



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes
September 14, 2021
Parks and Recreation Commission**

Commission Present: Traverse, Todd, Hurley, Johnson, Duke and Farrell

Staff Present: Moreau, and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:37 p.m. by Traverse

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Todd, second by Farrell, motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Traverse asked to waive the reading of the consent agenda and motions into the record for approval.

Approval of consent agenda by Duke, second by Todd, motion carried.

Dewey Park Art

Traverse introduced Tyeastia Green who was present via Zoom, and explained the art installation to be installed in October 2022, looking for artists, applications close end of the month, have committee looking also that live in that community to be a part of selection committee, chose Dewey Park range, making sure an area that most diversity is and has a lot of history. School across the street to engage with art piece, already have mural on the ground and hoping will be community led event, want community to choose the art and in an area that a lot of people don't think to put this in. Mayor wanted in Battery, Waterfront or Church Street and this area will bring out of the more well-known areas and bring more people into other areas and enhancing abilities, trying to bring in richness but not price out the current residents.

Todd said she loves the area and wondered where located within that park and was told in the grassy area of the park, hopefully will not have to remove any trees, will be quite big, quite substantial in size. Green said once they pick the artist they will come and survey to see how best to fit in with the area.

Hurley asked what the timeline for the project was and was told actual search is started and installation is October 2022.

Johnson asked if there was a vision for type of materials that would be used and was told they knew it could not be wood or any material that would disintegrate. Need to make sure it will be able to be maintained, they can use water, lights and any durable material that will wear over time.

Farrell asked what type of structure will be solicited from community, and was told that members will sit on panel and will not be from the community specific but will be involved with others in the selection committee.



Todd asked if conversations are happening around the placement of the farmers market and if they would be able to coexist together and was told yes has been longstanding market that has been present every week and emote belonging and keep all aspects of Dewey.

Keenan said that there is a new ordinance out that speaks to art and asked if there had been conversations as to how the two would collaborate together or for future pieces of art. Green said no and did not know about the ordinance and did not know about funding sources and would be happy to work with BCA in the future. Keenan said for every capital project that is done 1% is put aside for art and in process, is new and a funding source for art, another way for all departments to collaborate together.

Traverse said from time to time speaking of art from Wood, particularly the Greylock one in Battery Park, and has come to as not enough funding and needing more help to maintain in Battery Park. Green said did not want in that park particularly because of the current statue. Felt very imperative to make sure that that current upkeep is repaired and returned to its glory. Would be nice to have original artist and if not it would be nice to have back to the way it was to be portrayed and would love to help have it maintained. Traverse asked as commission or community at large what could be done to help contribute to seeing that this gets done and was told to share RFQ broad and wide, would be great to have a Vermonter do, no racial component but would like to make sure that the artist understands race and who as a community as a piece of art and supported publicly. Would like commission standing with when completed.

Farrell asked if there would be a preference built in to the request for a local artist and was told no but have had some local artists that had applied. Todd asked to have the verbiage sent to share with others.

Johnson stated that the original artist is still alive that did the Greylock statue. Hoped that they could be contacted.

Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00 PM)

Public Forum was opened at 6:00 pm

Phillip lives on Killarney Drive and had become aware that the city may come into possession of property that lays behind the Elks Club and part of the property that abuts Arms Park. Wanted to get in on the ground floor to ask if the Parks Commission or department has any specific plans for the property.

Traverse thanked for the comment and said no, not at this point. He did not know if any plans, Todd added that the Director was not at the meeting and others did not have any information currently. Traverse said it was on his radar and would likely be discussed soon if that was going to be happening.

