

**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 10, 2014  
TIME: 7:00 P.M.  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
ROOM 208  
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

**Members Present:** Chair Carl R. Chisem  
Councilman James B. Streeto  
Councilman Thomas Serra  
Councilwoman Sandra Russo-Driska  
Councilman David Bauer

**Staff Present:** William J. Russo, Public Works Director

**Others:** Dhruv Kekare, Student Representative  
Kim Kuzina, 102 Sisk Street, Middletown, CT 06457 – Tynan Park Hours  
Helen Kuzina, 92 Sisk Street, Middletown, CT 06457 – Tynan Park Hours  
Jillian Huey, 92 Sisk Street, Middletown, CT 06457 – Tynan Park Hours  
Joyce Powzyk, 476 Country Club Road, Middletown, CT 06457  
Margaret Krokolski, 379 East Street, Middletown, CT 06457  
Thomas Cocomo, 9 Gianna Lane, Kensington, CT 06037  
Ron Burelli, 59 Wig Hill Road, Haddam, CT 06457  
Vince McDermott, Millone & MacBroom  
Mike Doherty, Millone & MacBroom

Chair Chisem opened the Public Works and Facilities Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m. He requested a motion to approve the minutes dated October 8, 2014. Commissioner Bauer stated that the motion towards Grant Writer, Thomas Sobocinski, was unclear. It was agreed amongst the commission that the motion in the previous minutes shall be amended for further clarity. Minutes were seconded and approved unanimously with the amendment.

Commissioner Serra mentioned that there is a Tollgate Road situation that shall be added under “other” as item 7c. He also wanted to add the issue with the hours at Tynan Park as item 7d under “other”. Motion was made to add the two items under “other”. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. Deborah D. Shapiro – Thank-You Letter – there was no discussion regarding the thank you letter; however the commission received it in their agendas to review.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Street Naming Ordinance – The commission reviewed the street naming ordinance then made and seconded a motion to approve the changes made which are explained below in item 5b.

Commissioner Bauer noted that he would like every department to see the changes made, once approved by the Council.

- b. Cocco Brothers, LLC – Subdivision Naming Letter – Thomas Cocco stated that he made a deal when he purchased land from a family to build on, that he would name the street after one of their family member’s names. He was not aware that there is a list for naming streets in Middletown.

Prior to knowing about the City’s list of street names, Thomas sat with the family and discussed the naming “Talia’s Trail,” which is both emotional and sentimental to them. The land was in their family's name for over 100 years. The daughter’s name is Talia, after its Hebrew meaning, which is morning dew. This is because as he looked over his land from above, he would see nothing but the morning dew.

Councilman Bauer stated his concern with the street naming. It involves looking at an ordinance change, which the Council has the only authority to change. After searching the history of public land records, he came to the conclusion that he doesn’t believe that picking a name that is not on the list should be allowed. There is an obligation to stand by the culture and the history of Middletown.

Director Russo stated that this is the first situation where he did not go to Wayne Bartolotta with Dispatch to see if the name works with the CAD system, because he knew that there would be a discussion. Based on the decision made, he will look into the City’s public safety concerns. He mentioned that he previously told Thomas that the street naming’s ultimate decision is based on the ordinance and the Council.

Commissioner Serra wanted to know how the developers are made aware of the names that are available from the list. Director Russo stated that they usually come in to Public Works after their meetings with Planning & Zoning to take a look at the list of names available. He tells them that the council weighs heavily on the concept of standing by the culture and history of Middletown.

Approval was moved for the name “Talia’s Trail” subject to Director Bartolotta’s approval for public safety concerns and recommend sending it to the council. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Russo-Driska. Motion was approved 4-1. Commissioner Bauer did not support the movement due to the process not being followed properly. It was agreed amongst the commission that the process should be explained in further detail in the ordinance so that no further issues occur.

- c. Milone & MacBroom Presentation – Vince McDermott introduced himself to the commission along with his colleague Mike Doherty. They passed out copies of the PowerPoint presentation which consists of two separate tasks for the proposed project. The first task is the inventory and analysis of the existing items that were on the list. The second part is a demand analysis.

The inventory and analysis consist of 17 sites including schools and parks. A checklist was developed to bring out on the field along with aerial photography so that certain things can be marked up such as athletic facilities themselves, site paving, access, parking, ADA compliance, routes to fields and/or other amenities on the site. Site facilities, for example, rest rooms and other amenities such as bleachers will be observed on site, specifically safety concerns. Using existing aerial maps, each site was studied. Considering the lack of as-built plans, pre-development site

plans were used instead. This will help show areas that are in need of drainage or better drainage. Overall, the bleachers at all of the sites do not meet code.

