



**Parks & Recreation and Harbor Commission Meeting  
Minutes  
October 6, 2015**

**Commission Present:** Bossange, Hurley, Hanson, Khadka and Matson

**Staff Present:** Bridges, Francis, Rogers and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:35 p.m. by Commission vice Chair Bossange.

**Approval of Agenda**

A Motion was made by Hanson to approve the agenda, second by Khadka, motion carried.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Approval of Minutes of September 1, 2015 Meeting

\*waive the reading, approve the minutes and place them on file

Motion was made to approve the consent agenda by Hanson, second by Hurley, motion carried.

**WVPD, Valley Ridge Park Draft MOU**

Bridges introduced Nick Warner from the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD). Warner gave a handout to the Commission outlining the property and boundaries of the property that abuts Schmanska Park and the connection to the Valley Ridge trail. A draft MOU was sent out to the Commission as part of a starting point and WVPD is looking for a partnership around the parking area and trail area.

Warner explained the mission of the WVPD and also added that the park would be a donation from SD Ireland and would also boarder a piece of land in South Burlington. The property has a significant acreage that would need repair and also has some critical habitat and much more. This is the beginning of rolling the plan out to the public and looking to address all concerns with operations.

Warner explained that the piece of land that goes up to the parking would be managed by WVPD and then would go into the Parks property, park is on the South side of the development. WVPD will be looking to develop a MOU to outline the responsibilities, once all in place would be run by WVPD.

Bridges added that between the two entities there is a very significant amount of acreage and are taking a proactive role in the relationship with WVPD and felt it is a good merge of the two to sponsor and maintain moving into the future.

Bossange stated that connectivity from the parking area was an issue and asked how difficult it would be to create good access from the park to the parking lot and Warner said it was not that unique and they have done this at other locations. Bossange asked if a housing proposal was also requested for this site and was told yes with the addition of the land.

Hanson asked where the land was, if it was on the parking lot side of the road and was told yes and runs along the river. Hanson also asked if there was a connection to Centennial Woods and was told there is



no connection currently that he is aware of and Bridges added the best way to get to Centennial would be from Schmanska but currently no good connector for the two. Hanson did not see any problem with connecting the land to the parking at Schmanska and would like to see a connection to the other parks near Schmanska. Warner said that he is in conversations with other partnerships to try and manage better the Centennial Woods area.

The Commission felt very positive about the proposal and was very favorable about the proposed MOU and looks forward to seeing a final version in the future.

#### **Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00PM, 3 min. per person time limit)**

Public forum opened at 6:03 p.m.

Nobody came forward to speak at Public Forum.

Public forum closed at 6:04 p.m.

#### **Smoking Ban in Parks**

Bossange said he and Kaplan have been working on banning smoking in parks, he had talked personally with several City Councilors and is going to make some adjustments to a proposed Ordinance. Bossange also said he would be attending the next Ordinance Committee meeting that will review the second draft, if approved it will go on to the full City Council. Will know more after October 21st. meeting but also added the proposal has a lot of support from State and locals.

Khadka asked what the common argument is and Bossange said most that are opposed said the concern was that some "need" to smoke for stress and other reasons and also that it is a right, however Bossange suggested allowances to do on the perimeter or parking areas off the land of the park. The most common concern was that it felt discriminatory.

Rogers asked if it would include the City Campground and Bossange said he really heard a lot about that and it would be very difficult, there are a lot of smokers in that particular location and Bridges suggested designated areas.

Hanson stated that it is still an issue due to the close proximity of others and even if in a designated area it would be arguable to allow. Hanson felt camping is a family friendly activity and healthy activity and should not allow smoking.

Matson stated that there are a lot of students at BHS that are interested in helping with this ban and would like to know if the students should attend the Ordinance Committee meeting and was told yes by Bossange and Hanson that it would be very powerful to have a student voice. Bossange will notify Matson when the meeting will happen at the City Council level.

Hanson reminded the Commission that when this ban originated several years ago the intent was to ban in all parks and then decided to do incrementally and started with playgrounds, beaches etc. and would like to have that recognized.



### **Parks Master Plan**

Francis asked if everyone was agreeable with the content of the plan and stated she was looking to have the final document printed by the end of the month. She was seeking approval from the Commission tonight and if approved would move the plan forward to the City Council at the next level to review and approve. Francis also stated that it would be part of the Municipal Plan that is the framework for the City. Francis asked if any Commissioners had any feedback.

Hanson asked for clarification of the chart that stated what Burlington has versus what the national recommended level is and was concerned about what it meant. Bridges added that we have many soccer fields but does not mean we have too many, but that we only have a few full sized fields for above 12 years of age. Hanson stated that her question of concern is that it can be interpreted that there are too many fields when the greater concern is that they are so fully used all the time but yet we have too many. Was also concerned that it said dog parks are too large, agrees not well kept but disagreed that there was not a need for more as well as the need for an aquatic space.

Bridges said that they are not saying this is the prescription, but rather added the maintenance piece of what is currently being used.

Hanson stated that she felt the content states that Burlington has too many of certain items and Francis said rather than looking at specific items it is more about being lower on the list and could add more reality as to what the City would like and value and how to make it happen.

Bossange stated that he sees the plan as a document to stay focused on and to look at the plan and answer the question of where we want to be and if it is happening.

Francis stated that the chart is very confusing and needs to be better described as to how to interpret and the need to layer our own cultural lens over it.

