one date in August that is still available. Roderick Smith, Recreation Supervisor, has reached out to five bands with the date and the available spot will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Tom Gill mentioned there were two bands that contacted him regarding the concert series. Bill DeMaio suggested, in the future, for the bands to contact Roderick Smith in January. We determine, in January, what kinds of bands are needed for the Summer Concert Series.

Tom Gill asked Bill DeMaio what else is going on, besides, the food trucks on Food Truck Friday. Bill DeMaio reported Cody Bondra & the Contraband will be performing at Food Truck Friday. There will also be trackless train rides, hay rides, Imagination Playground blue blocks for preschool-aged children to build with, jugglers, magicians, stilt walkers, and the food trucks. Tom Gill asked if the activities are sponsored. Bill DeMaio replied that the Department tries, very hard, to get sponsors for every activity there is, in return for advertisement. Tom Gill went on to say that this year is the 70th Anniversary of the Fire Department Veterans Association. The association is trying to think of something to do, with the town. There was talk of an antique fire apparatus parade. Tom Gill did not want it to infringe on anything the Department had planned. However, if the Beer and Wine Garden is going to be open for the Food Truck Friday event, maybe the event for the Fire Department Veterans Association could be coordinated with that. Bill DeMaio responded that anything is possible. If there are only a few antique fire trucks, they could be parked in Mill Pond Park for people to view. Bill DeMaio suggested that beer/wine tickets could be given to a certain number of members of the Fire Department Veterans Association, and a price could be negotiated so that it is done economically. Tom Gill will share these ideas at his upcoming meeting. Bill DeMaio said he would be available to speak on the phone to brainstorm some ideas.

Tom Gill mentioned Frontier internet for the upcoming special events at Mill Pond Park. Bill DeMaio has been in contact with a representative from Frontier, and Roger. On the hard-wiring side, there are no worries. Bill DeMaio wanted to make sure that the representatives from Frontier are happy with what we did together last year. A representative will be checking within the Frontier organization and get back to us. Tim Hutvagner added that he spoke with Roger, from Frontier, and Roger is fine with coming in with whatever wiring we want to do. If we wanted to buy one of Frontier's units and put it in the middle of Mill Pond Park, for the events, he can run wires and hard wiring to wherever we want to go. Tim Hutvagner, is unsure of what the price would be at this time. Bill DeMaio said he is okay with having the Beer and Wine Garden set up over by the playground, where the hard wiring is already set by the pole. The wireless aspect failed us a little bit, last year, due to the number of people using their phones in the park. We will work it out for this year's events.

e. Mill Pond Pool Report

Bill DeMaio reported that Mike Fortuna, architect and engineer from TLB Architecture, LLC, is at the Board meeting, via Zoom. Hearing the facts of the proposed Mill Pond Pool project, from Mike Fortuna, will be a tell-tale conversation of what is going on. The Board will be able to ask him questions too. Bill DeMaio shared that, over the last week, it was suggested to him to find a new location for the pool, by the south end of the pond between the soccer field and the pond. If the pool was in that location, the Department may be more likely to get commitments from leadership to receive the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding, that Bill DeMaio, Keith Chapman, and Janet Murphy have set aside with the possibility of having a pool built. State Representative Gary Turco, State Representative Kate Farrar, and State Senator Matt Lesser are 100% behind trying to get the Town of Newington \$5 million from the State Bonding Authority by the end of May, as long as the Town matches half of their money. Two years from now, the estimated cost of the Mill Pond Park project is \$10.6 million. For \$5 million, plus \$4 million of federal money, it would cost the Town of Newington \$1.6 million dollars over two years. This Board, three years ago, believed in that and we had a shovel-ready

