

## FIRST SELECTWOMAN KUPCHICK ANNOUNCES FIRST ADA COMPLIANT OUTDOOR FITNESS PARK

*Utilizing grant funds, a state of the art outdoor fitness park will be installed this spring at Fairfield's Bigelow Center.*

**FAIRFIELD, CT** — Using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act for the CT Department of Aging and Disability Services State Unit, First Selectwoman Kupchick is excited to announce the installation of an ADA compliant, outdoor fitness center adjacent to the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities.

This project will help aging residents, who, due to the Covid epidemic and concerns about disease transmission, are reluctant to participate in indoor activities. The facility will include a variety of accessible strength, agility, and conditioning equipment, it will serve residents with disabilities or physical limitations. This project will strengthen efforts to re-engage aging residents who have not been participating in activities post-Covid and attract new members.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said, "The outdoor fitness park at Gould Manor Park has been a welcome addition for residents who enjoy exercising outside. I think this is a home run for our town's seniors with varying abilities to be able to exercise outdoors. I want to

thank Human & Social Services Director Julie DeMarco, Director of the Bigelow Center for Senior Services, Brenda Steele, and Parks & Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese, who worked together to bring this project to fruition."



The desired outcome is to bring aging residents back in touch with services available at the center and to avoid the negative consequences of social isolation, loneliness, and unaddressed need. The project adds to the center's range of programs designed to meet the needs of residents of various ages, interests, and concerns. Once connected to the center, participants can learn about other recreational and supportive activities. In short, by offering an open-air fitness option, the subgroup of residents whose concerns about infection were heightened by Covid can be encouraged to return, or get involved for the first time.

Director of the Bigelow Center for Senior Services, Brenda Steele, remarked, "We are thrilled to give aging adults in our community an outdoor playground with designated fitness equipment allowing them to engage in physical exercise including strengthening their muscles, balance and much more. The playground is also an opportunity to socialize and enjoy fun activities while being outdoors."

Human & Social Services Director Julie DeMarco added, "Playgrounds aren't just for kids any more. We know the benefits of exercise and being strong, healthy and fit as you age, and we know exercise helps your longevity and emotional well-being. The new outdoor fitness park, at the Bigelow Center, will provide our residents with another outdoor space to socialize and exercise."

Equipment includes items such as a custom balance station; swing, cross trainer, leg press, chest press, and arm and leg bikes. The purchase and installation activities will result in creation of an ADA compliant, outdoor fitness center readily accessible to Fairfield aging residents.

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