



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
HARBOR COMMISSION  
Minutes  
September 13, 2022  
Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Commission Present:** Duke, Hurley, Lantieri, Johnson and Wiseberg

**Staff Present:** Roach, Sauve, Cahill, O'Daniels, Storrs, Moreau, Kaeding, Bushnell

**Public Present:** Zoe Richards (Conservation Board Chair), Mike Shea (Spirit of Ethan Allen), Jack Wallace (Burlington Harbor Marina), Paul Land

The meeting was convened at 5:32 p.m. by Duke

Duke reports that Alex Farrell has moved to South Burlington and is no longer able to participate on the commission. There is an open seat listed on the city website.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the agenda by Hurley, second by Wiseberg, motion carried.

**Legacy Fund Update**

Cahill stated that last winter, with the help of the commission, staff realized that the fund was only being funded at less than .5 of the full cent that it was supposed to be allocated. As of July this year the fund is now being funded with the full cent.

Zoe Richards indicated that this full funding has allowed the conservation board to reconsider what projects they can potentially work towards in the future. Has assembled a nature based climate change document in hopes of elevating a lot of the work that the conservation board and parks commission is doing. Essentially – parks are valuable and important not only for our community wellbeing but also in terms of climate action. Selective plantings can help cool cities, clean the air, and clean the water. These projects are low investment and high impact. The city council has been very supportive of the project and the conservation board has provided an idea for future projects.

Cahill provided a slide presentation showing the breakdown of what the fund has generated and how those funds were allocated. He specifically pointed out that 30% of the fund goes to funding a land steward position which has been historically funded through multiple sources. The other 70% of the fund has gone towards the conservation of around 230 acres of land.

Now that the fund is up to capacity, Cahill recommends distributing funds differently – 30% will continue to fund stewardship (land steward position), 30% would go towards conservation and acquisitions, and the remain 40% would be allocated towards a new category which would support nature based climate solutions in the community.

Hurley asked the time frame in which the 230 acres were required. Cahill was not able to provide information on specific properties, but was able to confirm that the fund began to accrue in 2006 and has been in operation since then. Hurley asked what acreage might be remaining. Cahill reported that



there are six different properties that have either been on the wish list since the beginning or have recently become available. These are spread throughout the city and consists of many different type of acquisitions including “pocket parks”. The estimated acreage they are hoping to acquire is around 140 acres.

Duke asked for examples of what work could be funded by nature based climate solutions. Richards explained that it could be as simple as increasing the number of new trees we plant yearly to replace older trees that are being removed. Cahill showed the commission the implementation plan developed by the city which will act as a potential guide or map to use of the fund. It would allow the funds to be used by city staff, conservation groups, and other organizations. Some of the categories for work include tree planting, community gardening, food security, etc...The conservation board has asked for more detail on how the fund would be administered and accountability for future projects. The goal is to make sure the fund is used appropriately.

Cahill suggested that the parks commission and conservation board have a joint meeting at some point in the next year to further discuss the fund and the use of the fund with the hope of making the meeting a yearly event. The conservation board has made it clear that they would like to see diversity in the projects that the fund sources, and would also like to see community built around the concepts and ideas and giving community something tangible to develop around. They would also like to find a way to make the legacy fund a matching funding source.

Richard concluded by explaining that there are three separate things that the fund is supposed to support – land acquisition, long term stewardship, and conservation education programs. Land acquisition has been going well, but work is needed to improve the other two areas.

#### **Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00 PM)**

Mike Shea, owner of the Spirit of Ethan Allen, asked about the harbor commission meeting following the parks commission meeting with questions in regard to the plan to dredge the harbor. He noted that the dredging desperately needed, his ships are bottoming out in the harbor, and he has had a hard time finding the plan for the harbor dredging.

Jack Wallace from Burlington Harbor Marina also commented on the need for dredging in the harbor. He also asked about harbor patrols and patrol routines as executed by BPRW. He has seen far more traffic in the harbor in the last few years and notes that the city should be providing patrols now that the pandemic is easing.

Paul Lande joined the public forum to discuss the community garden program, but as the item had not yet been discussed he decided to wait to hear the presentation.