project. We predicted that the federal government would come up with money for infrastructure; low and behold they did. We also found out that pools and park projects are part of the ARRA funding and qualify. Any projects under \$10 million have no audit, whatsoever, for any town in the country. Bill DeMaio went on to say that timing is everything in life. All last week, Bill DeMaio worked with TLB Architecture, LLC to see how the pool could be located by the south end of the pond, between the soccer field and the pond. He reached out to the Soccer Club of Newington president and past-president. Mike Fortuna was nice enough to try to talk to the Geotech drilling company. However, we didn't get that far because we found out that with the 100-year flood plain, the 500-year flood plain, and the 100-ft. wetlands buffer, the pool could not fit over there without taking away the soccer fields. As we all know, taking away soccer fields is not a good idea. It wasn't a good idea before and it still isn't a good idea. Three years ago, the Department installed \$50,000-worth of irrigation systems to make soccer fields nice. The Parks staff is doing a nice job and those soccer fields really do look nice. The soccer fields are used 5-6 days, per week, during the spring, summer, and fall. It is a highly used facility. Mike Fortuna was kind enough to put this information in writing, so that Bill DeMaio could share it with Acting Town Manager, James Krupienski. That information was sent to James Krupienski this afternoon. The Board was cc'd in on it to be transparent and to let everybody know what's going on. We are back to square one again. We're back at the Garfield Street location as the only common-sense approach to making this project work, for a lot of reasons. The Mortensen Community Center and Gymnasium are right across the street for children attending our summer camp programs. The water table is a lot lower at the proposed Garfield Street site, approximately 6-7 feet. At the existing playground, near the tennis courts, the water table is only 6 inches below the surface. Bill DeMaio shared that some people wanted the new pool at the same site as the existing Mill Pond Pool. All of the existing wading pool and most of the existing big pool are in the 100-ft. wetlands buffer and the 100-year flood plain. It's not a 100% guarantee that we could even build a new pool in the existing location. Sixty-five years ago, we didn't have these laws and regulations and now we do. That is another issue. In the Parks and Recreation profession, we always build a new pool in a different location so you don't lose a swim season. It takes 1 1/2 - 2 years to build a new pool and we don't want to close a pool and not be able to provide swimming lessons and recreational swim during the hot summer. People have said to Bill DeMaio that parking at the library is a problem. Monday-Friday, the pool on Garfield Street will be used by children attending our summer camp programs. They don't drive; they are dropped off here. The campers are here from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The pool is open on Saturdays and Sundays, beginning at 1:00 p.m. On the weekends, Town employees are not working, so the parking lot at the Town Hall is wide open. There is really not much change. The proposed pool site is approximately 550 ft. from the existing pool site. In two years from now, the Town is thinking of purchasing some property down the street that might have more parking. They also have some ideas about relocating bussing, possibly. Bill DeMaio doesn't know for sure, but that is some of the talk that is going on. Two years from now, parking might not be an issue at all for those reasons. He wanted to make sure he was transparent with the Board about what is going on with the proposed Mill Pond Pool project. We were perfectly willing to try to compromise and move the pool to another location. We met with DJ Zordan, Town of Newington Fire Marshal, and contacted the State of CT Fire Marshal's office. Bill DeMaio received verbal permissions regarding the fireworks display, for the Life. Be in it. Extravaganza, if we could have built the pool on the south end of the pond. It would be okay if we asked for a modification and the Town of Newington signed off on it, and the State of CT signed off on it. That is where we are at, so far. Bill DeMaio wants to make sure all of the Board members know what is going on regarding this project. Mike Fortuna is here for the Board to ask him any questions regarding the proposed Mill Pond Pool project. He had previously done a comprehensive job of explain the flood plains to Bill DeMaio. A 100-year flood plain does not mean that every 100 years there is a flood. It means there is a 1% chance of having a flood each year and in a 500-year flood plain, there is a 2% chance each year of having a flood. You can't even have a fence in a flood plain that would stop water and debris from flowing during a flood. There cannot be any obstructions that were built and may stop a flood. Then, we looked at the tennis courts and those are 1/2 in the flood plain and in the waterway. Bill DeMaio feels strongly that this is a chance of a lifetime. Nowhere would federal government and the state pay for 90% of a town project like this. If we let this one go, we really have a change of regretting this down the road forever. Mike Fortuna reported that Bill DeMaio shared all of the highlights. Jay Bottalico said it sounds to him like there is a parking problem and he doesn't see a parking problem with this proposed plan. People can't walk? Bill DeMaio reported that it was measured today and is 550 ft. from the front door of the existing Mill Pond Pool to the front door of the proposed pool on Garfield Street. It is not far. Jay Bottalico said that parking shouldn't be an issue then. Mike Fortuna reported there are approximately 45 parking spaces in the parking lot near the Mill Pond tennis courts and approximately 400 parking spaces in the Municipal Complex across the street. He realizes that some of the parking spots in the Municipal Complex are allocated for police and other things. He continued by saying that no matter where you put the pool in the park, those are your two parking options. The location of the pool, within the park, doesn't have an impact on the overall parking. Mike Fortuna screen-shared a map for the Board to view. The purple areas on the map show the floodway;