The first site is Keigwin Middle School; the fields are used for practicing football teams. There is a baseball field and two overlay practice areas that don't need any side requirements. The baseball field is unused and covered in weeds. The outfield overlay areas are heavily used due to the condition of the turf being so worn. Considering the low public access at this facility, there weren't as many concerns with parking. There are some minor issues with fencing that will be looked at.

Lawrence Elementary School has one softball field facility, a multi-use field, some basketball courts and playground facilities. The softball field is in fair condition with parking immediately adjacent to it with handicapped parking available. There is a paved walkway leading up to the backstop of the field. There are no connections into the field itself or into the dugouts. There is one set of portable bleachers that don't meet safety code due to the lack of fencing along the back. The field itself is in fair condition. There are some issues with wear on the infield lower spots, along with some dips and dives in the outfield. There is no "recovery zone" on the outskirts of the field; there are shrubs immediately next to the field instead of having the common ten feet of room for running out of bounds. There is one large oak tree on the edge that does not look in the best of health with branching that could lead to a potentially dangerous situation.

Moody School is one of the larger facilities that was looked at. This site has greater use with accessible parking provided at the west side of the school. However, there is no clear defined sidewalk. The facility is a terraced facility, from the south to the north it drops in elevation between fields. There are no paved pathways besides the western edge of the property. There are two softball fields and a little league baseball field that have some low spots, along with the outfield turf in need of some restoration. Due to having lights at this facility, it gets more use than others with the extended time of use. The large softball field is becoming very weedy so it will need to be cleaned up. The major issue at Moody School is the soccer field. Its turf is almost bare in areas close to the center of the field indicating high-use. There are some exposed arrogation heads causing a hazard for the players. Sections of the bleachers are bent upwards with sharp edges. The basketball courts have three inch cracks throughout, which is also a safety hazard.

Snow School has three softball fields and an overlay soccer field. This site has challenging slopes where the school and the parking area are above the play area, giving no direct access to each other. There are some similar use issues such as the turf being compacted and weedy, the infield having a lip and the bleachers not being up to code. The smaller softball field in the lower eastern corner appears to not be used any longer. The area of the soccer field has underlying grades which can cause potential injuries. The recovery zone is up against the softball field separated only by a fence. There is no fencing on to Wadsworth Street where it slopes down along the road which could lead to potential hazards such as balls or children going into the road. Safety netting or fencing was recommended for that area.

Wesley School is a small facility with a small youth soccer field, a couple basketball courts and a playground area. The courts themselves are very small, resembling a play area with many cracks in the pavement. The field is in decent condition with turf wear, compaction and weeds. The firm was informed that there used to be a baseball field in the lower corner. This has since turned into a meadow area that now has a mowed path leading to the gardens on the other side of the property, giving this area potential for future expansion.

Woodrow Wilson Middle School and Pat Kidney Field were combined considering their location. The school has multi-use field surrounded by a track. These facilities are surrounded by grandstand bleachers which are on the top of the list for repair according to Vince McDermott. This facility, from a bleacher perspective, should not exist as far as safety concerns. The drop-off from the edge of the track into the field is a concern. The access from the school across the street is also a concern even though there is a crosswalk. The shape of the track is not considered an equal quadrant track; therefore it cannot fit a legitimate sized soccer field in the middle of it. It is only sufficient enough for a football field. Pat Kidney field, adjacent to the track and multi-use field, has a slope between the two sites with stairs to allow access. Issues concerning pedestrian vehicular conflicts are caused due to lack of parking. The tennis courts and fields are fairly unusable with poor surface conditions. There is a press box and rest rooms that are also in poor condition which is concerning due to the amount of nearby residences. These two sites should be prioritized at the top of the list with the high concern of safety issues and the high use of the site.

Hubbard Park has two baseball facilities, a press box and bleachers. It's a narrow site, parking is limited and it is surrounded by busy streets. There is decent access from East Main Street as a pedestrian and some limited access off Main Street with stairs. There are no handicapped parking spaces provided, along with drainage issues from the field to the southern portion. Some of the fencing on the outfield is worn and could use updating. There are no immediate safety concerns.

