



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**March 13, 2018**

**Commission Present:** Bossange, Hurley, Hale, Pierce and Kaplan

**Staff Present:** Wight, Cahill and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:36 p.m. by Commission Chair Kaplan

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion made to approve the agenda by Hale, second by Bossange, motion carried.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Bossange read aloud with the motion included, motion made to approve the consent agenda by Hale, second by Pierce, motion carried.

**New Employee Introduction**

Meghan O'Daniel introduced herself to the Commission as an Administrative and Garden Program Facilitator. Meghan also spoke about the outreach work that she has been doing for the garden program.

Wight explained Meghan's hours at the front desk at Pine Street are 12-4:30 p.m., 8-12 p.m. is covered by other staff with registrations taken at other locations as well. The department made a conscious decision to support the Conservation division more.

VJ Comai, City Arborist arrived, and introduced himself, stating he is from Southern Vermont, ran a nursery in Charlotte, did consulting work in summer, very excited about joining the City.

Stated he had been looking at the Ash borer problem and all staff will be monitoring these trees that represent 10% of the City's inventory, the ash borer had been found in Barre and a good chance it could be closer to Burlington than stated. Invited all to contact him whenever needed.

Hale asked if he gave the tour of City Hall, was told yes. Hale thanked and said very informative and educational.

Pierce asked how the DRB meeting went in regards to City Hall Park, Wight said it went very well and spoke about the historical nature of the space as well as the civic space and sometimes can be contradictory but felt that they met both needs. Some concerns were no shade spaces but in the end a good balance of both sun and shade as well as seating areas. March 20th will do have the final vote.

Hale asked for clarification of the location of the Farmers Market and asked if in fact they would not remain on the turf and was told they would not be in the park on the grass but on the outside of the park on paved areas and walkways.



### **Lake Champlain Byway**

Motion to approve the City's continued participation in the Lake Champlain Byway project by Hurley, second by Pierce, motion carried.

### **Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00 PM, 3 min. per person time limit)**

Public forum opened at 6:00 p.m. by Commission Chair Kaplan.

Lynne Lieb thanked BPRW for its leadership and staff of the parks for all they do and spoke specifically to Starr Farm dog park, stated used year round by Burlington residents and other surrounding towns, highly used resource in the summer by visitors. Would like to have the trees looked at as they have roots exposed and would like to see them maintained. Some of the fences are in urgent need of repair and would like to ask to have consideration to replace all the fencing and two of the main gates repaired as they get really damaged due to the weather and asked for consideration.

Eric Corbman, spoke of the Starr Farm dog park as well and asked if the small dog area could get some repair in the short term and in the long term need some funding to go toward the park as a whole. Suggested getting funding from dog license or Penny for Parks.

Kaplan explained have done a comprehensive look at the dog parks but have stalled out to look at the bigger picture and encouraged to keep talking and explaining needs and working with the department.

Wight stated that Roach had sent a link to her regarding the research and information around dog parks and the needs and asked if she would revive that plan and start moving it forward again.

Public forum closed at 6:08 p.m.

### **Naming of Parks and Playground Equipment**

Kaplan stated the policy had been worked on previously and updated the Commissioners that were not present at the time the policy was created. The intention is to bring to the Commission's attention that requests could be coming to them soon for approval. Some requests fall under the Director while others would need to be approved by the Commission.

### **Discussion of Oakledge After Action Report**

Wight explained the document was created after a drowning incident and is a plan that will be put into place very soon. Several areas have already been worked on such as signs, educational programs, brochure has a page that speaks to water safety and schools have information to distribute as well. Speaking with the Boys and Girls club regarding use of pool for swim lessons in the summer. Met with Fire chief and working on a grant for an additional boat.

Bossange asked about signage and if no smoking would also be listed and was told yes. Would keep lifeguards focused at North Beach but extend the hours.

Hurley asked if the swim lessons from Boys & Girls club would be free, Wight said would have to find a sponsor, the BPRW budget could not support this activity.

Hale said she would be happy to go with Wight to speak with Boys & Girls club to discuss options for lessons.



