



**Parks & Recreation and Harbor Commission Meeting
Minutes
November 3, 2015**

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

Staff Present: Bridges, Moreau, Paradis, Kaeding, Cahill and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:34 p.m. by Commission vice Chair Bossange.

Approval of Agenda

A Motion was made by Khadka to approve the agenda as amended by adding item IVb. Discussion Item: 10 Year Capital Plan, second by Hurley, motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes of November 3, 2015 Meeting

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

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

Waterfront Update for 2015 Season

Moreau stated that the summer was very good and busy and proceeded to introduced staff Kaeding who would speak to Campground and Paradis who would speak regarding Marina operations.

Kaeding explained how the Campground did, with number of visitors and reservations from many different countries and explained that the new online registration system worked very well. February 15th is the begin date for the year to begin registrations, he gave stats for the different sites and number of users, spoke of opening for half day use on the new open space location.

Hanson asked about the restrooms and was told by Bridges that it is in the capital plan to update the main restroom facility for the next season.

Kaeding stated that a bike rental was added this past season and did very well.

Bridges added that a security guard was hired to patrol at night and made a huge impact on work and unwanted activity during the day as well as the activity that would carry through to the top of the hill and was well coordinated.

Hanson asked how the campground fees compare to other campgrounds and was told that they had just raised the rate for the first time in quite a while and others in the area raised their rates mid- season but overall Burlington was about in the middle. Plan to reevaluate the fees and services without coming in as the lowest, would like to be in the middle pay level. Kaeding said fees are similar to State parks fee system.



Hanson asked if the campground provided lean-tos and thought it could be beneficial to offer resident and non-resident rates.

Paradis spoke to the Marina stats and number of visitors from different areas, available on request. Then explained the revenues and where they came from.

Moreau spoke to the new counter and functionality which came from federal boater grant that had some extra funding. Explained two new parking kiosks in the Pease lot which solved launch ramp issues, have new signage and revamped seasonal parking passes that increased sales. Moreau then gave a breakdown of the parking revenue from all the different areas and sources. Water quality of blue green algae is increasing had more closures than past, with ten full and 4 partial closures, have increased training initiatives and greater web/social media presence.

Moreau explained projects; got a new computer program that makes the marina more efficient and now focused on improvements to the North Beach facility. Other facility improvements that would be included are Boathouse floors and signage and North Beach gatehouse restructure. Will be working on North Beach mid-range and long term visioning for campground and will work on Perkins Pier Marina project.

Explained the seasonal dock master end of the year dinner and how they take pride in training of the seasonal staff and staff come back every year are very diverse and representative to the community.

Bossange thanked for another stellar year on behalf of the Commission.

Khadka thanked and said he noticed that people that come from other countries are large and highlighted and wanted to know what they have done to make residents more welcome to the waterfront and are aware of resources and Moreau said that the bigger question is parking and spaces that are available and offering affordable passes to get all residents into the park.

Hanson said a couple of years ago the sailing center did a couple of sales that were free and touched on people from City that had not normally done anything and suggested reaching out to people to encourage locals to engage. Asked about the water getting so low if there is a way to address the lower water issue and how it effects propellers and was told that dockage is offered at other locations. Also dredge at times, but very costly and was performed several years ago. Paradis stated that she would put out in the newsletter to take precautions when the water is low.

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

Public forum opened at 6:00 p.m. by Bossange

Philip Pezeshki, stated that he runs on Texaco and North Beach every day and wanted to speak about Burlington College proposal, was concerned with how the Cities money would be spent. His understanding of the project was that it would create over 700 new housing units on the property, concerns with storm water runoff, felt the park located near the large residential community would create the conception that the park belongs to the housing specifically and does not understand why the City would pay for, also stated most of the land there is a slippery hill and not usable, inevitable will



have restrictive access to public. Is concerned with the drastic change to that neighborhood and beach and questioned why the citizens are asked to pick up the tab.

Joanna Hunt, Burlington resident, against the proposed development of the Burlington College property, continues to feel the proposal has way to much development and feels more value in leaving wilder bigger open space, impact to big and feels runoff will be huge, not a good space for a large development.