#### **Update on BACG Program**

Deryk Roach provided some background on the equity work that the program has been doing in the last couple of years. One of the identified steps towards improving equity in BPRW included improving the community garden program. He introduced Dan Cahill who provided an update on the new garden agreement for the community gardens. The new agreement actively seeks to make the program equitable for all races and all members of our community with the goal of being intentional about inclusion and belonging. Dan specifically sited Paul Land who has been deeply involved in the process as a community member.



Cahill provided an update on the adaptive garden agreement which seeks to help promote the pieces of gardening and the gardening experience that can help maintain curiosity and encourage interactions with one another. Staff will be meeting with site leaders to further discuss their roles as well as further community building. The heart of the community garden program is the volunteers that run it; the site leaders make this program work and BPRW acknowledges that if the running of the gardens is left up to folks who have the time and resources to take on site leader roles it can have a restricting effect on who uses the community garden program. Cahill and his team will be looking at what site leaders and volunteers need to best do their jobs and what kind of staffing positions need to be created to serve a parallel function to support the site leaders.

Another step is the development of tools and resources that can support the learning and growing in relation to inclusion and belonging. The aim is to provide tools, resources, and information in a culturally appropriate way and in a way that works for all users of the garden program. This aspect is more of a reflective process.

Finally, they will be reexamining the requirement of 4 hours of volunteer work, what qualifies as the community service requirement, and what may or may not be supporting people's access to the gardens. The aim is to broaden the way BPRW serves the building of community and belonging at those sites and in the program.

This work is all in the early stages and will continue to develop as time moves forward.

Johnson commented that he was appreciative of the work being done to improve equity and the information Cahill provided in the presentation. Duke concurred with Johnson and thanked Roach and Cahill for their work.

#### **BTV Stat Fall Presentation**

Sophie Sauve provided a short presentation that she and her department previously presented on BTV Stat. This year they chose to focus on playgrounds and provide a bigger picture that is city wide.

In deciding what to focus on for BTV stat, they decided to focus on playgrounds, the expectations around playgrounds, aging equipment, dwindling fees, ADA requirements, and universal access. One of the challenges that BPRW faces in terms of playgrounds is a lack of replacement parts and the need to remove pieces or whole structures due to aging and that lack of replacement materials. Out of the 30 parks in Burlington there are around 16 playgrounds in those parks. 12 playgrounds are due or overdue for replacement in the next 5 years. Some of these are more than 20 years old. Playgrounds at Leddy and Pomeroy had to be completely removed due to a lack of replacement parts and another one at Smalley was removed due to rotting wood. The team did discover that, while there are many playgrounds in need of repair and replacement, most do outlast their life expectancy. In terms of replacement, geography does impact the plans for replacement in addition to wear and tear.

On the financial side of things, 4 playgrounds were replaced in the last 5 years. Costs have varied over that time to replace parts and whole pieces of equipment, and the cost of materials for the universally accessible playground at Oakledge is considerably higher than standard materials. Inflation is also a factor in replacing current playgrounds in need of work. The cost for that would likely be around \$2 million. Next steps include looking at what is needed for each playground replacement.



The main budget for playground replacement comes from penny for parks, but creative funding sources have also been improved. Sauve provided a breakdown of the use of funds from the penny for parks program and how BPRW intends to use those funds for FY2023. There are, however additional costs that are not included in the breakdown for penny for parks. Playgrounds are just one of the components of penny for parks funds use, and all other programs that use the fund need to be balanced along with playground work.

Hurley commented that she loves the playgrounds. Duke commented that Sauve and Cindi Wight presented to the Parks Foundation at their last meeting and provided information on the need for funding to improve playgrounds akin to the general fund with an aim towards universal access. The parks foundation was receptive and may support the department in raising funds to improve playgrounds going forward. Wiseberg commented that the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of work at Oakledge is starting to wrap up and he is very happy with the appearance of the new space.

Sauve provided brief update on Oakledge, noting that workers will be shutting down for the winter at the end of the week. They are ahead of schedule and plan to come back for 3 to 4 weeks in the spring to complete work (poured in place surfacing). They anticipate the playground being reopened in early summer as long as the weather cooperates.