absolutely no chance of developing in; that is the water course of the flood. You cannot do anything in that area. It would either increase the velocity of the water or raise the elevation of the water. As he zoomed in, the darker blue area on the map shows the 100-year flood plain; 1% chance of a flood within any given year. There are some areas of the country that have had four or five 100-year floods over the course of two or three years, so the definitions will probably be changing soon. As it stands now, that area shows the 100-year flood plain. The lighter blue area on the map shows the 500-year flood plain. The teal color on the map shows the wetlands; the yellow is the 100-ft. upland review area. Mike Fortuna indicated, on the map, the area of land that could be developed, if the decision is for the soccer fields to be eliminated. This would be without any special regulatory approval. You might get regulatory approval to build in the 100-ft. review area. That would be it. Mike Fortuna reported that you wouldn't stand any chance of getting the pool complex in this area. He went on to report that uphill, on the north side of the pond towards Garfield Street, the 100-ft. wetlands buffer ends roughly 110-115 ft. off of the edge of the pond. All of the area where the proposed pool complex on Garfield Street would be built is clear and free; no special regulatory approvals required. Mike Fortuna reported that aside from all of the other good reasons to be closer to Garfield Street; proximity to the Mortensen Community Center, access to utilities, better security; it's much easier and less costly to develop. There are no special regulatory impediments and ground water is much lower. That is the quick land map. Mike Fortuna said he was happy to answer any questions regarding the information he reported. Tom Gill asked how much space would it take to build the pool by the soccer fields. Bill DeMaio responded that it is actually one soccer field now. It has been changed from two fields to one, and turned the other way. Mike Fortuna showed the area on the map. Tom Gill went on to say that you can build a soccer field somewhere else and utilize that space. Bill DeMaio responded that there are approximately 1,000 families in town that are involved with the soccer program. Soccer has more spectators, at times, and the field is used for three seasons; unlike a pool that is just used for eight weeks in the summer. Jay Bottalico said then there would be an even worse problem with parking. Mike Fortuna reported that if the soccer field is moved anywhere else in the main part of park (north or east of the pond), you will have significantly more people driving to the event. You will create a greater parking problem than you would have had with the pool there. Eileen Francolino ask Mike Fortuna how much more space would be needed to meet the proposed pool design, in the area of the current soccer field. Mike Fortuna responded you would need the entire soccer field area. You could probably find a way to stay out of the 100-ft. upland review area. It might be impacted with grading. Eileen Francolino then asked if there will be a path from the tennis court parking to the pool complex, so that it is handicap accessible. Mike Fortuna responded that the master plan linked all of the areas of the park with handicap accessible pathways. With the pool on Garfield Street, not all of that had to be constructed in Phase One. If you put the pool down by the existing soccer field, you would certainly need to create the handicap accessible pathways as part of this project. There is no logical way to get along the street, on Garfield Street, by the bus yard, and you would have to clear that steep grade by the grotto to get back to the soccer field. It would be an awful long path. You would probably build some accessible parking down by where the soccer field is, near that gravel lot. The rest would be pathways to other parking areas. Eileen Francolino clarified that she was asking about paths from the tennis courts to the proposed location of the pool on Garfield Street. Mike Fortuna responded that wherever the new pool is located, they will connect those paths. If the pool is placed down the soccer field, we would have to create handicap accessible parking. We can't expect somebody in a wheelchair to traverse that distance. Bill DeMaio responded that with the former Town Engineer, Gary Fuerstenberg, we talked about the handicap accessible parking spaces at the Community Center to being right up near Garfield Street, so you could easily go the sidewalk and cross the street to the pool. That was always the intent. Billy DeBlasio asked if Mike Fortuna could show what the proposed area of the pool would look like, if placed on Garfield Street. Billy DeBlasio went on to say that in regards to the chemicals associated with the pool, the existing pool is in a terrible location with the pond water. Bill DeMaio responded that we have a letter from Salvo, a chlorine company, saying they will not give us liquid chlorine anymore at Mill Pond Pool. If there is a spill, their insurance wouldn't cover the environmental cost for the pond. Don Woods asked why we keep having this discussion when the best people in the business have told us there is one spot that is optimum to build a pool in Mill Pond Park. All of sudden now, we are going back to a total disaster area to be considered over by the soccer field. Anyone who went through that, Don Woods, in particular, isn't interested in facing that fight. Why would we want to put the pool there when it is inferior to where it has been recommended? Don Woods said he doesn't get it; somebody has to be against this. Jay Bottalico asked why we spent \$50,000 to find out where the pool should go and now everyone is questioning it. He went on to say these people are experts. If we aren't listening to the experts, who are we going to listen to? Eileen Francolino asked Bill DeMaio if this presentation has been given to all of the Town Councilors, State Representative Gary Turco, State Representative Kate Farrar, and Senator Matt Lesser. Bill DeMaio responded this presentation was shared with this Board, Acting Town Manager, James Krupienski, and Tim Manke and Kim Radda, the Town Council Liaisons for the Parks and Recreation Department. Bill DeMaio filled out all of the paperwork for the state bonding and provided it to James Krupienski. Bill DeMaio believes that James Krupienski is