Andrew Simon, handed out a flyer to the Commission and showed part of the development plan of the Burlington College property and said people working with save Burlington space feel it is a good plan and many that do not. Feels a significant amount of space should be retained as stated several years prior and feels as the plan stands is not a good one, not in favor of committing conservation money to the project, would like all to take into consideration when the commission is making a decision to move forward with the project. Would like to have a plan that respects the water and land near the property and feels that does not fit into the developers plans.

Amir, stated that his company operates at the North Beach concession and would like to request approval to sell beer at North Beach next season, explained the fee for operation does not cover the rental fee and this revenue would greatly increase operations and financial ability to maintain. Would like to invest money into a brick oven and deck, can't afford to pay the rent or provide adequate services otherwise.

Public forum closed at 6:15 p.m.

10 Year Capital Plan

Bridges explained the plan being presented is the same one that was given to the Board of Finance last night and focused on the expenditure side of the plan, from previous discussions there is a known shortfall in funding to maintain. Bridges then had Keenan from DPW give the presentation.

Keenan spoke mainly to the powerpoint presentation, strategically planning for city wide plan and reiterated how investment today helps to prevent future larger expenses in the future. Primarily focused on next four years, they are the most real numbers to work with, trying to catch up because assets have not been kept up with. Keenan stated that by maintaining roads will help to preserve firetrucks and the like as it will not wear on them as much if you maintain roads, equipment will last longer and you will save money. Streets and sidewalks, imperative that getting to and through the parks are paramount, park roads are now incorporated into the plan of the City and not on its own to do, 75% of Leddy parking lot was repaved, Oakledge received a lot of work as well as the Cemetery, no longer programming at Memorial Auditorium as of April 1st, bike path is in the plan in its entirety as well as City Hall Park, keeping in mind that other items and projects come up due to breakage and malfunctions. Assessments have been done with data driven information on what needs to be maintained first. Areas have been identified and placed in order of need with a cost of \$2 million to complete the specifics. Parks need about \$700,000 per year to maintain infrastructure.

Bossange asked if the projects will please everyone in different areas of the City and Bridges said need to balance that approach, needs could be in one area and was told it will eventually get to everyone.



Hanson asked if there is data that shows the usage of the sidewalks and was told yes by Keenan and Hanson also asked about crosswalks near Callahan Park specifically from Shelburne Road in particular to school aged children crossing and Keenan said looking at drop off and pickup as well as flow and looking at in holistic manner.

Keenan concluded by saying the City is looking at multiple funding resources and will be coming back to groups with this information and also with savings and what the rotation will be.

Former Burlington College Agreement

Bridges introduced Gil Livingston and Dan Cahill to discuss public lands and Bridges stated for clarification that the land and beach are not public lands currently and are trying to preserve many of the recreation uses and public areas, zoned for 800 plus units. Bridges expressed the desire to always conserve more space but would be purchasing 12 acres for \$2million, which is a significant amount of money and portion of the property. If the City does not purchase the land it would not be accessible to the public. Not asking for approval of funding but rather for the use of the conservation funding to be used for the project. The Vermont Land Trust and the City of Burlington will have an agreement to co-own and acquire the land in February. The conservation fund should have about \$1 million in funding and will not liquidate the funds, \$500,000 down with other conservation sources funding the remaining portion.

Livingston explained he is the president of the Land Trust, this project has engaged a broad range of community and development people and the project itself will be located as close to North Avenue as possible and concentrated on housing. Current and formal access to beach is important, high demand for community gardening in the City and flat open family recreation space is desired. Collectively have looked at alternatives and feel this is the last opportunity to come to a good agreement with a private ownership, ending up with something to be proud of. Borrowing \$1.5 million, Land Trust will borrow the money and will be responsible for payment, will come from National or Conservation Land funds a Seattle based division that does lending. Is somewhat anxious about doing quickly but believe it is the best thing to do now.