#### **Standing Item:**

##### **Report from Commission on Volunteer Hours**

Johnson reported visiting Callahan Park for around 3 hours to chat with folks about the commission. Hurley was not able to complete any volunteer hours this month. Wiseberg spent around an hour at Oakledge reporting issues on see-click-fix. Duke met with Cindi Wight and attended the parks foundation meeting with the hope of spending more time on projects in the winter months.

##### **Report on PACC Dog Force**

Duke was unable to attend the last taskforce meeting. Cindi Wight was in attendance but was not able to be present for this meeting. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

##### **Report on Parks Foundation**

Alex Farrell was the commission representative, but as he has now moved to South Burlington a new representative is needed. Duke has been attending meetings and would be happy to continue to do so, however she offered the position to any of the other commission members who might be interested.

##### **Director's Items**

Wight was not present for this meeting and Roach did not provide an update at this time.

##### **Commissioner's Items**

There were no commissioner items at this time.

##### **Adjournment**

Hurley moved to adjourn, Wiseberg seconded, motion to adjourn Parks Commission passes at 6:43 pm

**The Harbor Commission meeting was convened at 6:44 p.m. by Duke**



## **Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda by Wiseberg, second by Johnson, motion carried.

## **Waterfront Update**

Erin Moreau had one update to provide on marina operations. There are no fee changes at this time so that item will not be needed. 2022 was the first summer in a couple of years where the Canadian border has been open. Moreau shared a graph that clearly indicated the improved number of slip and mooring rentals over the last two years. The marina and campground both received software upgrades which really improved communications with customers, and the transition to the new system went very smoothly and now the team will be looking into what went well and what needs improvement in the year to come. They will be providing an update to BTV stat in February.

In terms of the campground, the improvement in reservations also improved from the previous two years. A fee change provided improved revenue for the campgrounds. Because of the new software staff was able to track visitors by the states that they came from, noting that Canadians is by far the largest group of visitors. The campground had a great year. On opening day the campground sold out on all of the busiest weekends and Alec Kaeding was busy right up until closure on 10/15. They were not able to move forward with the master plan for North Beach, but they will continue to look for funding sources to update the campground from its 1950s style and infrastructure.

Moreau will be spending some time this winter working with Sauve on solutions for the boathouse and start to plan for work to be done to improve that structure. Time is extremely limited, and hopefully they will be able to do a study this year.

Finally, Moreau provided an update on externally produced events at Waterfront Park. The events were still in recovery from the pandemic shut down, and is working at around 2/3rds capacity. Two large events decided not to return, but there have been several new producers/events and Richard Bailey is looking to fill in the last gaps in the summer schedule. A full update will be provided in December.

There are a few winter projects on the docket including construction at the cottage at North Beach which was started back in 2020 and was shut down due to the pandemic. Parking is another focus they will be looking at in the winter, partnering with DPW to roll in the few surface lots that are part of Waterfront division into the full city structure. Automated gate arms are likely to be added to assist in after-hours security issues. Moreau will be issuing an RFP for harbor dredging. An underwater depth survey was completed this fall and there is funding for design and permitting for dredging and further funding in FY24 for the actual dredging work. Looking at dredging at Perkins Pier and the main waterfront at the end of College St. They are looking at where the most need is with the knowledge that available funding may not cover all the areas that need work. They will be providing an urban park ranger program update in December.

Hurley asked if there were any updates on the boathouse. Moreau stated that she and Sauve will be looking at the boathouse feasibility study to determine the future of the boathouse. They will go from there. It is a much needed conversation and thankfully there are funds secured for that work.

Duke asked if fees and pricing will be looked at over the winter for either camping or the marina. Moreau states that fees were updated last year and only went into effect this season. They will be reassessing to see if a specialty fee (long term rate) is needed, but there is nothing pressing as the fees



were just updated. The only potential fees updates may come in terms of events with the hope for better compliance with Act 250 guidelines. There were issues this year with events and compliance and they are considering changing monetary requirements to improve that compliance going forward. Duke commented that the event fees seem modest to her and that some problems can be solved with just more revenue. Moreau commented that the department often hears from producers that they are more expensive than other locations, but BPRW will be looking at the needs for stronger damage deposits and fines for Act 250 violation.

**Adjournment**

Wiseberg moved to close the meeting, Hurley seconded, the motion passes. The Harbor Commission was adjourned at 7pm.

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