MONTHLY PARKS COMMISSION UPDATE – NOVEMBER, 2021

STORIES

A resident just called only to tell us what a phenomenal job we do in our parks – he commended specific recent projects (Oakledge, City Hall Park) as well as our trees and flowers, he could not say enough good things about the work we all do to keep Burlington beautiful and livable…what a great call to get on a dreary Monday afternoon – keep up the GREAT work, everyone!

Hello Erin -

This is to give a resounding note of appreciation for Brendan Kaplan, who is doing an excellent job as the Burlington Marina Manager.

Brendan is an excellent communicator. He is clear in his communications, whether in person or by phone or email. He follows up on issues promptly and thoroughly. He is also an excellent leader as is evident by the good performance this year of the dockhands and their high morale.

His near-constant presence at the Boathouse, especially during the disruption of the rail crossing construction, and his calm, intelligent demeanor have helped make this season at the marina very pleasantly functional for slip holders such as ourselves, and for tourists.

With appreciation -

J. Ladd

DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND NOTABLE STAFFING DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST REPORT?

- Melissa Cate, Gary Rogers and Joanne Putzier attended the NRPA National Conference
- Gene Aube, Michael Donnachie and Derreck Eckhardt attended the New England ISA Conference
- Kim Bleakely attended a 3 day Leadership workshop with Panurgy
- Opened our first permanent disc golf course in Burlington at Schifilliti Park on Thursday October 21
- Celebration of Kieslich Park on Friday, October 29
- November Work Anniversaries – Jen Cotton (8 years), Dorjee Tsering (8 years), Paul Morris (5 years), Joanne Putzier (21 years with BPRW), Gary Rogers (24 years), Jeff Shedd (21 years), Pema Tsewang (4 years) and Janira Cartagena-Aponte (3 years)

COVID-19

We are instituting a masks required for all youth indoor programs for all in attendance starting Monday November 8th. Masks continue to be recommended for adults.
Major upcoming events: [http://enjoyburlington.com/events/](http://enjoyburlington.com/events/)

- **Senior Holiday Dinner** – December 16 @ Miller Community Center
- **The GIFT Ice Performance** – December 18 @ Leddy Ice Arena
- **City-wide events** - [https://loveburlington.org/events](https://loveburlington.org/events)

**Recreation Division Update**

- Recreation staff are busy implementing winter programs and planning for winter events.
- We have finalized our indoor Covid-19 policies for this winter season. Our policy for youth will mirror those of the Burlington School District. Youth programming in all facilities will require all participants, coaches, officials and spectators to be masked.
- BSD is not permitting any adult programs to take place in their facilities this Fall-Winter. This decision affects several of our popular adult sports programs.
- We are strongly recommending masking for adult indoor athletics programs and are allowing team captains in BPRW led adult sports programs to make recommendations on masking requirements for their respective leagues.

**Leddy Arena Programs**

- **Freestyle Ice (on-going until May):** Meant for practice/instruction with a coach. Mornings Monday-Friday
- **Adult Skating Clinics (on-going until May):** Tuesday & Wednesday Mornings. Figures Clinic/Advanced Skating
- **Public Skate (on-going until May):** Drop-in only. Monday-Thursdays 9:00am-10:30am
- **Stick and Puck (on-going until May):** Drop-in only. M/T/TH 10:45am-12:15pm
- **Lessons (beginning Saturday 9/18 12-week sessions)**
  - Itty Bitty Lessons | Ages 3-5 | Saturday @ 10:45am-11:30am
  - Itty Bitty Lessons | Ages 3-5 | Sundays @ 1:15pm-2:00pm
  - Lessons Level 1-6 | Ages 5-14 | Saturdays @ 11:30am-12:30pm
  - Lessons Level 1-6 | Ages 5-14 | Sundays @ 2:00pm-3:00pm
  - Lessons Level 1-6 | Ages 5-14 | Mondays @ 3:45pm-4:45pm
  - Super Sk8 | Ages 7-16 | Sundays @ 3:15pm-4:15pm
  - Adult Group Skating | Ages 16+ | Saturdays @ 12:45pm-1:45pm