### **Update on Parks Foundation (Standing Item)**

Bossange said when bikepath bisected asked community who owns the land to help get connectivity and found that some of the surrounding owners were interested in making more of their land accessible. Brought all parties together, had three meetings, formed Rock Point and Arms Coalition, in the middle of a capital campaign to raise money to get trails, purchase land, etc. and will be free and accessible to all.

Working on a brochure that would be used to promote getting funding to ensure public access to all 180 acres. Received gifts and pledges toward this initiative. Looking for legacy funds as well and piecing together funding. Event this Sunday night to have donors commit to the project.

Kaplan stated that she felt at times the Foundation is included in several table conversations and the Commission is often not always represented and would like to have clarity of Bossange's presence as a Commissioner versus a member of the Foundation. Bossange asked if Kaplan would like to be invited as a Commissioner and stated that he never thinks or acts as a Commissioner when at the Foundation meetings, he is acting solely as a Foundation member.

Hale stated that the Library Commission has a stipulation that you may not be a "Friend of Library" and a Commissioner on the same board, as it would be considered a conflict. Stated the community has asked her if this dual position would be considered a conflict of interest, suggested asking the City Attorney for advice on the City's position.

Hurley asked what the conflict was and Hale stated you could vote on both the Board and Commission and have an interest on funding.

Kaplan was contacted by Julia Wayne regarding the Oakledge Park Universal playground and asked for more information on that project from the department. Wight stated she had information and would share under Director's items. Kaplan stated have funding through the Department of Health that will cover in need/disabled persons. Feels that not always working on places that are accessible and inclusive to all and is making information available to all.

### **Conservation Acquisitions, Expected Executive Session**

Motion to go into executive session at 6:37 p.m. where premature disclosure might put the City at a substantial disadvantage, Pierce, second by Hurley, motion carried.

Motion made to come out of executive session at 6:52 p.m. by Hurley.

Hale made a motion to approve the use of Conservation funds in the amount of \$98,488 in accordance with the information presented in Executive session, second by Hurley, motion carried.

Kaplan asked Cahill to present at an upcoming meeting an update on how the funding works and a forecast for the funds.



### **Director's Items**

Wight stated Oakledge Universal playground group is moving forward with an application for a grant, applying for grant through NRPA as well, Wight stated looks like there will be a surplus in PFP fund and may be able to use some funding to start the base, already committed \$150,000, the surplus is \$344,000 from FY17. Will look at other projects in the 10-year plan and if can keep meeting needs might be able to support a larger capital need.

Capital Improvement Projects; Mayor's office put together a committee to start prioritizing projects, no contingency and other projects have come up. Wight has been a big advocate for parks so that it doesn't get minimized in priorities.

Working with CEDO job fair for youth on April 25th at the CORE center, Cemetery/CT position has been filled and will allow to have the person available 5 days a week and on site some days. Burlington Wildways coalition includes Ethan Allen Park District and others so that all are working together.

Kaplan said would like to talk about Memorial Auditorium at a future meeting.

Wight stated the department had been brought in with CEDO and some others on staff and leadership to look at what could be done with the lower level of the building and what best uses would be, some suggested non-profit office space and questioned if the City would be the landlord. Kaplan stated this building had been discussed for years and was decided too much money had been spent and were done and not spending more money. Stated there needs to be more dialogue on this subject and the expenses as well as who would do what. Kaplan asked to have this item as a standing item on the commission agendas.

Hale stated she had heard from constituents that they would like the property to stay public, not as a private space.

### **Commissioner's Items**

Hurley stated VTIF is putting on a disability film festival at Main Street Landing space.

Pierce stated that at a prior meeting the Commission had discussed having a joint meeting with the Cemetery Commission to open up the cemetery to have biking through the park. Wight will set up a meeting in the future.

Hale is organizing old north end cleanup in late May early June near Dewey Park to give residents in the area the opportunity to get rid of larger items and trash. Would like to do monthly street cleanup going forward as well.

Kaplan stated that Caesar formally resigned from the Commission, would likely be after April before a new Commissioner was appointed and suggested recruitment from other commissioners. Also stated heard the biking community would like a BMX bike park as well as a place for small children to go to learn how to ride a bike, which would include signs and streets to practice. Kaplan suggested referring back to the master plan. Bike share will be starting very soon as well on the waterfront.

### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. by Pierce, second by Bossange, motion carried.