

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

MILL POND PARK POOL PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE 2020 AUG -5 PM 3: 51

**CORRECTED SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Corrections in Bold**

*John O. Krupienski*  
Town Clerk

August 3, 2020, Zoom Event

- I. Call to Order – Town Clerk James Krupienski called the meeting to order at 5:16 PM.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: John Donohue, Carol Anest, Phil Knowlton, Don Woods, Jay Bottalico, and Garrett Havens; Bill DeMaio, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation; James Krupienski, Town Clerk; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Charge of the Committee – Mr. Baron read the charge, which was included in Town Council Resolution 2020-69, adopted on June 9, 2020. “Said Committee is charged to work with the Town Manager (and/or his/her designee) and any other appropriate Town staff in the oversight of the Mill Pond Park Pool Project and related activity. Such improvements shall comply with the appropriate sections of the Fire Code, Health Code, Building Code, and OSHA regulations, regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other health and/or safety code regulations currently in force.” Mr. Baron noted that, although the charge refers to the Mill Pond Park Pool Project and related activity”, a question has arisen if this includes all the elements of the master plan for the entire park, or not. He deferred to the Town Council members who are on the Committee to tell the other Committee members what the Town Council’s intent was. Ms. Anest felt that the project encompassed the entire park, not just the pool. Mayor DeBuono added that Mr. DeMaio had showed a plan to the Town Council that encompassed changes to the entire park. The project was more than just the pool.
- IV. Election of Officers – Mr. Baron agreed to serve as Secretary if that was the Committee’s pleasure, and also recommended that the Committee select a member to Chair the Committee and also a Vice Chair to chair meetings when the Chair is absent. Mr. Havens made a motion to nominate Mr. Donohue as Chairman of the Committee. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Woods. Discussion: Ms. Anest asked if a member of the Town Council could serve as the Chair. Mr. Baron replied that they could. If that person did not retain their seat following the next municipal election, the Committee would have to select a new Chair. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 0 NO. Mr. Donohue ran the meeting from that point forward. Ms. Anest made a motion to nominate Don Woods as Vice Chair of the Committee. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Havens. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 0 NO. The Committee agreed by consensus to have Mr. Baron serve as Secretary and to take the meeting minutes.
- V. Public Participation – None.

VI. Pool History – presented by Mr. DeMaio. When Mr. DeMaio started as Parks and Recreation Superintendent on July 1, 2015, he was notified that the firm of Milone and MacBroom had been selected as the architect to design Churchill Park, and he was tasked with determining a Capital Improvement Plan request by September 1 of that year for Churchill Park. Milone and MacBroom was using a sub-consultant out of Massachusetts for the aquatics piece of the park. They were convinced to switch to TLB Architecture. Mr. DeMaio worked on the design of Churchill Park, which included the fields, the pool, etc. He never had the opportunity to compare the two pools at Churchill Park and Mill Pond Park. Mill is a little older. He has evaluated the program, the pool construction, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, the filtration system and pool use. Renovations were performed in 1988, before the ADA was passed, and did not include ADA considerations. The firm of Weston and Sampson looked at both pools and concluded that both Churchill Park Pool and Mill Pond Pool are in disrepair and should be replaced. They also estimated a cost to fix the problems that was in the millions of dollars. Mr. DeMaio feels that is not the way to proceed as it would be throwing good money after bad. Mill Pond Pool has five home pool filters and no commercial pool filters. There are handicapped accessibility issues. There are numerous leaks. He is losing about \$800 a day at Churchill, 370,000 gallons in four weeks. The Town needs to think about replacing the pool. Why is he proposing to move the location of the pool at Mill Pond? TLB Architecture did a conceptual plan for him that included moving the pool. In his opinion, TLB is the best firm for pools and aquatics. They have lots of experience and resources. Why are they moving the pool closer to Garfield Street? There is hydrostatic pressure on the bottom of the pool. There is a crack in the deep end of the pool, which allows ground water to bubble up into the pool. The pool is in disrepair. This was identified 14 years ago. Mr. DeMaio had three pool contractors in to look at the location. The pool was originally put in the wrong location. **If you make a mistake the first time and put the pool in the wrong place, and then you decide to do it again in the same place and expect different results, you are wrong.** The Mill Pond Pool is not deep enough or wide enough for diving. On Garfield Street it would be out of the way and off to the side. There are utilities on Garfield Street also. Why add a splash pad? Splash pads provide entertainment at very low cost to families. It extends the time the facility is open, from April 1<sup>st</sup> to October 30<sup>th</sup>, which encompasses the shoulder season. No lifeguards are needed. Kids run from one activity to another. It can be computerized. The State Health Department requires hot showers. You can recycle water from the splash pad in the summer. Gray water the rest of the time can be used to water the fields, etc. Cost for the master plan was \$20 million; \$8 million with an outdoor, family destination pool, plus demolishing the existing pool, putting in an amphitheater and band shelter, \$800,000 for renovations to the baseball field, and \$100,000 of other renovations. The Town Manager said there was more support for an indoor facility that would be used year-round. The operating costs would be \$10,000-20,000 per year if there is no geothermal or solar heating panels on the roof. It is up to the Building Committee on how to move forward. With an indoor pool, you have expenses for heating the water, heating the atmosphere, and removing humidity. That is a thumbnail sketch of the last five years. The Committee can move forward, either with an outdoor pool or an indoor facility.