**Miller/CORE Programs**

- Fall Programs taking place at the Miller Community & Recreation Center or the ONE Community Center included:
  - American Sign Language
  - Ethiopian Cooking with Mulu Tewelde
  - Beginning and Intermediate Line Dancing
  - Medicare Made Clear
  - North End Yoga
  - Yoga for Adults
  - Fundamentals of Salsa
  - Virtual Fitness Class
  - Women’s Self Defense
  - Out & About Trips to VINS, the Rokeby Museum, and an Ethan Allen Cruise.
  - Learn to Ride workshop at the Leddy Arena Parking area in partnership with Local Motion
We offered AARP & Fit Lot-Fitness classes at the AARP Fit Lot located at the Miller Community & Recreation Center. The Fit Lot classes are at no charge to participants due to a grant that the department received in order to have the Fit Lot installed and to offer classes at no additional charge to participants when attending a Fit Lot class. Our Fitness instructor is an instructor from the YMCA.

CORE Adult Center
- The Core Adult Center has been providing meals and programming on the second floor of the ONECC since July. All Core Adult center activities are online and available for community members to enroll. The Core Adult Center used raised garden beds for gardening this summer/fall season. The participants harvested produce and used the produce to make salads, salsa, and other tasty dishes.
- Offerings at the CORE Adult Center for this fall/winter include:
  - Chair Yoga, Fundamentals of Salsa, Bone Builders, International Cooking and Cooking with Mulu, Acrylics, Reminiscing, Book Club, Armchair visits to Hawaii and the Grand Canyon, Bingo, Nature Crafts, Seed Saving, Preserving Fresh Garden Herbs, and social hour each day.
- Participants attended SEVEN trips this October to destinations throughout Vermont

Events
- The Recreation, Facilities, Grounds & Waterfront Teams all worked together to provide fun and safe in-person Halloween events in October
  - The Halloween Bike Ride was a wet and wild one and was held on Sunday, October 31st at City Hall Park. We had a few dozen costumed riders brave the rain and come with decorated bikes
  - Halloween Howl Hayrides were a big success on Saturday, October 23rd at North Beach Campground.
  - We provided haunted forest hayrides to 35-40 guests in three wagons every half hour between 2:00 & 6:00pm. Over 300 people participated in the event.
  - The Pomerleau Holiday Party is scheduled for Sunday, December 12th
  - Senior Holiday Dinner will take place on Thursday, December 16th.
  - Recreation Events Planner, Emma Allen, has resigned and accepted a position working in the events field for a private sector company based in Winooski. We will be posting for this open position later this month.
Athletics

- NFL Flag Football was a big success this autumn with six teams in three age divisions competing in games th is September and October. We are only the third town/city in VT (Hartford and Stowe are the other two) to offer a NFL Flag Football league.

- Other successful fall programs included: Itty Bitty Soccer, Itty Bitty Disc Golf, Maven After-School Skate, Talent After-School Skate and Field Hockey Clinic.

- BPRW Youth Basketball begins on December 4th. We are utilizing the Burlington Boys & Girls Club, Champlain School, Hunt School, Flynn Elementary, CP Smith & IAA for games and practices.

- BPRW is set to host the largest grade 5-6 youth recreation league basketball tourney in Northern VT on February 11 & 12. We expect over 20 teams to participate at Hunt School & Miller Center.

- Our Melanie Davidian Women’s Basketball League will be starting up on Sunday, November 21st.

Recreation Facilities Division Update

Leddy Arena

- Leddy staff and skaters bid a sad farewell to our Customer Service Associate, Devin Jones, who resigned effective October 19 to move to Indiana where her fiancé plays minor league hockey. Devin brought an incredible level of professionalism, perfectionism and customer service not only to Leddy but to the entire Department and she will be sorely missed. We plan to post her position at our earliest convenience in order to have it filled before the hockey season reaches its busiest next month. In the meantime, thank you to Tess Weafer, our Leddy-based Recreation Specialist who is helping to keep the arena running in Devin’s absence.

- Leddy staff welcomes Dustin Dupont to the Leddy maintenance staff beginning November 10. Dustin is a shared employee with the Parks Facilities Division where he has worked since August. Dustin joins Bob Lapointe, Stan Bajuk and Josh Cushing who keep the arena running seven days a week for up to 18 hours a day in the height of our season.

- Lumberjacks junior hockey is well underway at Leddy with five games scheduled in November. BAHA youth hockey games began October 23 and high school hockey kicks off its season beginning November 29. Leddy Arena is home ice to Colchester and Burlington Boys hockey teams as well as the Burlington/Colchester Girls combined team.

