



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes
December 13, 2022
Parks and Recreation Commission**

Commission Present: Duke, Hurley, Keech, Johnson and Wiseberg

Staff Present: Cahill, Moreau, Kaeding, Preston, Ramono and Putzier

Public Present: Zoe Richards (Conservation Board Chair) and ECHO

The meeting was convened at 5:34 p.m. by Duke

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Keech and remove item IV. PFP Community Requests to January meeting, second by Wiseberg, motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda by Johnson, second by Wiseberg, motion carried.

Commission discussed briefly the proposed event blanket permit and would like to have the department update a few times a year on the upcoming events.

ECHO Update on Creemee Stand

Kelcey, sales and David and Charlie Smith, spoke of the mobile food truck trailer, had successful season, saw ECHO guests, wedding clients wanted to add on, a lot of school and camp groups. When first opened focused on customer behaviors, swapped order and pickup windows, added extra line stanchions to help with customer flow, reported on revenues, very good, increasing refrigerated storage to help with delivery capacity and better understanding of the flow of the season.

Wiseberg asked what other items might be added and was told some gluten free and non-dairy and vegan choices as well as adding some beverages. Wight explained that there was not a timeline for when the license would end and thanked the group for coming in to report out on the season.

Keech asked if the creemee stand was a significant addition of revenue to the souvenir shop and was told yes, has been a significant addition.

Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00 PM)

Nobody came forward to speak at the public forum.

Legacy Fund Adaptation

Dan Cahill and Zoe Richards introduced themselves. Cahill said this was a follow-up to the last month's meeting, increased funding in conservation fund, presenting and seeking as an item to approve and move forward to adapt. Prior funding was \$190,122 and as of FY23 funding will be \$561,000.

Richards stated went back to what the program was for and was written in 2004, did update in 2014 but the founding document is still extremely relevant and wanted to highlight what it is that is needed to do



to continue in perpetuity that would look out for purchase and long-term spaces. From this created Legacy Fund, questions went before the voters, two separate votes; one was to decide if wanted to have this and that was specifically a yes or no and then a vote on the specifics of how to do and what it could be used to fund. The fund specifically covers Land Stewardship, Acquisition Planning and Conservation Education.

Cahill spoke to the purchase and protection piece of the program. Spoke of how to build in to the acquisition of the land to cover all aspects. On protection side, 30% of the funding goes to the Land Steward position and covers overall management of the lands, which include forest regeneration, habitat protection and monitoring. Feels enhancing and climate solutions. About \$3.2 in funding and of that \$2.2 to acquisitions and \$969.8 to stewardship.

Richards, stated last year passed nature based climate solutions addendum to open space plan and will be re-written in 2025. Explained this is a way of valuing clean water, heat, clean air and must value wetlands and all, and stated that all are real climate issues and eco systems are very important.

Cahill spoke to an implementation plan that is divided into goals, strategies and actions. The document gives criteria of how to disperse and administered, speaks of joint meeting of BPRW Commission and Conservation Board and priorities for the climate adaptation fund set and approved by both bodies in May, June – September have outreach and education about the fund and upcoming priorities, October – December applications open, December – January internal project review an refinement, January open space subcommittee meeting – project applications reviewed and recommendation made to BPRW Commission and Conservation Board, February BPRW Commission and Conservation Board approve and recommend project slate to City Council and Mayor, March City Council approval and April funds disbursed to approved projects.

Richards stated that Nature based encourages keeping trees and not cutting to help and 1/3 should be nature based and should be 20% of portfolio and stated ahead of the White House and its report that was just put out.

Cahill stated that both commissions/boards were given scenario as recommendation of 30% stewardship which is the current, in past was \$57,000 versus what would be available in the current fiscal year which is 30% stewardship at \$168,300, and 30% acquisition and planning at \$168,300 and 40% NBS Projects at \$224,400....Cahill stated that the Conservation Board felt strongly about going with the scenario of doing 30 % Stewardship, 40% Acquisition and Planning and 30% NBS (nature based strategies) Projects.

Keech said he understands and said he felt does not feel developing is part of and felt acquisition is the key and no matter what work is going to equate over time and limited land will be available. Feels far more needs to go into acquisitions. Asked what the projection for growth is for stewardship, and asked what it would be used for.

Richards said agrees with but important to remember in we are in an urban context, and by doing nothing to help with trails is harmful and won't help make sure have in perpetuity and watches land that is already possessed is not kept conserved.



Duke said the NY Times has an interactive map to look at per capita impact on climate change and an argument can be made, Charlotte high per capita carbon impact, if you look regionally should take 200,000 people from Charlotte and put them in Cambrian Rise and help Charlotte carbon impact. In the end need to focus on protecting what have, not buying the most land possible is the most important way to go. Felt for education, management can have a bigger impact and feels a good direction for the program to go in. Felt stewardship is likely the bigger need at this point.

Richards said it is more important where the ecological land is located and gave an example of the project at Champlain School and growing trees, growing nursery, clippings from about 500 trees and native nursery stock.

Cahill stated that the stewardship is very dependent of the acquisitions.

Keech asked how the 30 and 40% debate was explained and if it was specific projects or acquisitions and costs. Cahill asked how got to \$500,000 balance and stated it varied differently over the years and felt City was in a place where have a backlog of items to get done, the first 40% projections was a review that was put forward and felt it should be equal or less and wanted to be more incremental. Wanted to see how it was going and look at the matrix and measurable outcomes to disperse.