Seeing nobody further from the public, Public Forum was closed at 6:04 pm

Lake Health, Fountains and Pools

Traverse stated this topic was really a discussion on water access and putting on agenda for a couple of reasons, all been aware that bacteria and algae blooms have caused more closures of lake and questioned what access do Burlingtonians have to water access. Said on the positive side the City did get the City Hall Park fountain and it was a great addition/contribution and outside of Burlington, Winooski just opened a new public pool and he felt that was a fantastic contribution to the area. Asked if room for something in Burlington and don't know why no public pool in Burlington, maybe due to use of Lake and



maybe need to think differently about water, heard from others around accessibility, working on better accessibility at Oakledge, also equity and inclusion issue. Tonight the focus will be on lake issues and had Megan Moir present to speak on that piece but would like to hear from the Commission as well on their take, just a sounding board as planning processes and plans come up in the future.

Megan Moir, DPW, Burlington Water Resources spoke about what is driving the E.coli and bacteria along with the desire and need to have alternative means for cooling off.

Kris Stepenuck, UVM Program, introduced herself and explained how she was working with the Lake Champlain Sea Grant, and doing outreach to understand. She explained how far and wide the basin is, and that it even flows into southern Quebec. Stated about 18 to 1, land to water ratio is huge and very hard for people to make the connection. The first point she made was; what is done on land effects the water, not algae, photosynthesize. Total maximum has internal loading of phosphorus form toxin rich at times, have no way of telling if toxins are present and they come in different forms. Questioned if people know when the beaches are actually closed, saying not consistent signage and process and what to look for. Spoke about funding available, one through clean water act, some other federal funds available but not decided as of yet the amount available. Maybe education program for people as to what to look for and how to respond to blooms, could be innovative ways to work with also.

Moir emphasized that because Burlington emphasizes blooms and alerts, there are still ways to get access and that is what is special about Burlington as opposed to other areas is its ability to notify the public.

Hurley asked what percentage is Chittenden County that contribute phosphorus and said many are near the target or just above the target area.

Todd asked if there are places within the park to be experiment places and solutions with knowledgeable staff, Stepenuck said could participate in raise the blade, which means only cutting 1/3 of grass and increase soil organic matter to do that. Many municipalities are doing on much of fields. Moir said anything they can, they are doing, put in rain gardens, participated in one alternative thing that did not pan out. Finger Lakes in NY are having problems as well, don't know that one exists currently. Looked at Alae torches, water quality buoy, even though water supply not contaminated would like to be able to monitor and be notified, almost a mile off shore. But within 20 years would love to see happen.

Moreau said she sees Water Resources department and UVM as the results but is totally willing to try and work with others to do the best to keep open, using aerator is not real beneficial in a large scale, could work in a smaller area but not a larger area. No quick solution.

Duke said recognize a lot of variables, asked if looking at more beach closures and was told yes, in the sediments loading, heat activates the oxygen and more extreme events with climate change. Moreau said they know they will be on high alert when they have several hot days in a row or several rainy days in a row, can almost forecast when it will happen.

Farrell said need to understand what to do to increase water access as this will be a recurring issue and likes going toward other solutions, asked if gone so far as to looking at other alternatives and Moir said she spoke with Wight as to how much water would it take for splash pad, potential locations, Burlington



is not water poor but available to use where it runs off and back into the ground and looking at synergy to offset cost to water, give discount to those that don't have access to air conditioners. Asked if parks interested in having splash pads or hooking up a hose to sprinkler system, some temporary solutions and permanent solutions. Moreau said currently in the middle of Perkins Study and could work that into the plan as well.

Farrell felt important to have something in all locations, misters or splash pads etc. as a quality of life issue to those that don't have.

Duke would like the commission to at least consider putting in a pool, several of the commissioners were in favor of looking into the idea of and learning to swim at a pool, particularly with New Americans.

Todd would like to see more language on the signs and with the verbiage to match in all languages.

November Bond Support Letter

Keenan stated she was part of the ARPA group with CT office and was interested to see if a pool or splash pad would qualify for any of the grants, she said she would look into.