Bossange asked if people know that it is not possible to get any better of a deal than what is being offered and wanted to know if the community understood that clearly. Bridges explained that most people have seen the property as public and it has been more of a general understanding, but made it very clear that it is privately owned and the trail would probably remain, but would not serve a multiple range of uses, also added that there would be some great opportunity to use the stone house.

Hanson said it was still very hard to accept the development and the change to such a nice space and realizes it is inevitable however part of her wants to keep it open but can't find a rationale way to believe that every alternative has been looked at to the property the way it is. Thinks it is a real fear that the residents of the property will think this is there front lawn and inevitably want to keep private and would like an explanation on how to keep that from happening.

Livingston explained that this is a public investment and what he heard from citizens is the desire for a neighborhood park and from the beginning the conversation was against new infrastructure, had lots of conversations of how it will be and there will be lots of different levels of income and culture living there



and a main destination and connection to get to all other areas, trying to create a neighborhood connection not a parking destination.

Hanson asked if the City could reduce the number of housing units on the site and also if so what would the open space be like and what would be required to have an open space. Livingston said the developer would probably have several smaller green spaces around buildings did not know of any requirement of allowing public use to beaches and other areas.

Matson asked about the additional traffic that would occur and if there was a plan to deal with that and was told they have not dealt with that yet in the conversations but would need eventually, the project would take many years and processes and a traffic analysis would have to be conducted.

Hanson asked Livingston if he had seen this happen successfully and was told it is very typical and successful in many other housing projects to have combined open spaces.

Goes before City Council and would have to come back for final approval.

Bikepath Urban Reserve Landscaping Plan

Bridges stated that there will be some trees removed and wanted to be very clear that the goal is to be informative and this has to happen in order to remove asphalt and bring up to grade and will be a significant improvement to the space. It will be made more welcoming and reintroduce more native species to the space, also the plan took into account conservation as well as arbor planning.

Bridges stated there was some tree removal done today from arbor plan that did go through the regulatory process of Design Review Board and is being managed properly.

Hanson asked about the tree maintenance plan and Bridges said it was on the DRB agenda posting and had made some amendments to it. DRB and Conservation agendas were posted with all the information regarding plans.

Director's Items

Bridges said a contract was in place to remove soils at Leddy, awaiting a decision as to where it is going and waiting for results for disposal. A plan has been put into place, removal will be a very rigorous process.

Spoke about recreation programs having more presence in old north end particularly in St. Josephs building location, continue to have discussions about the future of the building. The building could be a gathering place for the community and make a huge impact.

Hanson asked about having the Very Merry Theatre partner with us on that as they have shown interest in the stage and Bridges said he and Rogers had spoken with them and they want to have it be there home and use the space in that manner with permanent seating the gym with no other use as a gym overall. Bridges stated that there is a huge deficit of gym space and the City over all does not have many open gym type spaces. Khadka added that a lot of non-profits would like to have offices there and have as a one stop shop location.



Hired a new Recreation Manager will start January 4th from Oregon, Illinois, skatepark is open and was told it was packed yesterday, not fully completed and will have formal dedication in the spring, was told by Mayor he had received rave reviews about the park. Southern marina proposal is still being worked on, looking at different partnerships and trying to begin something new at Perkins Pier, will send other staffing news to Commission via email.

Commissioner's Items

Hanson said she was sharing the Very Merry groups desire to be at the St. Josephs building and would like to continue to keep talking to them about a partnership. She explained that she had a concern from a user about reserving Leddy for a birthday party stating that the user said it was very hard to find a staff member, mentioned and told the woman to call Melissa.

Bossange said the smoking ban will be coming up soon to go before the City Council for second reading and approval and also asked Putzier to send a calendar of Commission meetings for 2016 to the Commissioners.

Hanson asked about the request from the concessionaire to sell beer at North Beach and if he would be coming to the Commission with this as an item at a future meeting and was told by Bridges that an RFP had been put out for a concessionaire and he anticipated that they would be submitting a proposal with this in it and would go to the Commission. He also stated that most contracts run 3-5 years typically.

Bossange recognized all the efforts of Matson serving on the Commission and thanked her on behalf of the Commission and wished her well in her next endeavor.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. by Khadka, second by Hanson, motion carried.