



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
And HARBOR COMMISSION
Minutes
May 4, 2021**

Harbor Commission Meeting

Commission Present: Farrell, Lantieri, Traverse, Johnson, Todd, Hurley

Staff Present: Wight, Moreau, Kaplan, Morris, Kaeding and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:30 p.m. by Traverse

Farrell made motion to move Transient item before Scuttling item, second by Todd, motion carried.

Traverse gave outline of how meeting would run, after Scuttling would take comments and questions from Commission and then Public, asked public to use raise hand sign if wanted to speak.

Introductions by Traverse of Commission members and staff for public.

Approval of Agenda

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

Marina Long-Term Transient Rates

Moreau welcomed the commission and introduced herself, introduced Kaplan, Marina Manager & Deputy Harbor Master to Harbor Commission as started last year right at same time as Covid and had not had a "normal" working season. Overall scope is Canadian border is still closed and really impacts transient boaters, 70% of July users are Canadians, due to that must look at business model and needs. Local transients would like to stay in slips longer and would like to capture more revenues and boaters to stay in Burlington longer.

Todd asked if spoke with private marina and asked for comparison between private and ours and was told not fully open and saw two or three weekends that had events so have not had a full functional year and have not filled many transient slips. Thanked for creative thinking and asked how plan to advertise and was told post on site and spoke with individual boaters and public and had a lot of interest.

Hurley asked if a number of people do this and if it will help fill the gap, asked how many people will want to participate in this type of transient boating. Kaplan said since will not be able to fill all slips during week and on all weekends the long term transients will fill those spots. Trying to capture when ramping up and winding down on capturing as much revenue as possible.

Todd offered to help get the word out as well and promote advertising this opportunity.

Lantieri asked if a number of nights are reserved at a mooring and was told yes numbers in green are for each night that stayed in 2019 and in purple was how many for mooring. Wanted to know what the maximum number would be if at close to peak and was told 44 overnight transient slips would be 1200.



Motion to approve long term rates by Farrell, second by Todd, motion carried.

Ferry Scuttling

John Paul and Jonathan Eddy spoke to the public and commission to give more information, permitting is not something this commission has any jurisdiction over.

Jonathan Eddy co-owner of Waterfront Diving Center and John Paul, CORE Engineers, will give presentation and then open for comment.

Eddy stated would like to create artificial reef, 10th vessel 11th in Lake Champlain, four within 2 mile radius of Burlington harbor. Some asked how dive center stays open in Burlington and he said ultimately because of the historic dive sites. Feels will add a great dynamic to divers and proposed location will be with other shipwrecks and will attract others from other states and will get visiting divers and economically impact economy. Engineers approved permit and state permit approved, next approval needed is from Burlington. Needed to get other two permits before approaching Burlington. Just need approval from Burlington not a permit. Sent Q&A to all prior to meeting and stated was concerned many had gotten misinformation and would like to address information.

Paul introduced himself stating he was with CORE Engineers and was in charge of major vessel operations. He went through all the previous issues that were of concern; one piece of information was the Adirondack not being historic enough, stated it was built in 1913 and then came to Vermont in 50's and is a historic vessel in that respect and now almost all of them are gone. Been ferry crossing for over 150 years in some form or another. Paul said sinking vessel is a good way to preserve he said rather than others that would be cost prohibitive and when you dive on shipwreck it is fascinating. Said impeding navigations was a concern and just not true as others are near already and had not generated any issues. Stated the biggest concern is toxins and pollutants and have to follow very stringent policies and have to abide by and is reviewed by DEC and Coast Guard before sunk. Said very big project to get ready before sinking. Last item of concern for others was Ferry Company is donating to State and paying for the sinking of the vessel and felt that some just believe cheap way to get rid of and stated not true it is very expensive to do.

Eddy said the project is about \$175,000 to do and not all the cost of the fees that the process will take and the other option is \$70,000 to just scrap the vessel. Social media and the press he felt was being very unfair. Feels an exciting project and great for the Lake. Another criticism was not enough outreach, started November 2017 was first organizational meeting and from that the next 18 months was completing applications and organizations in due diligence, was then interviewed for media stations and people were aware that this project was taking place, did have public outreach, sent to government agencies, had public notice in seven days, March 5, 2020 meeting and after meeting the mood was very positive. In addition to outreach had short questionnaire that was on historic preservation site for a year. If were in favor or opposed less than 12% were opposed. Said a legislature in southern Vermont said not enough divers and stated over 600 divers registered currently but 200+ that dive unregistered. Expect additional 200-300 divers to visit with this new vessel and would be a good draw. Asked to take into consideration the misconceptions that are out, would like to consider the proposal and opened for questions.