- Itty Bitty Public skating begins Monday, November 1 and will take place through March on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30am. Itty Bitty Public Skating is a drop-in program for parents/caregivers and their children. While not a formal lesson, a skating instructor is on the ice to lead games and to familiarize children with skating - and falling down! Kids and adults are even permitted on the ice in boots if they are not yet ready for skates.
Birthday parties on ice return to Leddy Arena this season, with six parties already scheduled in November. The studio rink is a great facility to host birthday parties, family skates, corporate team building events, school and camp groups, etc.

**Miller Center**

- Darlene Loyer, Customer Service Associate at the Miller Center, is on extended leave beginning October 18. Thanks to Mellisa Cain, our part time building supervisor, who will be helping to cover Darlene’s absence at the front desk.
- Department of Health Covid-19 booster clinics are ongoing in the Miller gym on Wednesdays from 9am-2pm through at least the end of the year.
- Adult programs are taking off at the Miller Center with the arrival of cooler weather. Adult programming includes three levels of drop-in pickleball, line dancing, ASL, yoga, women’s self defense, salsa dancing, drop-in table tennis, family pie making, free walking program, and women’s basketball league, as well as private pickleball, dodgeball and men’s basketball groups.
- In addition to our regular user groups, other groups and programs at Miller this month include BSD’s Horizons program, Burlington Kids Afterschool program leaders, BSD Support Services team, Hunt Middle School Day of the Dead celebration, North Burlington Little League banquet, BPRW November vacation week camp and BPRW Soccer Sparks program.

**CORE**

- BPRW and BSD have finalized MOUs for CORE and the Miller Center to serve as emergency evacuation sites for Sustainability Academy (CORE), Hunt Middle School, CP Smith School and Horizons Program (Miller Center).
- November user groups and programs include City Lake Semester, Very Merry Theatre, Family Room/Parent University language classes, AALV teen program, Tibetan music group, AALV/Health Department booster clinics, karate classes, Ward 2/3 NPA, Ethiopian Cooking with Mulu, and Burlington GOP.
- The Request for Proposals for sublease of Room 219 (former VT Hindu Temple) at the CORE was issued on September 17, and two proposals were submitted by local organizations. A BPRW committee has scored the proposals and will be making a recommendation to the Director to move forward with a sub-lease to the top scoring proposal.
- Champlain Housing Trust has continued its closure of the event space during the latest spike in Covid cases. We are getting requests to use the event space which we cannot accommodate and are still searching for staff to work there once the event space is reopened.

**Park Division Update**

**Park Administration**

- Close down procedures for marina, athletic fields, tennis courts, gardens and seasonal buildings in full gear.
• Working on various items for the VueWorks platform, testing and training elements for the parks teams.
• Working with capital committee to further the capital report and comprehensive building needs and project listings for the December 6th bond vote.
• Continuing progress on integration of park GIS/data for asset management
• Finalizing job description for addition to the Central Facilities Team and the seasonal fountains.
• Partnered with several department for the Sears Lane encampment processing.

Conservation Program

• In partnership with Planning and our contractors, Timber and Stone - Phase 1 of Arms Forest trail improvements complete. Video displaying the work with interviews with the trail builders came out with the fall Conservation Newsletter.
• In partnership with Planning Team, development and implementation of a native pollinator seed mix for southern section of bike path work at Oakledge
• Convening of a committee to plan the 50th anniversary celebration for BACG (Burlington Area Community Gardens). The committee will meet monthly starting in November building toward a harvest festival in fall 2022. We welcome a Park Commissioner to join the committee if there is any interest.
• Conservation Team worked with Burlington City and Lake Semester students at Kieslich Park.
• Fall Plantings Completed - 150 trees, and several hundred native perennials being planted. Trees and shrub sites for fall 2021 - Champlain Elementary School, Oakledge Park, Schmanska Steps, New Bike Path rain garden near Texaco Beach, Ethan Allen Park, 311 North Ave

Cemetery Program

• We held a burial 10/6 at Greenmount to inter the remains of participants in the Anatomical Gift Program at UVM. All told the remains of about 50 people were interred that day.
• There were 7 additional burials in the month of October at Lakeview.
• We are in the process of installing 2 new mausoleums and sold 4 lots in the last month.
• Office staffer Holli Bushnell collaborated with Abby Kolosovski from FFL and Thea Lewis from Queen City Ghostwalk to hold an evening of spooky storytelling on 10/28. About a dozen people attended, shared stories, and drank hot apple cider. A good time was had by all.
• Lewis has also been giving 2 separate tours at Lakeview (Fright by Flashlight as well as her general Lakeview tour), most of which were completely sold out. Lewis provides the cemetery with a percentage of her sales as a use fee for the space.
Central Facilities Program

