



Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council
From: Mayor Miro Weinberger
Date: August 22, 2017
Re: Appointment of Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Director

I respectfully submit for your consideration and approval Cindi Wight as the next Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront (BPRW) Director for the City of Burlington. Cindi emerged as an outstanding candidate during an extensive national search that involved over 50 applicants from Vermont and many other states across the country. I am requesting City Council approval of this appointment at your August 28, 2017 meeting.

Search Process for the New Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront Director

My Administration began its search for a new BPRW Director in May of 2017. The extensive process included:

- Posting the position locally, state-wide, and nationally in May of 2017. The extensive process included targeting diverse communities and conducting supplemental recruitment efforts through my office.
- Reviewing resumes that met minimum requirements and initial interviews of both in-state and out-of-state candidates by the following eight-person search committee led by my Chief of Staff, Brian Lowe:
 - Kyle Dodson, President & CEO of the Greater Burlington YMCA
 - Brooke Gilman, Managing Director, eSecLending
 - Laura Hale, Parks Commission Member
 - Dave Hartnett, North District City Councilor
 - Nancy Kaplan, Parks Commission Chair
 - Alisha Laramee, New Farms for New Americans Program Specialist, Association of Africans Living in Vermont
 - Susan Leonard, Director, City of Burlington Human Resources Department
 - Brian Lowe, Chief of Staff, City of Burlington
- Interviewing three finalist candidates directly presented to me for consideration by the search committee.
- Hosting these finalists in Burlington in August of 2017 for additional meetings with members of the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), the Burlington Business Association, the Champlain Housing Trust, members of the City's Diversity and Equity Core

Team, members of the City's Parks Commission, City Department Heads, and the BPRW Leadership Team.

At the conclusion of the search, Cindi's passion for the work of Parks & Recreation, her extensive, decades-long experience in the field, her commitment to innovative approaches and continuing education, and her demonstrated commitment to listening carefully and building partnerships with the communities she has served made her an outstanding candidate to build on the recent strong successes of Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront.

Enthusiasm and Passion for Expanding Park Access and Community Programming

Cindi grew up in LeRoy, NY where her parents still reside. Cindi has been married to Keith Wight from Newry, ME for 26 years. They have three children. Josh recently graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology, Molly is a junior at University of Pittsburgh, and Emily will be starting her freshman year at Carleton College.

Cindi graduated from Bates College with a degree in Psychology and with her husband Keith headed west for adventure. After being passed over for a volunteer position on the local parks board in San Juan Island, WA, Cindi found out the board had another plan for her. She was offered a position as the first director for the San Juan Island Park & Recreation District, and quickly discovered that she had found her dream career. She was able to organize programming across the island for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

After spending several years as the Recreation & Parks Director in the San Juan Island District in Washington State, Cindi served briefly as the Middlebury Parks & Recreation Program supervisor before relocating to Rutland to begin work in the Rutland Recreation & Parks Department.

Cindi will bring 24 years of professional experience in parks and recreation to Burlington, including four years as the Superintendent (Director) of the Rutland Recreation & Parks Department, where she oversees all aspects of the department, including budgeting, long-range planning, grant writing, and community partnerships. Prior to serving as the Superintendent, Cindi oversaw all recreation programming for the City of Rutland for 12 years, focusing on managing full-time and seasonal staff, developing and organizing programs, building and implementing budgets, and adapting to the needs of the community.

Over time, she has developed a reputation as a careful listener who seeks out community input for important departmental decisions. She states in her cover letter: "I strongly believe in municipal parks and recreation and that we have the opportunity to improve our communities through people, parks & programs." Her work, and that of her team, has been repeatedly recognized, including with the Facility of Merit award from the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association for creative efforts to expand services to all community members through projects like Baxter Street Park. In addition, Cindi started the city's youth theatre program with Susan Scaccia soon after coming to Rutland in 2002. It continues to this day with five productions each year, along with summer workshops impacting the lives of hundreds of Rutland-area youth, and was singled out in 2012 for national recognition.

I believe Cindi's success at galvanizing community engagement and developing successful community programs will help her build on the strong foundation already in place at the Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department.

A Committed Professional with Strong State and National Connections

Cindi has made a career-long commitment to staying up-to-date on the best practices within the Parks and Recreation profession, and of learning directly from some of her most motivated and creative peers across the country. In 2015, Cindi was selected for the American Academy for Parks & Recreation Administrators, and her prior work has also been recognized by the Vermont Parks & Recreation Association, the National Parks & Recreation Association, and Rutland County.

In addition to her selection to the American Academy for Parks & Recreation Administrators in 2015, she was appointed to chair the Academy's Externship Committee this year and had been serving as a member of the National Recreation & Park Association in various capacities since 2011. Previously, she served on the Executive Board of the Vermont Recreation & Park Association from 2005 - 2011. Cindi has also completed additional academic and professional training, obtaining her M.A. in Parks, Recreation, and Sport Management from North Carolina State University in 2013 with a GPA of 4.0.

These state and national connections have served Cindi well in her career and will benefit all Burlingtonians. She will be able to draw from professional contacts in a wide range of cities across the country to bring new ideas to Burlington or to address challenges that the City faces.

A Director Fully Invested in the Community

Cindi plans to move her family to Burlington and fully engage in life in the City. In Rutland, Cindi went above and beyond to dedicate much of her time to her community by participating in community programs like Project Vision and the Parks Rx Advisory Board. Project Vision is the celebrated effort undertaken by former Mayor Chris Louras to help support Rutland residents struggling with addiction, and has influenced the development of Burlington's similarly focused CommunityStat effort. Cindi was also a strong supporter of the Rutland City Schools, serving for 14 years on the Schools Tapestry Advisory Board. Additionally, Cindi served on the Killington Valley Marketing Committee, and for several years on the Rutland Amateur Hockey Association Board.

We are fortunate to have an opportunity to bring Cindi to Burlington, as she was not looking for a new job when she learned of the BPRW position several months ago. After reviewing the posting - and doing her independent due diligence of Burlington - she became increasingly enamored by the sense of community in our City and saw the excellent programming offered by our Department firsthand as she observed the preparations for our July 3rd celebration. She believes the new Director will have an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the lives of all our residents through the range of programs and projects Parks undertakes, from the Bike Path restoration and enhancement to reviewing and considering summer programming options.

Going forward

Further details of Cindi's career can be found in her attached resume. Following your confirmation of her appointment, I intend to place Cindi at Step 7 of the BPRW Director pay scale for an annual compensation of \$92,459. Pending confirmation, Cindi plans to begin work on October 1, 2017.

Thank you for your consideration.