Hurley said felt a lot of work had been done and trusts the process and the staff and percentages can be hashed out and supports.

Johnson agreed with Hurley and appreciated questions as well as the decades of work that have gone into the process.

Motion to change the Conservation Legacy Fund from the current 30% stewardship, 70% acquisition allocation to 30% stewardship, 40% acquisition and 30% NBS work allocation as a measure to be reevaluated annually, by Wiseberg, second by Johnson, motion carried.

Urban Park Rangers

Wight welcomed Rangers and Waterfront Team and said when all supported bringing Rangers on board that is how got support and felt that would be dealing with dogs off leash, fires on the beach and the like. Program started in May and can't say enough about the right people in the position. Andrew and Neal are the right Rangers and the ones that have really made this program.

Neal Preston introduced himself and stated how much he loves his job, regardless of how different the actual job is from what the initial job was introduced to be. He said it is probably the most hardest and difficult job within the Parks system. Stated spent 6 hours moving encampments. Said had an amazing team of seasonal Rangers over the summer. Romano said he was in parks since High School and a college grad, graduated last year and loves to focus on education.

Preston said essentially felt would be lots of community engagement, such as kids programs and guided tours as well as projects within parks and patrolling parks. Preston gave some examples of the ways in which he and Romano are in the community building relationships and breaking down fears and phobias and helping to build bridges of understanding and communication with all individuals within homes and outside of homes.



Moreau stated that when all other options are used the only other safe place to go is in the Parks and the Rangers have spent a lot of time building relationships and helping with understanding, compassion and to help them find a better situation on a case by case situation. Not an easy solution as to where to tell people they can go.

Moreau also stated they have still not had adequate training and protection, learning as they go and instead of retreating moved forward, learning process and don't have a clear answer as of yet but are being honest as to what is being seen within the City.

Keech asked if they had any sense of how many people are homeless and was told about 60 unhoused, has not witnessed any since July, which was a mother with 3 children. Typically couples and people struggling with drugs and mental health, along with those that can't be housed. Preston said largely when approached they operate with smiles and human dignity. Felt this process will continue moving forward and struggling at the national level why it would be expected that it will decrease.

Moreau spoke about the direction she would like to head, proposal for additional rangers and support, working closely with BPD, municipal tickets and more community outreach and tourist engagement. Anticipate this won't go away and requested 6 additional rangers, increase seasonal staff budget. Feel important and necessary work and takes a high amount of networking and resources. Would like to elevate the position that Preston is currently in and the level of connectivity that is being done.

Keech asked what happens to the belongings that are packed up and Preston said individual gets a note of belongings and where they are and they can come and get them, they are stored and located at North Beach in a trailer and kept safe until claimed and picked up.

Duke thanked the Rangers and said the way that Preston talks about it and conveying the humanity and stated that all did a great job speaking at the PAAC meeting and helped others to understand what is happening and what the City is going through. Totally supports adding to the program and continuing the conversation and asked how she could help in supporting the proposal of increasing more staff and training as well as equipment.

Romano said some winter engagement and events would include Urban Ranger community day at Leddy Arena January 14, Teach cross country skiing basics for recreation at Battery Park, cross country ski tours with the Rangers, pop up snowperson contests on the first snow day of the year CHP, also enrolled in Camels Hump Challenge.

Hurley thanked the Rangers and would love to have more people hear and see about them and appreciates all that they have done.

Motion to write a letter in support of expanding, strengthening and support the work of the Park Rangers and the increase in staffing and training and education by Wiseberg, second by Keech, motion carried.

Request for Waterfront Advisory Group Representative

Wight said that Act 250 stated this committee meets twice a month and has given the group the authority to go over how events have gone for the past year and review requests for events for the coming year, includes individuals from the neighborhood, Bailey the Events Coordinator, a producer,



BPRW staff, Fire, Police and a representative from the Parks Commission, not a big commitment but need a representative. Wiseberg said that he would like to be the representative for the Parks Commission.

Standing Item:

Report from Commission on Volunteer Hours

Keach had an additional hour, Wiseberg had an additional hour, Duke had an additional 3 hours

Report on PACC Dog Force

Duke stated she missed the last meeting, Wight said that Jake stepped down and Bria is on and a bit more traction. An idea came out of meeting for outreach and funding, if task force pushed getting dogs licensed 50% will go to task force if an increase is seen.

Report on Parks Foundation

Wight said looking at Frame in discussion on it, BPRW is going to them around a campaign around playgrounds and have small group and how they directly support Burlingtonians and will go back with formal request to take on fundraising around them to make accessible.

Director's Items

Wight said removing Leddy Municipal Arena out of ordinance as it was out of date and were successful in getting approved, also updated cemetery perpetual care language and got approval, took over ONE Event center and oversee for Champlain Housing Trust and started partnership with BCA to get more events covered for space, the Banner program is BPRW responsibility and working on how to move forward with the program and will be using similar permitting process with OpenGov with a higher fee so that don't lose money. Greenbelt is fully funded and Traverse discovered that was not fully funded and the CAO thought the same would go for Greenbelt/Street Tax and is not fully funded and readjusting what can do within that budget. Outdoor grant beginning to look at what can do, Catamount giving ski's and boots and will help with programming and City efficiency is trying to keep at level funding and sharing winter trailer. Cain overlook will be getting repairs and have granite pavers, new benches and repair the canon, lastly greenway mural is very nice and if you step back and look at you see other items within the mural.

Commissioner's Items

No Commissioners items.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Duke at 8:02 pm.