Mr. Woods noted that if the filtration problems go back to 2007, they were first observed in 2005 or 2006. It was recommended then that the pool be phased out and replaced. Mr. DeMaio added that the Town has spent over \$100,000 at Churchill and Mill Pond Pools; \$30,000-\$50,000 in crack repair each year. Saving that would pay off the debt service on a multimillion-dollar facility. It is his personal opinion that the Town is spending a

lot of money to band-aid the problem. He patched under water last year at both Churchill and Mill Pond Pools. He is not optimistic that we can continue with both pools. They tore up the drain pipe last summer. The storm sewer pipes are collapsing. Mr. Bottalico asked about the type of building design. Mr. DeMaio replied that it would be on the same footprint, although it would move down Garfield Street to the east. The Committee would have to hire an architect. TLB is very good, they could save the Town some money. They could move from the conceptual plan that was presented to the Town Council to a more finished product. They included a 5% annual escalation clause in their cost estimate. The Committee could get the same type of plan for an indoor pool. Mr. Bottalico asked about materials. Mr. DeMaio responded that you could expect to see a wall of glass to entice users to go outside in the summer. He could also ask for pricing on a butler building or a block building. Mr. Knowlton said this conversation got him thinking about an indoor pool as well as a outdoor plan. He asked how much it would cost for them to come up with a plan? Mr. DeMaio said that he could ask for a price for a conceptual plan. 7%-10% of the completed cost normally goes for architectural services. There could be economy of scale in this instance. He will ask for a conceptual design for an indoor facility, both with and without geothermal and solar panels. Mr. Woods asked about the number of attendees in a typical summer. Mr. DeMaio responded that there are 18,000-21,000 visits to each pool during eight weeks. Churchill Park has picnic pavilions. Mill Pond Park has more of a neighborhood feel.

Mr. Knowlton stated that he has children and is a big fan of splash pads. They are a gateway to other water activity. He asked Mr. DeMaio to elaborate on the differences between the splash pad proposed and an upgraded splash pad. Mr. DeMaio responded that the size and amenities are different depending on the amount of money that you have to work with. He described various applications. He then noted that an indoor facility draws people to buy homes and condominiums. Seniors that live in senior facilities take memberships in West Hartford. The Parks and Recreation system can draw young families, seniors, and everyone in between. Mr. Havens asked about dealing with the hydrostatic pressure and if you relocated the pool would it have the same problems? Mr. DeMaio said that it would be more away from the pond and towards the library. A geologist would do borings to avoid problems of this nature. Ms. Anest requested that Mr. DeMaio ask TLB about situating the pool, to find out if they could take the 2018 plan and sketch over how the pool would be and how close it would be to the pond. Mr. DeMaio responded that he can ask for that. If it is an indoor pool it will look much different from an outdoor facility. A competition pool for Newington High School **needs 280 seats**. There is also a warming pool for Seniors and little children, and a recreational pool. Ms. Anest also asked to see what the Vernon project looked like. Mr. Donohue asked a question about page 11 of the spreadsheet, aquatics, \$5 million, was that just for the pool area? Mr. DeMaio responded that the individual water related element breakdowns are on that page. \$12 million is the cost for the whole master plan for Mill Pond Park. That includes walking trails, basketball courts, and soccer fields. \$8 million was for phase 1, which included aquatics, the bathhouse and the amphitheater. This was phase 1 of the spending plan of the former Town Manager. Mr. DeMaio did not come up with the indoor facility. Mr. Donohue asked how the indoor facility would impact the cost. Mr. DeMaio responded that the cost would become \$15-\$20 million: \$4 million for basketball and tennis, \$5 million for aquatics, and \$7 million for the rest of the park. That is the whole park plus an indoor facility. Mr. Donohue referred back to the earlier proposed Town Hall project, and asked if there were issues with building a facility in Mill Pond Park. Mr. DeMaio stated that proposal was before he became

Superintendent in Newington, but that he thought opposition was political, in part because it involved takeaway of open space. Mr. Knowlton reminded members that that plan wanted to put the new Town Hall off Willard Avenue, where the soccer fields are and the fireworks are held. This plan will be given consideration if the plan is to shift the pool and splash pad towards the Community Center, Town Hall and the police station. Being closer to the road where police can see it as they drive by is also a security consideration. Mr. DeMaio stated that, even in other Towns, there have been efforts to move pools closer to the road for security purposes, so the police can see it as they drive by. Mr. Woods also spoke about the previous referendum. He felt that discussion about the soccer fields was taken out of proportion. There was a lot of misinformation. This was the first time that social media received a lot of use. Where this facility is proposed to be, there is no loss of green space. The amount of space used is very similar. The pool now is located in the wrong place. The Committee needs to get out a positive message. If negativity takes the lead, it is tough to remain positive.

- VII. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee - Ms. Anest asked to meet again the following week to discuss the timeline. The Committee agreed by consensus to hold a Zoom Meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. Mr. Baron will issue an Agenda and Mr. DeMaio will contact TLB about sharing with the Committee what was presented on the Vernon project and about sketching out what an indoor facility on Garfield Street would look like.
- VIII. Public Participation – None.
- IX. Comments by Members – None.
- X. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Baron*

Jeff Baron  
Director of Administrative Services