



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes
November 9, 2021
Parks and Recreation Commission**

Commission Present: Traverse, Hurley, Duke, Lantieri and Farrell

Staff Present: Wight and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:33 p.m. by Traverse

Approval of Agenda

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

Parks Funding Sources

Traverse introduced Katherine Schad, CAO, from Clerk Treasurer office, budget presentation began via PowerPoint slideshow. Schad stated she would be explaining the Parks revenue big picture and what makes up the tax rate, impact fees and would end the presentation with answering questions.

Schad explained the different types of designated monies and where they come from specifically and how they are arrived at. Some are from the General City Tax, such as the Bike Path, the Tree & Greenbelt, which is portion of the Street Tax, Parks Property and Expenses, and then dedicated taxes, which include Penny for Parks, Open Space Land Conservation and lastly Impact Fees.

Began explaining the grand list and the different rates that make up the total overall for the City. Highlighted the five that were specific to Parks and Rec department.

-Bike Path Maintenance, passed 11/2012, used for maintenance and improvement of bike path, revenue neutral rate, portion of the general city tax rate-increased tax rate by a half cent

-Tree & Greenbelt, passed 2012, a half cent dedicated portion of the streets capital tax to pay for care and maintenance

Rates capped by voters

-parks property and expenses, in charter sec. 67 of charter, rates capped by voters, City Council shall annually appropriate a reasonable amount of money, not less than two cents on each dollar, provide necessary funds for the care and improvement of park property and for the City Recreational program, and meeting any expenses of the Park and Recreation Department, looking at FY22 general fund budget

-Penny for Parks, additional tax beyond the parks property and expenses tax, rates capped by voters, City Council shall annually assess upon the property grand list.



-Open Space Land Conservation, aka LCLF, an additional tax established 11/2004 per City Council resolution, rates capped by voters, for purchase and protection of important natural areas and open space.

-Impact Fees-a bonus not budgeted on the tax rate sheet, adopted 1992, charged against new development to help offset costs of new infrastructure required by City growth, used for capital improvements. To accommodate the demands created by new growth.

Farrell asked about one of the taxes being no less than 2 cents per dollar and Schad explained have discovered that designation of parks property and expenses is essentially everything to provide , understands is less than 2 cents of what charging residents but the inflow of 1.5 mil. is much higher than the \$900,000 generated by the 1.7, actually investment is much closer to the 1.5 mil., which would exceed the 2 cent threshold.

Wight asked to be reminded of the revenue neutral rate for trees and what it means and was told these rates under revenue neutral change when a reappraisal happens, rates that are set automatically over which no discretion, some have floors but some also have ceilings. Wight said bike path was set to be a certain amount but because neutral was less.

Duke asked the funding restrictions for each of the categories, stated that some are designated and some are general and was told yes. Asked what percentage of the total budget was and Wight said about \$8 Mil. Schad said she took central facilities out of the slide presentation. Duke asked how much of the \$8 mil user revenue is and was told about \$4 an \$2 of that is from the Waterfront division, Campground and Marina. Park side is very small in what they bring in and Recreation brings in some. Wight added really pushing for future revenues to be invested in the spaces that are creating the majority of revenues to maintain them for longevity of the facilities.

Traverse asked about the bond and if it failed what would the department do in that case and the impact to the department, Wight unsure what would happen at this time but for interim still using PFP funding monies and working on projects, still have several smaller projects but not the bigger projects that need work and completion. Master plan was citizen driven and set aside \$40,000, when at the point to get full cent. Waterfront Shelter was citizen driven and got on the list and is in five-year plan.

Wight said impact fees \$150,000 for budgeting purposes and got \$20,000, but in the past it has varied from year to year, higher to lower.

Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00 PM)

Public Forum was opened at 6:09 pm

Philip Pezeshki, Killarney Drive, apologized for not responding to Wight in the past, was here to follow-up on the tentative proposed sale of the Elks Club property that might come to the City. Traverse deferred to Wight and She stated that they had spoken about it in executive session and that the Elks had a vote at their lodge and voted to have positive outlook for the City to own that part of the property, and likely will still happen for the west side of the property from the bike path. Pezeshki asked if the City had any plans for the use of the property and Wight said had a master plan but had not shown anything as it was not City property but indication would be to have some public access to property and accessibility, a meadow trail possibly but basically keeping as it is. Pezeshki said that is in line with what he and some other neighbors would like to have happen with the land. He explained he had mowed this



fall to keep in check, currently interest is in keeping it a meadow or planting butterfly attraction. Wight said the only improvements would be a kiosk and open meadow. Pezeshki said another reason for mowing was to keep the bittersweet and maples from growing out of control.

Pezeshki also asked if Wight could speak about any plans for the beach and Wight said that if the City did not own they would seek an MOU for educational access, that is just off the cuff, no major interest in gaining additional work and maintenance.

Seeing nobody from the public, Public Forum was closed at 6:19 pm

E-devices on Greenway and Greenway Speed Limits

Wight stated in 2018 and 2019 had meetings and spoke about the use of ebikes and the use on the greenway, which is a moot point now. It was determined at that meeting that the concern was more about speed than what they were on, and spoke of a speed of 15, shared use bikes currently located there are set at 10 mph max speed. Felt it was time to wrap this item up and get signage done and etiquette being an important piece of the process.