waiting for the Town Council to give him permission to release it. Eileen Francolino expressed that we need to move on this, since the money is not going to be held onto forever. She went on to say that if the Town of Newington hesitates, if we don't commit to this project, we are going to lose the chance of a lifetime. We need a pool; it's clear we need a pool. We need to get this done and this is never going to happen again. Bill DeMaio responded that for the Town of Newington, this is something that we have to do. It is a no-brainer. It is good for the community. Swimming lessons are so important for young people, along with recreational swim. We are the only town that doesn't have a splash pad. Other towns have three, four, or even five of them. Eileen Francolino added to the conversation by saying that at the end of the last Town Council meeting, one of the Town Councilors said that he was certain that Mill Pond Pool is fine and that there is underground wiring that is ready to go for a splashpad. Eileen Francolino would like to clear up that misconception. Bill DeMaio is unaware of anything like that. He asked Mike Fortuna to confirm if there is anything electrical, underground, for a splash pad at the existing Mill Pond Pool. Mike Fortuna reported no. Jay Bottalico added why would they put a splash pad there if the pool could drop dead the next day. That is throwing money away, as far as he is concerned. Bill DeMaio said the Town of Newington would need to raise \$1.6 million, over two years, which could be done in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and it may not even need a referendum because it is under \$975,000 each year. The town would be able to vote based on the Town Council approving budgets. Ed Marchion added that there will be significant cost overruns if you move the pool location anywhere other than Garfield Street. On a construction aspect, Garfield Street is the easiest way to build that pool in the entire park. You have very little issues with the water table there. This is a no-brainer. Ed Marchion went on to say the engineer is telling you this and now someone like me, a contractor, is telling you this. Mike Fortuna added access to utilities. Bill DeMaio reported that underground sewer, water, and electricity is all right here for the Town Hall. It would save hundreds of thousands of dollars. On top of that, the Town has a \$75,000 grant, from about 4-5 years ago, to connect Willard Avenue and downtown Newington with sidewalks and flashing lights, like they have in West Hartford, that make it safer to cross. That will be ready to go too, as soon as they pave Garfield Street. Don Woods added why would you spend \$10 million to put a pool in a location where the man that's in charge of building pools says that's a dumb idea, It doesn't make any sense.

