

## Burlington Planning Commission

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Harris Roen  
Andy Montroll  
Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur  
Vacant, Youth Member*



## Burlington Planning Commission Meeting Notes

**Tuesday, June 10, 2014 - 6:30 pm**

**PC Present:** H. Roen, A. Montroll, E. Lee (No quorum present)

**Absent:** B. Baker, L. Buffinton, J. Wallace-Brodeur, Y. Bradley

**Staff:** D. White, S. Thibault, E. Tillotson

Due to absence of a quorum, only the Parks Master Plan was presented. No other action was taken

### **I. Agenda**

No changes.

### **II. Public Forum**

None

### **III. Report of the Vice Chair**

None

### **IV. Report of the Director**

None

### **V. Parks Master Plan Presentation**

Jesse Bridges, Director of Parks and Recreation presented the draft Parks Master Plan.

The Master Plan is in its review phase. It is the first ever comprehensive Parks Master Plan for Burlington and it addresses urban forestry, urban wilds, recreational and conservation lands.

It is an overarching plan for all the City's parks and open spaces encompassing a survey and plan for equipment similarities, identities, lighting and signage in an effort to create an identity for the City Parks areas. The Department is still doing internal staff review. August 5<sup>th</sup> will be the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting where the focus will be on the Master plan looking for adoption of the plan in September.

A. Montroll: Perhaps it is better not to break the parks down by wards, but by neighborhoods? By wards might be isolating.

E. Lee: Connectivity is defined by bike and walking trails?

J. Bridges: Walking is the definition, based on a ½ mile walking distance.

D. White: How far is the park from residences, does the public have adequate facilities to get to parks?

J. Bridges: *Schmanska* Park is very diverse but is not handicapped accessible. Biking and walking to parks is always free, we want to enhance that accessibility.

**Programming and operations** - Lake Champlain is one of our biggest parks. There are big deficiencies in marketing exposure, camps are led by professionals which are city employees, and are relatively inexpensive for families at about \$150 per week.

As approved by the Planning Commission on August 12, 2014.

**Sustainability and stewardship** - For twenty years the department has received arbor awards. There is planning for increasing canopy cover. The plans for the urban wilds are being updated. The Department is working with the state to establish stewardship programs for rare and endangered species. Champ camp is continuing. The Department generates more than 60% of its own revenues. There is a struggle between public revenue focus vs recreation focuses.

Field rental rates are low and the Department is looking at increases of some fees. The focus is to have the fields not constantly reserved so that they can be used on a more random basis by park users.

J. Bridges: Looking more regionally, it would be nice if there was a regional park pass.

H. Roen: It could be reciprocal.

P. Wagner, city resident: Programs for kids and especially kids 18 to 25 are needed. The sailing center is not part of the parks Department but private money is being raised for a new sailing center.

J. Bridges: Parks does partner with the sailing center. Burlington City Arts, the Fletcher Free Library do offer programs. 18 to 25 is an underserved population. The Parks Department plays host to adult leagues. This area is one of the biggest deficiencies.

P. Wagner: Another group which is underserved is homeless people. Do Parks provide quasi shelters?

J. Bridges: It is a balancing act; the City is not able to provide shelter. On Thursday, the Department is doing training with an Americorp representative on this subject. The City has to find a way to connect people with appropriate services. Some of the City spaces function as defacto shelters.

D. White: Something equivalent to the street outreach program like the market place has through the Howard Center? It seems there is the potential for a parallel to this.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: It is her hope that staff will be educated about possibilities for connectivity. A system wide solution with all service groups is needed.

J. Bridges: The Burlington golf course allows wonderful winter accessibility plus running trails. There are some calls to remove some tennis court facilities. There are a plethora of community gardens but more are needed. There are 500 gardeners in the City. There is a need for a dog park in the south end. Vermont State has highest rate of pet ownership in the country. Is Oakledge Park a possibility? Dog licensing could be improved.

D. White: There is a plan to drill down to examine surpluses and deficiencies.

A. Montroll: National averages/allocations might be not appropriate for Burlington.

J. Bridges: There are drop in programs all summer, free lunches all summer, plus four hours of recreation free. This program serves multi ethnic families, with the emphasis on developing an expanded menu reflecting ethnicities.

Parks are designated by size, based on national standards.

A. Montroll: Waterfront Park feels like a regional park, not community. Perhaps it needs a different characterization.

D. White: Considering how a park is used and applying the Form Based Code approach is completely different.

A. Montroll: The report is based on consultant language, perhaps Jesse could provide a description more appropriate to Burlington.

P. Wagner: Doesn't the connectivity make all part of a system? Establishing nodes of connectivity between parks as linkage could help.

J. Bridges: This is good feedback from the Commission and the public, the language can be fine tuned for Burlington. Six of the seven most visited parks are on a waterfront. Lake trails and beaches need the most attention.

D. White: And this is an urbanized park, not rustic. Not all civic spaces are green as relates to FBC.

As approved by the Planning Commission on August 12, 2014.

H. Roen: The opposite point is that the park does provide peace and quiet sometimes.

A. Montroll: Parks can be special and unique with multi functions, which is great.

J. Bridges: The Waterfront PIAP proposals, connectivity, wayfinding for the park system, bike path upgrade all are connected. There are partnership opportunities, almost all with non profits. A new logo has been designed for the department. Stormwater is addressed in sustainability; there is a new compilation of inventory, a new approach which comes back to lot coverage.

D. White: Really likes the thinking about parks and stormwater. The map shows the street tree corridor, greenbelts also serve stormwater functions as well as urban wilds, and as special habitats. The tree canopy cover is impressive.

E. Lee: Rain gardens, parks should be part of a public and neighborhood conversation system.

J. Bridges: The City has a lot of approaches to stormwater and water conservation. The key is increasing sidewalk funding, improvement of stormwater and planning.

A. Montroll: Long term specifics are very specific. He would recommend that they be made more broad.

J. Bridges: There have already been changes to plan. More graphics, assigning divisions of responsibility would be helpful. The system themes need to be right. They are pretty good right now, but fine tuning is on going.

**VI. Committee Reports**

None

**VII. Commissioner Items**

None

**VIII. Minutes/Communications**

None

**IX. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm