



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes
June 2, 2020

Commission Present: Barlow, Farrell, Todd, Traverse, Healy

Staff Present: Wight, Sauve, and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:35 p.m. by Traverse

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Consent Agenda

Todd read the agenda and the motion into the record and moved for approval, second by Farrell, motion carried.

FY21 Park Projects Update

Sauve shared her screen with all and showed projects completed; Arms Forest Master Plan, Leddy Maintenance Facility, Perkins Pier Pathway and Northshore Pause Place and gave brief descriptions of each and some projects that are ongoing from FY20 into FY21, such as Playground Compliance, Playground Equipment and Fiber, Walkway and Lighting and rack sealing at various locations. Other projects going into FY21 are Leddy Tennis Courts, Miller Recreation Center Fitlot, Starr Farm Dog Park Fence, Lakeview Cemetery Section 8 Design, North Beach Cottage Repair, City Hall Park, Greenway Rehabilitation, Greenway Realignment, Arms Forest Trail Implementation and North Beach Laundry.

Sauve also gave a list of projects that will be on the horizon soon; Calahan Park Tennis Court sealing, Schmanska Barn renovations and walkway, Appletree Park Lighting, System-wide Restroom Design, Schiffiliti Park Softball Transition, Leddy Park Pause Place, Champlain Street Park Playground Redesign, Cambrian Rise Trail, Perkins Pier Siting Study and Oakledge for All Playground.

Todd was interested in the Cambrian Rise project and how it had a large cost associated with it as well as the Oakledge For All project and wanted to know the time range for the projects. Was told that Cambrian Rise's funds are out of the department's control. Oakledge for All is hoping for construction next summer due to budget shortfalls, matter of prioritizing with list of internal projects and seeing what is left after taking care of most needed projects.

Barlow asked about current slated projects for this year and wanted to know if any risk to those projects not happening. Sauve was not sure if dog park fence would move forward and looked at cuts and projects on the list do have funds behind them and have had approval to move forward. As projects come up continue to get approvals to make sure that monies are available. Wight added that monies did get shifted from general fund to PFP and may take longer to get done for example in the next fiscal year but will get done. In end all projects will get done but it may take longer.

Traverse added the absence of canoe/kayak storage in the Burlington area along the water and if any opportunity for storage people would be very grateful for an opportunity for this to happen in future plans.



Todd was happy to see an update that went out to the public and would like to see if another could go out with potential openings and celebrations coming up in October or in the fall in general or when projects and deadlines will be completed.

Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00PM)

Public forum opened at 6:05p.m. by Traverse.

Seeing nobody from the public the forum was closed.

Public forum closed at 6:06p.m.

Todd suggested adding the meeting on Facebook as an event. Traverse would like to add this topic as an agenda item to the August meeting after new members are added to the commission.

General and Capital Budget Approval

Wight said usually this conversation happens in April and this year the budget is technically still being worked on due to the pandemic and the current events.

Losing quite a bit of money in FY21, in many ways had been over budgeted in the past in terms of not spending the money we were budgeted for. Looked at actuals and was targeting those numbers, was around \$200,000 and \$100,000 from PFP to help get through this period. Several nickel and dime changes on lines and then tougher items around seasonal staff lines for this fiscal year but optimistic for next spring. Cemetery was cut for seasonal employees and it's noticeable from mowing. Lakeview is starting to look a bit rough due to lack of staff, one of Cemetery Commissioners said this is the time to put up signage along the bikepath as a natural area and use of pollinators etc. so that people would be more positive. The department does collect revenues and brings in half of what usually do which is all that we are budgeted and we bring in more that is a plus, if we do not bring in at least half that would be a big problem. 9% of campers are from Vermont, \$40,000, will not be losing revenues due to these figures. Would not be making enough in revenues to keep the campground open if we were only open to Vermonters.

Barlow asked about GF and noticed that FY20 expenses are 1.6 million less than budgeted and revenues are significantly less, asked if this was COVID related and Wight said the FY19 actuals is where we were able to find \$200,000 by tightening up those lines and we had not been spending. A lot of payroll and amounts that are not run through end of year so not final numbers. Recreation received a grant for running summer camps in the amount of \$150,000 and helping with all the extra PPE and new regulations.

Traverse asked if funding down the line that we would qualify for and Wight heard of a project opportunity through CARES that might be a funding match the City could apply for.

Todd asked is everything is in hold state with no adding or extras or new funding/projects unless funding from outside sources are obtained and Wight stated that was correct. Wight added that several staff positions are vacant and currently unable to fill.