Traverse asked what the commission's role would be in terms of establishing a speed limit and if it would need to go before the City Council or would it be from the Commission. Wight said it would start with Commission and then go to City Council by resolution. If suggested speed it would be more guidance than a rule. Wight said used to be such strong commissions and thought it may have come from commissions initially, not sure. Wight was looking for commission feedback to discuss and what people think about a speed limit on the bikepath and secondly e-devices, and in the past it was not the device but rather the speed of the device. Personally uses the path and was not looking for a ban on scooters or others as she had never seen any high speeds.

Farrell felt thinking back he recalled leaning toward guidance and asked for clarification and Hurley said yes, also remembered the desire for more suggestive signage, as enforcement is virtually impossible.

Wight said had brought in a 20 mph one at one point but never finished and said in the end never did. Hurley said very interested in hearing what Local Motion had to say as they were very knowledgeable on the topic.

Jonathon Weber, Local Motion stated he recalled the past discussion that there are times and places that it is appropriate and safe to go more than 15 mph and would be unfortunate to impose based on a few disregarding rules and etiquette, also feels would be impossible to enforce, most bikes don't have speedometers, feels some real issues with having a speed limit. Etiquette is the way to go and happy to help in any way with signage and education and other organizations would be happy to help as well.

Hurley asked if something came up to revisit or was it because need to do signage, what was the reason addressing currently. Wight said mainly had done nothing and need to get something up on the path, etiquette, keep to the right, something. Weber stated he had provided a link to some signage used in other places.

Duke stated most of the time 20 is completely appropriate, when safety issue it is mainly etiquette and not speed. E-bikes that are currently on the path are maxed for 20 and can't go over that.



Lantieri agreed that signs are necessary and need to be very obvious for all and focused on the downtown area of the path, that are not common riders and don't ride as much and are not as acclimated to how the traffic and bikes all intermingle.

Traverse as a frequent user of the path agrees with others comments and would like to see signage and not hearing any need for a speed limit along the path, certain areas where etiquette signs could be more effective than others but as reopen can reengage more.

Park Field Fees

Wight showed a number of fees that need to be approved at different levels of approval. Showed the area and what type of approvals were needed. Starting with some of the easier fee updates that require commission approvals, doing fields tonight, will then move to the Arena fees and then to the Harbor fees that require Council approval and others.

Park field fees; City Hall, Battery Park, Water, recommend field use fees mainly for events would like to not increase the rate, just want back in the parks. Looking at new rates, Waterworks Park is new, FRAME and looking for general park permit fees, based on number of people and impact would increase the fee, Outdoor park permit fee, based on number of people \$100 annual fee, if over 20 refer to general park permits standards, not changing general waterfront park rental rate fees.

Hurley asked if all fees were approved if that would create a lot more revenue or is it a wash, would it be that impactful and Wight said will see more revenue under park permits, outdoor classes not sure but some revenue. It is not the amount of work, already doing so not a lot more work, just need to get a handle on what is out there.

Traverse asked about the fees for use of the bikepath and was told that is for walk/run events and when renting shelter using the bikepath also for the event. Hurley would like to see more on a case by case basis for smaller events that don't make or raise much to not exceed 10% of funds or something along those lines and Lantieri agreed with doing some type of equity consideration as well.

Duke said overall the prices were great and some flexibility to apply for a different rate, but also access where could charge more and would be totally appropriate. Wight said considered doing different rates for prime times and higher demand dates, also stated when you are over 100 people for the bikepath, if doing a small walk with 20 or smaller group would not be the type of group this would focus on but more the groups that are raising thousands of dollars with lots of people.

Traverse was concerned with the 20-plus people you need to have a permit, did not know that was needed and felt that was a low number, was concerned that the fee is penalizing the honest.

Farrell would like to have more data about the number of individuals that get a permit for 20-39 people.

Farrell made a motion to approve field use fees, second by Hurley, motion carried.

Lantieri would like to consider a waiver for some that the financial piece may be a barrier to and would like to see some considerations.

Standing Item: Report from Commission on Volunteer Hours



Hurley had 1 additional hour responding to emails and park opening, Traverse had 2 additional hours, park opening and meeting with Wight.

Director's Items

Wight mentioned BOF/CICO approved \$250,000 improvements to Kieslich Park, the good housekeeping seal of approval acknowledged \$5,000 to leverage, also thanked folks for covering shifts for Champlain Park, Sr. Holiday Dinner might be looking for volunteers, Urban Park Rangers going to BOF for approval soon, youth programs clarified masking for all indoor programming, masks required, Pomerleau Holiday event is typically all non-profits from town 300+ at the Hilton and feel it might not be the time yet to have all together and might do a flow through, trying to find different things to add and be able to do and asked for solicitation of ideas from all.

Wight asked Duke if she could look at Leddy and give some ideas about concession area, interesting space and what could it be used for and asked to just take a look at the space. Duke agreed to and was very interested.

Lantieri was curious as to what the pay would be for the Events Planner, Wight said it is currently union position, grade 15, trying to get to a 17 and needs to go to BOF, \$50-60,000 currently, if non-union and a grade 17 it would be \$56,000-\$67,000 annually.

Commissioner's Items

Traverse said connected with Madalinski on the Champlain Park and how to be of further service to the department going forward.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:22 p.m. by Traverse.