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Eileen Francolino that the Acting Town Manager, James Krupienski, be notified that the Newington Parks and Recreation Board is in full support of the architect's, Mike Fortuna, professional recommendation to construct the new pool at the best location, which is Garfield Street across from the Mortensen Community Center. Furthermore, the Board is requesting the Acting Town Manager, James Krupienski, to present the plan to the Town Council for their support and commitment to allocating the \$4 million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding to the project. This will enable the three Newington state legislators the ability to apply for the \$5 million of state bonding funding immediately. Billy DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jay Bottalico asked the Board if there were any other questions regarding the topic of the proposed Mill Pond Pool. Tom Gill asked if the splash pad would be in the location of the existing pool. Bill DeMaio reported with the state health laws, during the year, the eight weeks that you are open, you can recycle the water to save water, and money, and use hot showers in the bathhouse. You have a fence corral to let people in the bathhouse to take a hot shower and then use the splash pad. On the shoulder months, of April – June and August – October, you turn it into gray water and irrigate the grass. It is an economical and environmental design. This still includes the solar panels, on the roof, that would help for hot showers. That is economical also. The solar panels will also help with warming the pool water, depending on the size of the roof. Eileen Francolino mentioned there always seems to be available spaces in the parking lot, below by the Police Department. People would just have to walk up the stairs in the parking lot. It is a closer walk than if there was parking over by the bus garage. The Board members thanked Mike Fortuna for participating in the meeting, via Zoom. Bill DeMaio shared that if the Town of Newington lets this opportunity go, they are going to have to build a brand-new pool, with a splash pad, in the future. Whenever the pools completely fail, they will have to do it and it will be an emergency. Hopefully, no one gets hurt and hopefully, the ramifications of not having a pool for two years will not drive people nutty. If all of that happens, then the Town has to spend \$10.6 million of their own money, with no grant money. Eileen Francolino added that there are two big reasons why people come to live here: the schools and the Parks and Recreation programs. If there isn't a place for kids to swim during the summer, people are not going to move here and that affects property values. People will not want to move to Newington if we cannot provide the services that kids should have. She went on to say that swimming lessons are important for kids to have. Swimming is the leading cause of accidental death for kids, until they are three years old. We need to teach kids how to swim. They need a pool. They need a place for recreation, so they can stay healthy. Bill DeMaio responded that the Board needs to make sure the correct information is being shared with the community. Eileen Francolino added that this proposal needs to get out to people and to the Town Councilors. People need to understand this proposal and see that we are not wasting money. We are building something

that kids and older adults will use, is accessible, and is a great thing. Bill DeMaio added that when we started talking about this project, the cost was approximately \$6 million - \$7 million dollars and now the cost is \$10.6 million. Mike Fortuna reported that the cost is escalating 4% - 6% each year and there were a couple of years when escalation was 25% or 30%. Bill DeMaio continued to say that the Department is spending \$60,000 - \$100,000, per spring, doing crack repair and filtration repairs on both pools. We are throwing good money after bad. There comes a point when you have to fish or cut bait. Let's cut bait and let's do it...let's fish. Bill DeMaio went on to say that a company had to come in because the Churchill Park bathhouse had sunk six inches and we had to jack up the lally columns; the chlorine ate through the bottoms of the columns. That cost approximately \$33,000. The filtration system could sometimes cost \$5,000 or it could cost \$26,000. You just don't know. Every time we open the pools in the spring, we just don't know. The ten-inch pipes that were cracked at Mill Pond Pool cost approximately \$10,000. It's incredible. Eileen Francolino asked Bill DeMaio if it would be possible, before the next Town Council meeting, to offer our Town officials a tour of Mill Pond Pool so they can see exactly what it looks like. Bill DeMaio responded that can be done any time. Jay Bottalico added that it has to be relayed to the Town Councilors that both pools could go at any time; then, what would we do? Bill DeMaio added that the visible side of the concrete is all crumbling and we are patching over patches, over patches. Mike Fortuna reported that we are looking at the good side of the concrete. What is causing the damage is rot from the back of the wall. All of that wet soil and the hydrostatic pressure is causing cracks and then pushing the water in. Once it gets to the steel reinforcing, the reinforcing rusts and then it jacks; it expands. That is what is blowing out the concrete on the inside. All of that moisture is coming from the outside. In the summer, when the pool is in operation, the pressures are equalized because the pool is full of water. Then, you dry out the inside, the back side stays wet. Wet moves towards dry; warm moves towards cold. That's what is happening. Whatever you are seeing on the front is worse on the back, reported Mike Fortuna. He guarantees it. Bill DeMaio thanked Mike Fortuna for sharing this information with the Board. Bill DeMaio continued by saying that we didn't even talk about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues. If someone wanted to call the 1-800 number to the Department of Justice, our pools don't qualify under the ADA which is celebrating its 33rd year of being signed into effect on July 26th, 1990. It is crazy; it is absurd what we are doing here. Mike Fortuna added that there are also some Health Department and VGB issues that the Department has, sort of, dealt with. Eileen Francolino asked Mike Fortuna what VGB stands for. Mike Fortuna explained VGB is the Virginia Graeme Baker Act. It is the main drain configuration to prevent entrapment in the pool, so kids don't get sucked to the drains. Jay Bottalico asked Mike Fortuna, with his experience, what the chances are of a pool cave-in. Mike Fortuna responded that he is not in the business of predicting that; but he can tell us that when concrete fails, it fails spectacularly. It's not like steel, where you can see it deflecting and bending. It's concrete; when it goes, it goes. Whether that is a year out, or ten years out, he couldn't say. Jay Bottalico said he is worried about those things and Bill DeMaio agreed. It is something to worry about. Mike Fortuna continued by sharing there are tests that you can perform to pin down, in more detail, when that will happen, but those tests would cost you. You would have to get a lab out there and you would have to dig test pits. All it is going to do is confirm that the pools are in failure. Jay Bottalico, Bill DeMaio, and the Board thanked Mike Fortuna for all of his expertise. Mike Fortuna said to reach out if any other information is needed.

