



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
Minutes  
January 11, 2022  
Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Commission Present:** Traverse, Duke, Johnson, Todd and Farrell

**Staff Present:** Wight, Kaeding, O’Daniel, Kaplan and Putzier

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

**Approval of Agenda**

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

**Open Space Burlington Report**

Traverse introduced Andy Simon and Ruby Perry, Traverse shared aerial map. Simon started with the barge canal and a punch list and then asked for questions and comments. Spoke about the barge canal as a whole and the eco system and what it needs to function better in terms of public space and in general and then the larger picture and possibilities for the site in the future.

Simon said the way configured parcels configured by yellow lines and blue is the super fund sites and then magenta is contaminated water on the site. Flood control services, storm water, soil stabilization, mediation over toxins have been going on for years, see as primary site for climate emergency to provide those types of services. Lots of work to be done at the site, the City owned site in the middle is covered with junk from previous homeless encampment and others, need cleanup for anything to proceed on the land. Need to be thorough inventory of plant and animals currently on the site. Need to replant with native species and improve access to the site.

Perry gave vision of what have seen, land has contained the toxins and EPA reports have pointed out and feels can do more. Don’t have exclusive benefits, see that create safe public access such as boardwalks, maybe research hub with UVM and others and is interest with others and a prime location for such. Could be training site for students as well as citizens, also a naturalist program and school groups. Can improve ecological studies, natural history, industrial legacy, and what the impact has had on wetland and how to do things differently. Have heard that the City is reluctant to own that property and working with many others and based on all caring what happens to that land and what happens to the Lake and storm water. Stated that ask is to find a way to support the project and asking for partners and would like to see the City as a partner and can’t do exclusively whether owned or not by the City.

Traverse said this Commission is not privy to acquisitions but more how to be managed and as a sounding board, could not necessarily be in a position to vote or take any action.



Todd stated she was a huge fan of the barge canal during the winter and the beaver wildlife, ecology and fascinated to look at as a public space and to create access. Has experienced with master planning with parks some concrete steps to follow and community input process and then another consultant phase and then propose a vision and asked what there process has been knowing a private group is proposing and what has been done so far and how do they see the public process moving forward.

Perry said they started with a petition with 500 signatures to conserve the land and in those comments a clear strong feeling that people want conserved and that land is important and not talking about a regular park, not doing the same type of study as other parks have had. Simon also stated started with whole land should be part of the whole land and not just a strip, talking about land acquisition, VT River Conservatory, VT Land Trust, VT Lake Champlain Conservancy, also talking to private land owner and was open to conserving as long as he could get asking price. Tried to get a good idea of the history of the land. Been learning about the land mainly and not speaking as explicitly as such. Also has looked into 1992 plan that was proposed to create landfill and remove all contaminates and Burlington residents rose up and ended up deciding to just leave alone. It was decided it needed care and conservation work.

Todd said framework of community benefits come and all get together to come to agreement and wondered if this group would be interested in working under this framework and have the City work with them to go through the Community development agreement. Did not know of an example in Burlington but does know it exists in other bigger City/Towns. Was also wondering how it would connect to other larger projects such as the Southern Connector or Champlain Parkway. Simon said that it was supposed to go straight through but then was found it could not happen because of contaminants.

Traverse asked as moving forward what next steps were and Perry said going to pursue an appraisal of the land and continue to educate on the land. First began with the environmental piece of the land and found a lot of interest of it being an education park to learn from.

#### **Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00 PM)**

Public Forum was opened at 6:07pm

Lev/Steve Levy, resident across the street from Callahan Park said he had been having problems with people parking and getting drunk leaving garbage. Asked to have lights turned off by 10pm. trying to resolve, did use c click fix but a gathering site for young adults playing music in cars loudly. Took a sign out last night and pranced around. Since he lives right across from the park would like to see it end. [Stevelev53@gmail.com](mailto:Stevelev53@gmail.com)

Wight said that she would check on the lights as they might be on a timer and he should call the police in case an ordinance is being broken. Even if the police can't show up they might want to document if there is a pattern. Levy said the hockey people started bringing amplified music to the rink and Traverse said they are not supposed to have amplified music in parks unless with permit.

Seeing nobody further from the public, Public Forum was closed at 6:13 pm

#### **Permits**

O'Daniel introduced herself and began her overview of her role and how she received request for inquiry on permit and then determines if department can accommodate and then finalize internally or externally. Issue three types of permits; general use, filming/photography and tabling permits. She then



gave a breakout of the permits as to how many of each and the General permits are the most with about a little less than a quarter of filming permits and very few tabling permits. Eventually the tabling permit might be combined with the filming permit. She gave a few examples of some of the specific permits that had been issued such as; Baird Block Party, low impact wedding ceremonies, school groups & Camps at various locations, community focused informational sessions, free and open to the public at Roosevelt Park, local organization tabling at Battery & City Hall Park, clothing drives at various locations and library visits to many of our parks. Some pricing coming up will be the tiered permit pricing; 20-39 people, \$25, 40-59 people, \$50, 60-79 people, \$75 and 80-99 people, \$100 and also Programs in the Parks initiative, which is generally smaller but want to capture who is using the parks and to get people into the park, just want to know who is using and how using the park and get outreach to others, \$100 fee annually.

Todd asked in what ways reaching other populations that are more diverse to let them know what is happening in the parks and how the permitting works and was told that O'Daniel is currently working with diverse populations in the garden program and word of mouth as well as on the website and not all done currently but in the works.

Duke asked in the pie chart how many permits that represented and was told by permit and could get for the minutes, felt around 120 total for the year. Also asked how many gatherings are actually getting permits and was told she did not have a true feed on and would in the future with the new Park Rangers coming on board.