Dubillier spoke said familiar with lake and job to introduce the lake to others and locals and very passionate about the lake and familiar will all the ship wrecks that are currently in the lake. Believes in



cemeteries being public places and the ability to join public place and enjoy opposed to way this project is being done and how it is done. Happened by accident not intentionally, skeptical of the cost analysis as by company involved and not 3rd party, skeptical of company publicity of sharing publicly when it was not a comfortable feeling at the Police department. He was one at the meeting that was opposed. Concerned with if the cleaning process can happen adequately. Concerned with sacredness and the precedence and the reception and the monitoring process.

Kay Frances Schepp, South Burlington resident, stated she was a therapist and people go to lake for peace, how long will the ferry be safe at the bottom of the lake. Then will it be trash in the lake.

Eddy responded to Dubillier comment LCMM said 60% of vessels were scuttled, about 300 in Lake Champlain and most were scuttled and he gave several examples. The cost, skepticism is understandable but all costs are line itemized and available to the public and had several estimates from providers and the information is verifiable. In terms of location of meeting, it was selected due to location and readily available.

Paul spoke to the environmental issues and explained that oil and grease, all have to be taken out and all must be eliminated, cleaning bilge and scrubbing, Coast Guard inspects. Asbestos is issue and was taken out and those have all been removed. PCB's most common is electronic components and all have been removed from vessel and only other source found, tested lead and other and came back with minimal, well below levels. Paint that is loose must all be scraped off, will remove floor tiles and hurricane roof, removed sewage tank and others. Explained that he had been to other dive sites that are well over 100 years and still very viable.

JP McCormack, asked if other locations had been considered with better clarity and if the location is set, asked if somewhat in navigation lane leaving harbor and asked if the buoy could be lighted or more easily lit and reflective. Eddy said looked at several other locations such as Shelburne Bay, very busy and lots of activity and in the way of other boat traffic, out near Juniper Island but is really subject to prevailing winds and unsafe and further ride on a rough day. Chose location did because Apple Tree Bay provide depth range and the terrain and wind from diving perspective. In terms of quality, there are others and variation in visibility it is a good environment.

Paul said the temporary buoy that was out had a light on it and could get the light permitted or allowed if the public would like.

Todd asked what parts of water ecology was evaluated and 3 other sites were listed and asked if any reports were available on the other sites that have them. Lastly asked what communities and engagement with indigenous communities have been involved in the process.

Eddy said regarding ecology, as divers they fish and love habitat and the lake is covered with fish, anecdotally fish are attracted to vessels. From fishery point of view benefit and talked about location and they thought location was good, also spoke with others that do sonar and shows different geological features and did due diligence to look at ecology and do not know of any other long term studies, have been no issues around pollution or habitat. Todd asked if anything had scientifically been studied with any results done and Paul said part of the problem is what causes the changes and you can calculate the volume of vessel but fairly small and when rain happens it overrides anything else and you



can't get an accurate read. You would have to isolate just one factor to get anything real accurate or conclusive and that is why it has not been done.

There has been no indigenous community outreach that has currently happened and Eddy and Paul said they would be happy to welcome all.

Eddy stated that UVM does not have funding to do special studies but divers would love to help and he would also extend to others that are concerned with the lack of studies that are done.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:56 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Commission

The meeting was convened at 6:56p.m. by Traverse

Approval of Agenda

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

Public Forum (Time Certain 6:30PM)

Public Forum was opened at 6:30pm

Seeing nobody from the public, Public forum was closed at 6:30pm

Grounds Work Tracking

Traverse thanked Morris for a great Greenup Day and Morris welcomed and said it went very good.

Morris said by tracking everything it really has made things so much clearer and helped to manage the budget. Next he began a power point and began to show how he has been collecting information from staff and is working on a better system to get the information that will streamline better. Explained where expenses and job duties are spent and what duties happen during what times of the year. Showed by pie charts and broke out within all the different job functions. Showed month to month what work is done and what time of the year is more geared toward what is happening.

Lantieri asked out of how many total hours are work hours and Morris said he could pull that information and it is representative of time in work and some take time off, get seasonal staff, 500 plus hours a month and it does not include himself and is not entirely representative without himself.



Farrell said works in data in his day job and great way to keep track and asked if he saw any surprises or feedback and was told trash is insane and how much of the pie is focused on this one item, also have one full-time staff person dedicated to trash 40 hours a week.

Todd gave kudos to Morris and said maybe neighborhood cleaning crews could help having the data to back up the need.

Johnson asked if an ability to collect data to contribute with volunteers would help and Morris said it was tracked by groups signing up to contribute.

Lantieri it would be great if the new tracking system could break down by location and if that was reasonable to have as a part of the planning process.

FY22 General Fund Budgets and Directors Report

Wight stated still did not know some of the information on budget, went to BOF and few pieces learned that some items are not finalized. Some assumptions, general one for commission but not true assumptions as have not gotten final approvals. When starting presentation showed the org chart and the teams, then the fiscal changes; Park Ranger program is looking good in terms of getting in place and more on the education side, envision them do naturalist program, history major would be a great attribute for this position. Continue to make investments in electric equipment. Anticipating another 1 million from FY21 but still short changed for FY22. Nor more skeleton crews, will have all seasonal employees back working.

