



Operations Committee - Board of Representatives

Jonathan Jacobson, Chair

John Zelinsky, Jr., Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: This meeting was held remotely

The Operations Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Zelinsky and Committee Member Reps. Adams, Coleman, Curtis, Mahoney, Sherwood, and Watkins; Phil D'Amico, Landscape Specialist, Vincent Piselli, Mill River Park, Kevin Murray, Operations Manager, Parks & Facilities; Mark McGrath, Director of Operations; Bureau Chief, Parks & Recreation & Facilities.

Chair Jacobson called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. O30.077	REVIEW; Results of City of Stamford Summer 2020 Pilot Program Utilizing Organic Park/Field Maintenance Protocols. 09/09/20 – Submitted by Reps. Sherwood, Stella, Jacobson, Cottrell and Zelinsky	Held 8-0-0

Rep. Sherwood explained that she has been working with the City to possibly create an ordinance banning the use of non-organic pesticides, larvicides, etc on City fields and parks. The City therefore began a pilot program with one field to determine the feasibility. The Mill River Park, which uses an exclusive organic program, has been working with the City.

Committee members discussed this item with the invited guests. Items discussed included the following:

- The pilot is a means of measuring against normal results
- Rainfall is down this year and field use is down due to Covid-19, so the pilot should be continued in order to adequately address the field's ability to withstand wear and tear; at least one more year would be needed to determine field impact
- The cost of using organic materials is substantially greater
- It is difficult to maintain the quality of the fields with an organic program
- There was a water use restriction this year
- The cost is about \$2,500 per acre; the City has 31 acres of fields this year
- Turf is routinely replaced every 3 to 5 years
- Organic soil is more porous and will recover better
- The fields need to have time to recover after use
- The Mill River use is different than the athletic field use
- The season goes from 4/2 until 11/15; there is no time for recovery
- There have only been 3 applications so far; it is hard to know the results

- There has been a significant increase in weeds (compared to the adjacent field, which is non-organic)
- Running an organic program would require additional funds, manpower and equipment, particularly funds and manpower

Rep. Sherwood expressed concerns that she had received the impression that the pilot program was going well, which conflicts with the information received this evening. She noted that the City needs a safe ecosystem for children and questioned whether the fields could still be used with weeds. She also questioned whether the pilot had followed the protocols provided and noted that overuse, compaction and watering would be issues with an organic or inorganic program.

A motion to hold this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Jacobson, Zelinsky, Adams, Coleman, Curtis, Mahoney, Sherwood, and Watkins in favor)

Chair Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Jacobson, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).