f. Preschool Report

Bill DeMaio reported Nancy Glynn, Recreation Supervisor, and Jessica Coelho, Assistant Preschool Director, are doing great with the Creative Playtime Preschool Program. There are already thirteen families registered for the 2023-2024 school year. The Department is really excited! We are starting with strong numbers of registrations for the upcoming school year. There are Open Houses planned; nineteen families have come to our Open Houses in the preschool classroom. They also hosted a Family Night for current students and families in the Creative Playtime Preschool Program. Everything that the Department predicted about moving the preschool program, from the church building to the Mortensen Community Center, has worked for us. It has become a pleasant, wonderful staff. Everyone is working together. It's a fun time! It is great hearing the preschool students in our building.

g. Pending Sponsorships for Upcoming Special Events

Bill DeMaio shared that if any of the Board members have sponsor ideas, like Frontier, please let the Department know. Sam Lostocco confirmed the following sponsors, so far: Geico (sponsoring Newington Goes Country and Food Truck Friday), The Flood Law Firm (sponsoring Craft Beer Night), Church of Christ Congregational (sponsoring Sundaes on Wednesday), and Cedar Ridge Construction gave a verbal confirmation of a sponsorship. Bill DeMaio added that Cedar Ridge Construction may be the presenting sponsor for the fireworks at the Life. Be in it. Extravaganza. Happy Harry's Wine and Liquor Warehouse committed to donating the wine and beer for our upcoming special events. Billy DeBlasio added that he spoke to Kamal Patel, from Happy Harry's Wine and Liquor Warehouse, and he told Billy that he would like to get more involved in the Department's activities. Bill DeMaio added that Kamal Patel, from Happy Harry's Wine and Liquor Warehouse, was presented a 2022 Building a Strong Community Award and he was very happy; very excited.

Mike Colossale, who is doing the Maple Hill Avenue construction, is an old friend of Bill DeMaio's. Mike Colossale let Bill DeMaio know that he is going to commit to sponsoring one of the events. Sam Lostocco added that there are others interested in sponsorships, as well. Eileen Francolino mentioned Turgeon Jewelers as a possible sponsor. Sam Lostocco responded that Turgeon Jewelers currently has a 3-year sponsorship for the scoreboard at Newington High School. Turgeon Jewelers and Cedar Ridge Construction both gave generous donations, of \$7,000 each, for the sponsorships of the scoreboards.

XI. COMMENTS BY THE BOARD

Eileen Francolino asked if the Board should attend the Town Council meeting to express their thoughts of the proposed Mill Pond Pool project on Garfield Street. Bill DeMaio responded that is a decision to be made by the Board. Eileen Francolino said that if any of the Board members wouldn't mind speaking at the Town Council meeting, she suggested that they attend. Board members could even call in, or write in, to the Town Council. Letters aren't read aloud, but they get the point across. It will show the Board is behind the proposed Mill Pond Pool project on Garfield Street and wants to move forward.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

NONE.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Jay Bottalico made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Billy DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Melissa Miller

Melissa Miller