Barlow asked about assumptions for next fiscal year around COVID expenses and Wight said would not have some around youth sports if unable to do and would not be able to bring in some revenues at the rink due to fall activities, optimistic for next May with revenues.



Todd asked if the Dept. of Health gave any projections for the Fall or best or worse case scenarios and Wight stated no projections far in advance, everyone basically finds out at the same time unfortunately and can't really plan very much in advance.

Wight explained the capital budget and have multiple funding sources, PFP-701, goes in and out, projects, several others 702, Greenbelts Street Tax, \$149,000 from special tax, \$50,000 from overall city funds one full time seasonal just for Trees program because maintain all greenbelts and parks

703, Conservation Legacy special tax for acquisition of lands, spend 30% for administrative fees and 70% to acquisition to conserve lands. Wight listed several pieces of land that had been acquired. Stated the money will sit and grow and when an opportunity comes up will have funds to purchase. Cahill's salary is paid in part by the Bikepath Maintenance and improvement and the other from the Conservation Legacy.

725 Parks Special Improvements, this is the Capital line the department receives from other places such as the Impact fees, which is around \$153,000-\$178,000 and have about 6 years to spend and if you don't you lose it. Also Penny for Parks which is a dedicated tax we receive yearly and can be carried over.

Healy moved to approve both capital and general budgets, second by Farrell, motion carried.

Off-Leash Dog Policy

Wight stated bringing this back around and would like to discuss but not place any action on yet, working on getting the ordinance updated, the policy would be with the commission, where they are what times open would be approved at commission level. Details not in ordinance. Issues with dogs off leash, more because out and about, hoping when finalized that it will help but will need to be a community decision and decide commission will be ready to take a lead on supporting or not supporting off-leash in community if good locations. If as a community embrace. One place that came up recently is Northshore Natural Area along the bikepath, entrance on north side and access on all three entrances and asked land steward if anything special or any reason we would not want dogs down there and was told no. Southern stairway to the ramp to the northern set of stairway no dog area.

Todd said it felt great to discuss and how people feel in public with dogs, looking at water and trail opportunity and would that be the Northshore area and what is it called and Wight said not called a beach but rather a natural area, number 3/natural area, public area.

Traverse said discussed in September of last year and some prospect of City Council taking up and City Council working on ordinance and wanted to know where is this at currently Wight said Parks Commission said yes, PACC and commission approved and then to Attorney, however the Attorney had been on paternity leave and the documents is still at Attorney's office but ready to go and wanted to bring commission up to speed.

Barlow said he is a dog owner and spends time in Leddy and some dogs are well behaved but many not on leash do not respond and feels by sanctioning will make worse in certain areas. Two winters ago a dog mauled some Canada geese. If a dog see's a bird or wild animal it will go after and problems that go along with loosening the rules.



Report from Commission on Volunteer Hours

Putzier asked the Commission if they had any additional hours for the month of May, There were none.

Director's Items

Wight said if anyone interested the Cemetery Commission is meeting on Thursday, June 4, to discuss Section 8 Design. They will be meeting at Pine Street. Camp programs received a grant to run summer programs and Emma Allen and Richard Bailey are working with RRC on open Streets Event.

Traverse asked about canceling the July 3rd event and update on any ideas, originally ideas were to bring people together but not supposed to have too many people together, can't really encourage to come together direction and vision is how to build community when not together. Allen has some ideas of flashlight and fireworks at 9:35, VSO have some items, local radio station will offer a staycation or some other prize(s) or other things related and use hashtag, lighting light at 9:30 and flag giveaways.

Todd liked idea of doing city wide shout out or countdown to cheer for Burlington or America or something altogether, Wight suggested when doing light or something at 9:30pm.

Sauve said did porch singing at a certain hour in her town. All sang same song, were notified ahead of time.

Commissioner's Items

Todd said thank you for North beach updates and the myriad of things happening and not because of the use of the campground.

Healy part of tower keepers who open and close Ethan Allen Tower, many volunteers interested in opening this year and what it would look like and was told the department said it would not be feasible this year to open, she asked for more information. Wight asked if she had heard more information on this and stated that she herself was going to check in with Cahill for more specifics.

Traverse recognized this as Healy's last meeting and thanked her for her service on the commission and knowledge and respect to the new commissioners. Healy said it has been a great 3 years and thanked for being a part of and always happy to help and will continue to be available.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:11 p.m. by Healy, second by Todd, motion carried.