Keenan said she had some updated slides more related to impact on the public and resident tax payers, went to City Council and Board of Finance last night and presented idea of going to \$40m bond this fall, moving forward and goal is to make sure people understand the need and why important, keep city vibrant and extremely thoughtful of the taxpayers in mind. Power point shows the need over next 3 years \$151 M, don't have but have some ideas of where it can come from, shared the slide of potential revenue sources and why having special election and impact on tax payer. Has received a lot of support from others on the plan. Spoke to the area of concern, Street Capital/Paving and sidewalks, Buildings \$4m from ARPA for improving buildings for pandemic for ventilation, Champlain parkway grant, and going to use bond proceeds, \$3m for parks part is to cover Boathouse, about \$1.5m. Have \$10m to hopefully spend, have a lot of larger projects that need spending that impact fees can't cover, hope to aid in getting projects done.

Moreau asked if it is possible to get federal funding toward dredging and tourism, Keenan said does go toward tourism, is grey area but definitely toward some other areas, it is possible. Was not as hopeful after doing research, still trying, about 50/50 percent chance.

Keenan also stated that Parks will also get funding for fleet through capital, longer life items.

The reason for a special election is due to the pandemic, set back a year, will negatively impact 2022 construction season, interest rates are currently low but rate environment is very low, community will need to focus on new High School plans on meeting day and even with other resources available more is needed.

Median home is at \$379,100 and will borrow over 3 years, from \$7-\$13 a month increase on this.

Next steps meet with Board of Finance and City Council on 9/27 for special meeting, stated if this commission approves/recommended, a letter of support to the City Council prior to 9/27 would be appreciated.



Standing Item: Report from Commission on Volunteer Hours

Traverse had an extra hour and Todd had an extra hour.

Director's Items

Todd shared follow-up information from P&R staff regarding questions she had asked.

Commissioner's Items

Farrell said back to water conversation said a lot of benefit to awareness and better about communicating causes and encouraged continuation of as to why and that it does not mean dirtier but maybe surrounding places may not be as cautious.

Todd said share what community said they would like when beach closes; more town pools, splash pads, creating a swimming wane, parallel beach/section for doing laps in a safe area. Loved the water conversation and supports exploring a town pool.

Traverse thanked for bringing in Professor Stepenuck, learned a lot and excited Keenan was here and exploring more funding and other issues around that and a sounding board for items and thinking creatively. Being a parent to young kids, having access to water has been great going to a public pool.

Duke reiterated and said every year hears "why don't we have a public pool", thinks City needs a pool and really think the equity piece is very difficult for some to get too and with continuing issues tough.

Traverse asked about letter regarding bond issue, first asked to do a general letter and second how broad is the letter, do support as a whole or only the parks portions. Asked if anyone was opposed of writing a letter in support of the bond.

Farrell had slight apprehension of doing the letter but bigger concern is the commission and wary of protocol if Director is not in favor of, assume likely is in favor but not sure. Traverse said he asked Wight and said that the Director was in favor of and if Wight were here would say in favor. That said the concern from last meeting is the Parks purview and feels from his perspective that dollar figure from that point, other infrastructures and resources that are included to support the Parks department. Farrell also added that support the dollars that support the parks and Todd stated that she would also support that, Parks specific items and projects that she with confidence could speak to those projects and that aspect of the bond. Hurley asked what others are doing. Keenan said Fire is supporting and in the same vein they too ride on streets and use sidewalks, can word any way you wish and last time got letter from all commissions supporting the bond as a whole. She stated she is asking the same from all and one thing to remember is that the Parks division is responsible for all buildings currently now too, it supports several areas for the Parks and what the commission is comfortable is fine, up to commission.

Hurley said a letter could be worded in that way as it would be very hard to piecemeal together to be very specific. Farrell had in mind phrasing rather than itemizing and articulating. Traverse asked if anyone opposed writing a letter along those lines and nobody was opposed. Traverse will draft a letter and send to all for review and generally speaking in agreement that City needs to adequately support its capital and that amount is adequate.



Traverse said some discussion over past few months regarding youth representatives, have received some interest if there could be two reps and feedback was positive. Traverse did not ask for decision tonight but stated if any had comments to get back to him. Traverse excited about Trusted Community Voices having interest and should visit.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. by Traverse.

DRAFT