Hanson suggested changing the wording of decrease dog parks to evaluate the size of our dog parks and Francis added that the parks were looked at in terms of maintenance and other types of dog parks and uses and agreed that the wording could be changed.

Motion to approve the Master Plan with the suggested edit from decrease to evaluate the size of our dog parks by Hurley, second by Hanson, motion carried.

The Commission wanted to formally acknowledge and compliment Francis for all of her hard work on the plan.

### **Burlington College Update**

Bridges explained the City is still actively working to acquire funding to move forward on the project as well as how all will function together and in the future. A tree maintenance plan went to the DRB tonight, walked the property and evaluating and would like to maintain. Not 100% satisfied with but it is very good and referred to board, hopeful to get to City Council in November and hopeful to have acquisition in the spring contingent on permits. An appraisal is being done currently on the 12 acres for other requirements for the City. The project will be a great legacy for future generations.



Currently \$1 million in Conservation fund account, however reluctant to spend down the balance. The City is actively looking at other properties for the future.

Bossange asked how difficult it would be to package the funding and come up with the monies and Bridges said speaking with others and feels very hopeful to get funding. Bossange asked about the pushback from some that would like nothing to be built on this property and Bridges stated that there were still some that would prefer not to spend any Conservation dollars, however acquiring and protecting this land if very critical and confident that it is the best for the land.

Hanson asked for the definition of use for the conservation funds and the breakout of monies and Bridges said the funds pay for the Land Steward, education, and 70% toward acquisitions. What does not get spent gets rolled over into the next budget year; \$190,000 goes into the account yearly. If all funding were spent on one project it would take roughly ten years to build back up to \$1 mil.

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

Bridges stated November was going to be a busy Commission meeting. Park paved areas have been in bad shape. Oakledge got some work this year, North Beach got started yesterday with paving, also paving at Lakeview Cemetery and 3/4 of the Leddy parking lot as well as the exit road. Soil testing results will be coming in and will review next week and get to EPA and then make a decision, still ahead of schedule with the plan.

Bridges stated that Memorial Auditorium continues to have issues and was recently in the paper, has capital needs and exploring what can be done in the short term and what can be done in the next year. \$5 mil in the next year just to do minimum to keep, but otherwise will have to make a very critical decision, the roof will have some work done, currently holding events that have already been scheduled but will not be soliciting any new events.

Next month the Oakledge siting and conceptual plan will come to the Commission, after full review of the plan there will be a recommendation for uses, two wetlands have already been discovered. Good data will come for a discussion with the Commission and then to the public so that all understand what is needed and what can fit. Francis added that the plan will be very data based and a good model moving forward.

Bridges wanted to acknowledge the work that is happening on the bikepath in the Urban reserve area and stated this would involve vegetation removal as well as new vegetation planted. Will have an honest conversation this winter with all about the end result of the area, also there will be no significant trees in that area that would be removed and will have a conversation regarding this soon.

Bridges stated that this fall conversations have begun around zoning allowances for set-backs and how there have been issues with auxiliary structures and the right of way going into parks as well as specific allowances for dugouts and sheds. There will also be a discussion around wayfinding that is subject to zoning and permitting that will need an allowance for a plan to move forward.

Bridges concluded by saying that he was also putting together the FY17 budget.



Hanson requested to have the presentation speak specifically to how it will affect parks or impact specifically and not the City in the entirety.

### **Commissioner's Items**

Hanson asked about the follow-up on the trees that UVM removed and Bridges stated that the technical review team should have seen that and never got the review and further UVM did not do anything illegal, will work on updating removal plan and Spinner would like to propose some ordinance revisions as well. Hanson wanted to know if anything came after the fact the trees were removed to let UVM know how it should have been done or specific guidelines and Bridges said the department does not have the authority to do anything. The City did not receive anything from the Design Review Board (DRB) and did not investigate further. Hanson suggested that Spinner/Arborist work with DRB moving forward with more knowledge around this and come up with a better plan, Bridges suggested making this proposal to DRB for future projects and have it be part of the process.

Hanson stated that she went to Open Streets event and enjoyed and hopes do more with the event. Bridges stated that Allen from this department took over the event this year and plans to do a lot more with it for next year and moving forward.

Hurley asked about the glass in Ethan Allen Park and if it was intentional and Bridges said it was very upsetting, had vandalism at Leddy and Ethan Allen this year and it looks like issues that have been happening and it is not more than what has been happening and did not feel that it was done maliciously.

Hurley said that she walked down to the waterfront for Oktoberfest and asked how it went and Bridges said that it went very well and had good success with the dinner, set up was cool, Sunday fell a bit flat for the family day but all in all it was a good event.

Bossange stated that he had met with Catherine from the Dog Park discussion and discussed the things that the group wanted to do and that she was going to organize and have had good meetings with them and plan to take action.

Bossange stated that the Parks Foundation has had a piece in the North Avenue News toward the donation to the Bikepath, also received \$100,000 from the Medical Center and several other donations from the public.

Bossange also added that in yesterday's New York Times there was a good article about making streets into one way and having bike lanes on a grand scale and said many Cities are making more accessible to bikers and walkers.

Bossange asked about Memorial Auditorium and who are the key players and the fact that the building is connected to many gateway properties and wants to know how it is tied to the Mayor's plan moving forward and at some point would like to discuss how all the pieces connect and what to do with the facility, either public or privately. Bridges said an RFP should be out soon asking for ideas.

### **Adjournment**

Motion was made to adjourn at 7:12 p.m. by Hurley, second by Khadka, motion carried.