Smith Park, off of Country Club Road, has a baseball field and multi-use field on the upper level. The biggest concern is the visibility of the park with the upper terraced field with no gated access to the park. This causes issues with visitors parking at the top of the field. Police surveillance is recommended for safety purposes at this site due to its location and visibility issues.

McCutcheon Park consists of beach swimming, beach volley ball, and softball fields with an overlay over the field. There is parking near the beach area with smaller parking areas closer to the field. However, there is no paved access to the field causing a lack of accessibility. Signage leading and surrounding the park should be taken into consideration to help visitors find the park easier.

McCarthy Park is a multi-use open lawn area with a basketball and tennis court side by side. The visibility for the courts is not impressive for use and appears to be not for sports play. There was a weight bench and a clothes drying rack on the courts. This space can be re-evaluated as more of an open space area in a more urban condition.

Roosevelt Park has a basketball court and a lawn area that do not get used frequently. Millone & MacBroom would like for the City to let them know what they would like to see in this park. Potential flooding can occur from the flood plane near the Mattabassett River.

Country Club Soccer Fields is a new facility consisting of two large soccer fields for competitive play with two smaller fields used more for practicing. One of the soccer fields is lit and used for tournaments which means it is a highly used area and in need of restoration. The parking lot consists of asphalt without markings, so it is recommended to be paved.

Long Hill Soccer Fields have drainage issues at the northeastern corner and center of the second field due to the under drain that was installed. This site was used fairly quickly after it was built so

the grass did not have enough time to mature causing wear and tear. The parking and potential expansion of the complex will be looked at down the road.

Palmer Field's entry gateway will be enhanced for the visitors experience as far as the hall of fame building, the concession building, the restroom building, the fencing, bleachers etc. Considering Palmer Field is a premier baseball facility and showcase for Middletown's baseball history, the level of quality of field should be well maintained along with the entry way.

Harbor Park's boat ramp area to the east side of the park between the two pavilions is undefined. The paving is not in great condition and can cause potential safety hazards. Some material will be installed to alleviate issues which consist of a mix of asphalt and concrete.

Spear Park has concrete sculpture designs and fountain that are not currently being used. There are hiding areas for people that loiter in the area that will be eliminated to make it easier for police to see into the park. Seeing as how the city doesn't own the parcel, the front half of the park will be the primary focus.

In order to maintain a self-sustained, quality turf, there should only be about fifteen hours of play at each facility. Quality turf is irrigated to extend the lifetime of the fields for common demand and future demand.

Millone & MacBroom expects to meet up with the commission with recommendations at the end of January at a possible special meeting. Concept sketches with budgets associated will be discussed. It was recommended that a power point be presented for easier understanding. A special meeting at the end of January 2015 was recommended by the firm, due to the lengthy presentation involved.

- d. Building Permit Refund – Extreme Maintenance, LLC - \$29.52 – A motion was made for approval for Extreme Maintenance, LLC building permit refund. Motion was seconded and approved.
- e. Building Permit Refund – L-Train Electric, LLC - \$43.78 – A motion was made for approval for L-Train Electric, LLC building permit refund. Motion was seconded and approved.
- f. Building Permit Refund – Phoenician Home Improvement, LLC - \$1,427.00 – A motion was made for approval for Phoenician Home Improvement, LLC building permit refund. Motion was seconded and approved.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- g. October/November 2014 Overtime Report – The commission reviewed their overtime reports. Director Russo stated that Tina Gomes, Chief Management Analyst, reviewed the numbers for overtime and they are still below the amount allotted for spending.
- h. October/November 2014 Building Permits – The commission reviewed their building permit reports

#### **OTHER**

- a. October/November 2014 Monthly Report – Highway Division – The commission reviewed their monthly reports.

- b. October/November 2014 Weekly Reports – Parks Division – The commission reviewed their weekly reports.
- c. Tollgate Road - Ron Burelli, former Middletown resident, stated that there is a car parked daily in a driveway on Tollgate Road with the bumper in the road. This affects his current tenants with his primary concern being that emergency vehicles and oil trucks cannot get down the driveway. Ron received a letter from Deputy Fire Marshall, Lou Bartolotta, stating that the car needs to move at least 6 feet to get the smallest emergency vehicle into the driveway. He stated that it is a public safety hazard and that his insurance company does not support fire trucks having to run 200 feet of hose from the road for a potential fire just because the truck cannot get up the driveway. Ron also mentioned that the water runs right across the road at the intersection and it turns into ice. Plowing and sanding cannot be conducted properly because of the incorrectly parked car.