- Annual gas cert. completed by Bruce Campbell
- Fourth Year Electrical class started by Ryan Alger
- CPR and First Aid Certified for specialist and HVAC Tech
- Leadership Institute completed by Kim Bleakely
- Sangay updating custodial plan for duties by building.
- Computer upgrades and workstations initiated via IT.
- Planning for new projects including security camera’s for BPD, evidence room BPD, water mitigation BCA basement, historical door upgrades at City Hall.
- Successful shut down of City Hall Fountain on Oct. 12.
- Salt shed rebuild nearly complete at 645 Pine.

Park Facilities Program

- Shut down and winterization of irrigation and seasonal facilities and amenities
- Thermostats and heating systems fired up and operating. Small adjustments needed
- Completed the testing and winterization of all fire suppression systems.
- Conducted job safety task analysis for working with docks and moorings as part of our fall close out with the safety manager Nichole Blow.
- Supported the Burlington City Marathon and the Halloween Howl at North Beach.

Trees and Greenways Program

- Continued street tree pruning in New North End
- Contributed to Sears Lane Clean-Up
- Fertilized all trees planted in the last three years
- Completed fall tree planting throughout the City, ~190 trees bringing the annual total up to 430+.
- Crew completed CPR/First Aid training
- Planted 6 new trees in Schmanska Park
- Responded to various see click fix and other work requests.

Grounds Maintenance Program

- Assisted the Cemetery Program with the mowing and trimming of Greenmount and Elmwood Cemeteries
- Distributed and spread 200 yards of safety surfacing to City playgrounds
- Conducted mowing at our landfills on behalf of Water Resources which is done 1x per year.
- 48 Volunteer hours assisted with trash pickup and other tasks
- Contributed to Sears Lane encampment clean up

Grounds Crew Work stats:

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trash Removal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mowing Operations</td>
<td>203</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fertilizing &amp; Seeding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletic Field Maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport of Materials/Equip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park Assets Maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment Repair/Maint.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleaning Workspace/Equip.</td>
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<td>Playground Maintenance</td>
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<td>Road/Lot Maintenance</td>
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<td>Inspections</td>
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<td>Fabrication</td>
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<td>Cross-Division Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encampment Removal</td>
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<td>Admin.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>448</strong></td>
</tr>
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Planning Division Update

- Projects Progressing
  - Bike Path Realignment:
    - College to King work- progressing along the Greenway portion of the project now
    - King to Maple Project ongoing – work along the Greenway wrapped up until next Spring – this section of the Greenway will be reopened until Spring when additional work at the intersections of King and Maple (rail-related) might necessitate another period of temporary closure/detour on Battery

New fitness station at Starr Farm Park just off the Greenway
Lavalleys Lane shift coordination continuing with VTrans – waiting on the State to complete the contracting process before this work begins this season.

• Bike Path @Oakledge: Project progressing with work advancing at the Flynn Avenue Beach Access (check out the linked video showing the evolution of the stairs and ramp at Oakledge).

• Calahan Park Master Plan: met with students from BHS’ Cities and Lakes program on feedback on the plan to date; working on next steps towards the final plan and final public meeting.

• North Beach Pull-Through Design: Design aimed for wrap up in November.

• Oakledge for all: Grant agreement should be in-hand in January 2022 for spring bidding.

• Perkins Pier Siting Study: Harbor Capacity Study draft is in-hand for review and we are aiming to wrap up this project in late fall; one final public meeting will be scheduled soon.

• Schifilliti Park Softball conversion: in motion!

• Battery Park: UVM Spatial completed a drone flight to collect information about the park ahead of a Comprehensive Planning process in FY23

Projects starting soon

• Roosevelt Park Comprehensive Plan – Surveyor selected to complete the first necessary assessment step

• Leddy Park Pause Place

Projects supporting other divisions/departments: (abbreviated)

• 311 Stone House
• Chief Greylock
• Perkins Pier Moorings
• Playground Equipment and Compliance
• Survivors of St. Joseph Orphanage Project
• Halloween Bike Ride!

Waterfront Division Update

Marinas & Harbor

• The marina closed for the season on October 15th. Work has commenced to store our docking systems for the winter – a process that will take us to December.