Gave 7 system themes; People, Wellness, Connection, Stewardship, Service, Community and Impact, with a focus on three, People, Wellness and Stewardship.

People- Community and partnerships-recognizing culture, racial equity, working with Fletcher Free Library and Burlington City Arts, Trash and connecting with Bi-POC communities.

Wellness-Enhancing recreation opportunities and programming; achieved through scholarship funding, focus on popular summer events, continuing winter equipment rentals at North Beach based on popularity during pandemic, collaboration with BCA with City Hall Park programming and coordination.

Stewardship- Protecting and preserving our environment; extensive tree planting in ROW, parks and natural areas, finalizing 311, adding pollinator plantings at Lakeview, commitment to electric first with all equipment purchasing.

Staffing Changes- Also added two new FTE's with urban parks.

Lantieri asked about Rangers position and would this be under BPRW or the same program that happened with folks in yellow shirts with younger people and was told that program was under the Police department and the Ranger program would be very different.

Todd very excited about positions and asked for racial equity clarification and Wight said Rec Specialist position and another position and want that position to build relationships with BIPOC community and going to places where can be most connected and can find interests and the position that was



previously held had started to do but then pandemic and want to work on establishing relationships first and then building programs.

Traverse asked if city wide assessment will be revenue neutral and if it will affect the PFP fund, Wight said the PFP is on the grand list and legal is trying to figure out and her take is that would be getting more. Felt they would go up but legal is looking at approved funds that were based on the grand list and if they can be increased. Traverse said general consensus was support for the PFP and such to keep increase toward BPRW capital fees based on the grand list and the approval and support of the increase.

Lantieri said a good step toward inclusion for the new Rec Coordinator is a good tool and important to think beyond one position but in the network of the goals of the position.

Wight then gave an update; Sr. Center is back open again, still have masks and spacing, Kids Week has lots of different activities going on and a scavenger hunt, had big tree planting in ROW, 230 trees in ONE, 800 native trees and bushes in conservation areas. Perkins Pier and Calahan meetings coming up, will pass on more information later. During public presentations as your role as commissioner, if you know you will have a certain question, email ahead of time so that can be prepared and will be happy to get answers. New Arborist Technician began, was in Colorado previously, filled Re Specialist position and they start in June. Lastly Calahan Park, CPS does all day activity at end of school year and asked if you would like a formal request going forward every year as they have just been doing it for many years.

Traverse only concern is that technically they are supposed to get a waiver and if complaint came it would be difficult, proposed a blanket permit and Wight said may have had one in the past, will follow up with O'Daniel.

Wight said mask/no mask is a big discussion for the summer and if receiving federal funds need to follow Vermont Forward and City is really grappling with as children are not vaccinated at this point. Would like to try to be consistent as a City as much as possible.

Todd asked about the public meeting and the possibility of getting questions in advance and what the format will be. Wight said probably not releasing anything ahead of time but if could she would send to commissioners a head of time, but felt typically that is not how it is done.

Traverse said with masks he would not want kids that are at higher risk to be excluded from programs because at risk due do masks not required. Wondered if it would make more exclusionary.

Report from Commission on Volunteer Hours

Lantieri had 5 additional hours, Todd had 4 hours extra, Farrell had 1, Johnson 6 (Garden Coordinator), Traverse had 6, Hurley 2 additional.

Commissioner's Items

Lantieri attended meeting last week became recommendation of barriers to spaces and programming on how to improve, such as seeing representation in meetings and meeting spaces, times, locations, compensation, information dissemination, registration for recreation programming information dissemination, difficult navigating City systems, laws usage using public spaces.

Recommend opportunities for parents and adults, create transportation opportunities, reframe when possible what kind of work is done and straight forward, building off and collaborating when cultural



events are happening, looking to see if fees associated can be eased and final have present and participating in City.

Todd said they would also like to be asked if they have any events coming up as a community and named an event that is coming up that is important to them. Another piece that came up was engaging another high school student and from green up day some requested they would like to see some other additions within the parks and she will mail the list to department.

Farrell said Park Foundation talk was just a continuation of past with new members, nothing new.

Johnson said that he had begun being a site coordinator at Myrtle Street gardens. People very conscious still about COVID-19.

Trusted community voices meeting was good, reminder hired 5 individuals that represent 5 communities and they have events on calendars. Lunar New Year was listed as a big event and encouraged all to be involved. Schools being a good avenue for information. Had an awesome day Saturday at Oakledge for Green up day, painted over one of the retaining walls, and would love to see murals in future.

Wight thanked the commission for being so engaged and active.

Lantieri asked about the difference between Cemetery, Parks, and PACC and Wight suggested getting together maybe once a year and that PACC is more City Council oriented and goes to City Council for approvals.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. by Traverse.