Traverse asked if any thought on making a list of approved permits more available, for example if a resident sees a person using amplified music in a park, could they look up to see if they had a permit. O'Daniel said it is possible to make public but to keep in mind some privacy to make sure not all information is public on the actual individuals.

Todd asked about the programs in the parks piece and that sometimes they don't know about or where to go to get that information and requested that communities are asked what they would like to see in the parks and O'Daniel asked for contact and was told Phet.

### **Parking Fees**

Kaeding stated that parking fees have not been adjusted in many years, want to up a bit, more for main holidays, to add more days to use holiday prices. N Beach will be the one using the majority of the fees as Perkins will have kiosks as do others. Mainly daily pass and student pass, holiday pass.

Wight said submitted memo and increase and last night at BOF, CAO indicated that the city is going to look back at department 2019 fees and do a 3% increase. Said today should be more of a discussion and come back in February to take action after budget discussions with the City. Discussed how and what specifics to raise. All information for low income is on our website for those that might not be able to afford. Parking falls into enterprise part of service sustainability strategy as a reminder that if walking or biking free. Kaeding said not a lot of season passes sold after July 1<sup>st</sup>, mainly daily passes.

Traverse explained that some of the fees are within the purview of commission and some are not, how can mix and match to make some of the expectations of the department and most are attainable and as talk about increases always keep in back of mind those that may need a waiver or decrease.



Farrell said he agreed to wait to make any final decisions and Wight added it would be good to get feedback from commission on parking as an area to generate more revenue. At one point the commission had given permission to look at collecting at Leddy again.

Duke stated it had been a while since collected at Leddy, felt the fee is low currently to get a pass and agree to take time to do business analysis and use money to pay for parks and have availability to use low income passes.

O'Daniel stated do issue low income passes and they connect with her to get.

Todd would like to see more increase in parking fees, and a bigger non-resident fee, also would like to have more accessible and can also be charging for them as well and prioritizing and would like to see BHS parking lot become a revenue parking generator. Wight said the school is open to BPRW charging and using the parking area but it is a matter of figuring out what the best way to do, with some type of park mobile or kiosk.

Traverse asked if any data on kiosk versus a parking system and Wight said not kiosk at Perkins at one point during construction had park mobile but do know, not really working would be able to see if kiosk comes in time, the difference with park mobile and kiosk. Kaeding said Oakledge might be a viable option to get that data.

#### **City Bond Update**

Wight said that the bond failed in December came back last night with \$25 m. bond feeling people are interested, concerned about school bond and what else was on for Memorial. Capital committee got down with priority to fire trucks, communication system, some for memorial and additional funds, 3 miles of sidewalk and road 1/3, money set aside \$5 m. for matching infrastructure grants, \$4.5 m. improvements to city buildings, \$2-\$3M. Parks Drudging, water facilities at gardens, trying to focus on revenue producing areas. January 24<sup>th</sup> is when the City Council will need to determine if a bond will go on in March, if not and is the following March then no money for any capital funding.

Traverse said very concerned about the timing and not sure what the bonding is and lack of information and is feeling like short time frame to get information out. Todd agreed that the clearer the message from the City about exactly how the money will be spent, the better the chance for it passing. Messaging and how the money will be spent is going to be very crucial.

#### **BPRW Dedicated Funds**

Wight shared a list of the numbers that pertain to the Parks department and how not all were fully funded in FY22 and determination was not fully funded due to tax increase. Wight showed Greenbelt, get ½ cent in previous years if fully funded \$280,000, PFP up to a cent and historically .05 if correct anticipate \$561,000, mainly park projects that are done and impact fees also play large amount and in FY21 received \$19,000 and to date received 0 money. Will need impact fees to get back to full level of projects need impact fees. Open Space/Conservation Legacy not historically fully funded, can be funded up to a penny but has been slightly half a penny if fully funded significant amount of money, \$560,380, bike path maintenance fund ½ cent would be \$280,690.

Farrell asked what stirred this to fully fund the accounts and would they be fully funded and Wight said this commission asked for full funding of PFP and comment was made to have fully funded and at BOF



meeting when showing FY23 shows fully funding all the various funds. Said as a Commission you may choose to request to have fully funded.

Traverse said that he was at the meeting and was a commitment to fully fund and was not fully funded previously due to COVID and his expectation is to keep it fully funded or he would be happy to advocate for.

**Standing Item:**

**Report from Commission on Volunteer Hours**

Farrell had 1 additional hour, Johnson had 1 additional hour and Traverse had 2 additional hours.

**Report on PACC Dog Force**

Duke said the committee has not met yet.

**Report on Parks Foundation**

Todd asked if inclusion on the Foundation Board was part of inclusion, diversity and Farrell said that has been a big part of the process and felt it was undersold previously.

**Director's Items**

Wight said the Parks Foundation took on the Redstone Cottage as a fundraising campaign, working with housing conservation board, few pieces working on, applying for \$62,000, out to bid in February. Wight told the commission what fees they are responsible for approvals; Leddy Arena Rental fee, Mooring fees and looks for feedback on others.

Wight commended Rogers for putting on Pomerleau Party, Sr. Party, delivering meals and many others that helped him out. Rec Facilities hired new admin person at Leddy, Scott, great skating show in December, The Gift, Conservation team focusing on winter trails, Cemetery Commission is looking at green burials, meeting Thursday and the link is on City Calendar, Park Facilities fixed railing at North Shore and found lots of interesting documents while cleaning out old documents, found documents stating BPRW had responsibility for the railing. Grounds team 127 clean up, planning team kicking off Leddy Park Comprehensive Plan, one step ahead as had public meetings already, Waterfront has new software coming for campground and waterfront.

Todd said she really enjoyed the Perkins Pier process and great to see team and consultants paint the picture.

**Commissioner's Items**

None

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 7:30pm