• The City has signed off on a permit amendment request from LCT to add 8 fingers to their docking plan. The BPRW team reviewed this request, both on paper and walked the site, and determined it did not negatively impact harbor operations.
We are actively working with Vermont Adaptive to apply for ARPA funds for the Perkins Pier project. Projects are fully funded, with no local match, with the potential for rewards between $500k and $10m. Applications are due at the end of January.

Now that we are in the off-season, the mooring upgrade project at Perkins Pier can commence. This project will upgrade the 23 seasonal moorings from a chain and anchor system to a more robust rubber-rhodes Hazelett system. This will be safer for our boaters, as well as easier for us to maintain. With our current chain system, it would wear out the shackles and boats would break free. This is a much needed and safer replacement system.

The Marina Manager will assess our current marina rates as we move towards our off-season, in order to propose a new and revised rate structure for our marina for the 2022 boating season.

The Marina Manager is working in conjunction with DPW this winter to streamline the waterfront parking systems. It is our goal to have active parking enforcement in all of our paid lots, unified through Parkmobile throughout all sites.

The marinas will be exploring new software for the 2022 season, as we look to move away from our current system. We aim to align ourselves with the growing industry of online reservations at our marinas.

**Campground & Beaches**

The campground closed for the season on October 15th. It was great to re-open after a year closed, and enjoyed a busy season. We felt the impacts of being closed for a year, especially in handling campers who were sent here from various local agencies who mistakenly still thought we were a low-barrier shelter this year. We found significant holes in our social services in Burlington, and often were left unsupported on the weekends in difficult situations. (Example – non-paying customers who refuse to leave, intoxicated and violent, threatening young staff and families of campers). We need to explore deeper how we can be supported as we have now transitioned back to a family campground.

We will be researching new campground software to replace our current, inefficient system, with the goal of having a new system in place prior to the start of next season. Both IT and CT will be involved in this decision.

North Beach will be releasing the Beach Concession RFP in the next several weeks. The RFP is for food services down at the Beach House at North Beach.

The North Beach Manager will be overseeing the Urban Park Ranger Program, and will dedicated significant time this off-season to the creation and start of this program.

**Events**

Planning for the 2022 is already underway, as the applications have been sent out to all previous event holders, as well as any new event can now apply.

We have already received most applications for 2022, and are expecting a much fuller roster for next year. We have also been in conversation with a one-time, antique boat show event that is interested in utilizing waterfront spaces for their national event.

Once all event applications have been received, they will be reviewed in early Winter by the Events Committee, in order to satisfy Act 250, as well as our own processes to grant event approval.

This off-season, our Event Coordinator will be reviewing the Waterfront Park event rates and will make suggestions on updating our fees.

**Urban Park Rangers**

The job description for this position has been sent to HR for review. Ideally, we would like to post this position in November, in order to bring on the first staff member to help us build this new program.
At its heart, we look to this position to be educational and engaged with our community about our dynamic park system. We expect this position to help us navigate some of the issues we see in our parks (fires, fireworks, dogs off leash), as well as inform and educate our community on the benefits of our waterfront and parks systems. We welcome your feedback on this position.

We have secured office space at Leddy Arena for the two FT positions. Work is ongoing to acquire all necessary equipment for this position (electric vehicles, e-bikes, storage shed, etc).

Admin Division Update

- Working on the VOREC grant – we are one of 37 applicants encouraged to submit a full application. Only 25 programs will receive funding and the current request for all 37 is over 2x the amount of available funding.
- Applied for a Historic Preservation Grant for the Red Stone Cottage
- Worked with staff on the celebration of Kieslich Park on Friday, October 29
- Upcoming demos of Campground and Marina software in November
- Working with City team on updating our FY23-FY26 capital plan
- Supporting Waterfront Division with moving the Urban Park Ranger 1st position to BOF/CC
- Working with staff on updating the fees that need to go to the Parks Commission and/or Council for approval. They include Leddy Arena, parking, marina and park fees.
- Considering a pop-up disc golf course at Oakledge in the off-season
- Working with Heineberg Board on MOU for use of the van (paused while board leadership changes)
- Working with Parks Foundation on sharing vision for maintenance of Pause Places along the Greenway
- Top issues on my mind – VOREC grant, standing up the Urban Park Ranger program and finding the funding for the Red Stone Cottage renovation.