It was stated by Director Russo that it is private property that the right-of-way runs through. Ron stated that this issue has already been brought to the Public Safety Commission. Councilman Serra indicated that the right-of-way needs to be defined first, relative to Public Safety. He would also like to know what the responsibility of a municipality is, when a Public Safety situation is being caused. The concerns with who owns the right-of-way and who has the authority over the right-of-way need to also be discussed. Councilman Serra has previously suggested having a video so that all Commissioners and Council can see the Public Safety vehicles that need to get up there.

The General Council stated that it is an issue between Ron Borelli and his neighbor. Director Russo will look into widening that specific section of the road without making the driveways any steeper, and Public Safety shall look into the issue further. Inquiries should also be sent to the Fire Chief at the South Fire District, as well as the Police Chief due to the contradictory information given to receive clarification.

Councilman Bauer made a suggestion for Director Russo to put his departments' expertise on any solutions that he may have to mitigate the right-of-way issue and present them to the Public Works & Facilities Commission.

A motion was made for Director Russo and the Public Works Department to give their thoughts towards widening the road to make it safer for traveling as well as for the use of emergency vehicles. It will then be reported back to the Public Works & Facilities Commission. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

- d. Tynan Park Hours- Kim Kuzina stated that she had some letters to hand out along with a statement on behalf of Stephen Devoto of 476 Country Club Road. Kim's niece, Jillian Huey, read the statement to the commission while they reviewed the letters that were passed out.

Stephen's statement was on the behalf of city parks and other open spaces that are open to the public. Chapter 214-6 of the City Ordinance reads, "The City parks and recreational areas shall be open to the general public daily between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and sunset, ..." Stephen indirectly asked the commission through his statement to initiate an ordinance change such that chapters 214-6 allows parks to be open from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after the sun sets. The ordinance applies not only to all parks, but also to all city owned space. The 8:00 a.m. opening time denies working resident's use of the park in the mornings, especially during the summer time when

the sun rises almost 3 hours prior. The 8:00 a.m. opening time is unique when comparing to surrounding towns.

Furthermore, Stephen's statement read that Chapter 214-44A of the ordinance says, "At the discretion of the Director of Public Works, or his/her duly authorized designee, any section or part of any park, facility or field may be declared closed to the public at any time and for any interval, daily or otherwise." If Director Russo feels that it would be inappropriate to open one particular open space before 8AM, he can simply make the hours different for that park. He can also change the opening time of the park if an earlier opening time leads to abuse.

Kim Kuzina stated that the second packet is a letter from herself along with a few other nearby residents that use the park. There are some signatures from some neighbors from the Sisk Street / Higby Road area. The only thing that she added in regards to the park and the hours is the safety. Kim walks her dog at the park frequently and there is discomfort with the traffic due to past incidences. She stated her preference towards walking on the trails.

Joyce Powzyk spoke on behalf of the Ordinance 214-6. She would like the parks hours changed from sunrise to sunset to enable the working people of Middletown to get out before they go to work. She believes residents should be allowed access to their own open areas that are supported by tax dollars. From firsthand experience, Joyce stated that people are needed in the area to make it safer. There are also issues with ATV's and trucks doing burnouts in which she has since made an effort to encounter. Moreover, there will be less mischief occurring in the City's parks and open spaces if there are more eyes and ears keeping lookout.

Margaret Krokolski mentioned that she lives on a very busy street. She works two jobs and would like to be able to use the park as a means of exercise before and/or after working hours.

Director Russo mentioned that he believes this ordinance is old and that it hasn't been looked at in a while. There have been similar issues in the past where he has asked the police department to keep their eyes on some of the mischievous activities. The ordinance states opening time at 8:00 A.M. If the commission entertains the idea, they can look at the proposed changes and then submit them to ordinance study. From there it will go back to the council for final approval.

Chair Chisem moved approval for the commission supporting the ordinance change for parks to be open from dawn to dusk along with the lighting, parking, fences and garbage pales to be in place. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

One of the commissioners had a question regarding the three truck driver positions that were posted. Director Russo stated that there was a previous eligibility list that has since expired. Two of the three positions were for medical separation reasons, and one was for a promotion. There were 25 candidates that came for an oral interview. It will then be narrowed down to 8-10. From there, the driving portion of the exam will be completed. There will not be a shortage of drivers in the winter time during these transitions due to other department's truck drivers filling in.

As there was no further discussion, the Public Works & Facilities commission meeting was adjourned at 9:22 P.M.