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Lakeview Cemetery
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Minutes

Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 23, 2025, 12:00pm

MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON AT 645 PINE ST, FRONT CONFERENCE ROOM, AND VIA ZOOM

Attendance:

Committee Members: Chair Becca Brown-McKnight, Councilor Mark Barlow, Councilor Carter Neubieser

City Staff: Cindi Wight – BPRW, Sophie Sauve – BPRW, Dan Cahill – BPRW, Scott Gustin – P&I, Doreen Kraft – BCA, Colin Storrs - BCA, Holli Bushnell – BPRW

Meeting called to order at 12:12 pm by Chair Becca Brown-McKnight

Approval of Agenda

Brown-McKnight called for a motion to amend/adopt the agenda with the following modification. Remove item 4.5. FFL Update - Friends and City Capital Campaign MOU (TENATIVE) and add Community Sailing Center to item 4.3. Mark Barlow moved to approve the agenda as modified, Carter Neubieser seconded, and all were in favor.

Approval of Draft Minutes from 10/24/2024

Barlow moved to approve the minutes, Neubieser seconded, all were in favor

Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 12:14pm. As no one present wished to speak public forum was closed at 12:14pm.

BCA Staffing and Update –

Doreen Kraft started by asking Colin Storrs to provide an update on the Chief Greylock statue in Battery Park. As of the morning of the meeting he and representatives from BPRW met with the Abenaki Council to discuss the substantial deterioration of the statue and the fact that in its current condition it poses a threat to public safety and may need to be deaccessioned. Staff was able to get an idea of what the council's wishes are concerning the piece as well as an idea of what they would like to see come next should the statue need to be decommissioned. A BCA staff member will be attending the regular Abenaki Council meeting in February for further discussion, but the Abenaki Council was happy to be involved at this early point in the process and have their wishes taken into consideration. Ultimately, BCA does not see a path forward that does not involve deaccessioning the piece, and that process will involve BCA board of directors, PACC, and City Council approval.

Brown-McKnight appreciated the update. Kraft shared that this is a very sensitive project, as, even though the artist was not native, the piece still holds a lot of significance to the Abenaki community. It's a very piece, and that shape is meaningful to the Abenaki people. The council members asked that if the piece does need to be decommissioned, something of similar stature be placed there temporarily as a holding place that would show BTVs intention of keeping that space sacred. Some funding was set aside

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for the work years ago, and Kraft asked Cindi Wight if those funds were still available. Wight confirmed they were. Kraft also asked if the reinvisioning of Battery Park is on track to align with the statue decommissioning. Sophie Sauve shared that the plan for Battery is in 2026, however there is a city wide plan that will be in the works sooner.

Kraft went on to share that, generally, BCA is working on their service inventory. The new administration and CAO Schadd asked them to look at each program they offer and determine the impact in community, a cost benefit analysis, which communities are impacted, and if there are other organization that hold similar programs that could serve instead of the city. At this point they have completed the inventory and are waiting for the administration to respond. They will come back to BCA with questions as they advance in the budgeting process. It has been hard work but very eye opening.

Barlow asked if there is a timeline for the Chief Greylock statue. Storrs shared that the timeline is dependent on securing funding for the work and getting assessments from contractors. After spring may be the best time, but they may start sooner. The assessment showed that it's unsafe, and currently BPRW has fenced it off. The issue is that it will be fairly expensive work and that will direct when they are able to complete the work.

Brown-McKnight asked if the service inventory will be available to public or the city council, and if so when? Kraft was unsure of that but will try to find out. Brown-McKnight asked if BPRW is doing the same thing, and Wight confirmed that they have been working on a service inventory as well.

Kraft continued to talk about the budget cuts BCA has made and the lack of programing in City Hall Park for the month of June. She has been feeling from downtown businesses that there is a critical need for programing in CHP to bring visitors to downtown. She's very concerned with the state of the city and the downtown challenges. BCA will continue to fundraise, but has not found funding to cover the missing programing. She asked the committee for additional ideas on how to acquire more funds for CHP programing in June.

Barlow thanked Kraft for her work on the service inventory and shared that he understands how difficult it is find funding.

BPRW Public Spaces Survey –

Wight shared a slide presentation of the open space plan. She passed the presentation over to Scott Gustin, Dan Cahill, and Sophie Sauve. Gustin added that Sarah Morgan and P&I and Zoe Richards from the conservation board have also been involved in their work. The city's current open space plan is 25+ years old. This plan, amongst other things, provides the basis for the city's conservation legacy fund. The plan was updated last in 2018 mostly around trails and natural areas, and that became the standards for nature based climate solutions. This re-write is to build on that, not replace it. This is a collaborative effort between multiple departments. They did a kick off in summer of 2024. They've met with a variety of stakeholder groups, and the evening of the meeting they will be starting their public outreach with an event at St. Marks. Over the weekend they will be at the winter farmers market as well to connect with the public. They've utilized a multiple online sources to reach out to the community as well.

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Brown-McKnight noted that their online communications is the reason they're on the agenda for this meeting. She was impressed by what she saw. Gustin explained that they're taking a different tactic for public outreach. Instead of asking the community to come to a public meeting, staff is going to public events and meeting people where they are. Looking ahead, they will continue public outreach in the month of February. They will pause between the first and second rounds of public comment to incorporate ideas.

Brown-McKnight asked Gustin to define open space. Gustin explained that that's part of what he's doing. It's generally thought of as city parks, but it can also include things like the south end seaport redevelopment. This update also hopes to address how the conservation legacy fund is used to support conservation infrastructure in addition to direct land conservation. From an inventory standpoint, Burlington is considered 49% open space. One of the largest pieces of this open space is private property – back yards. This plan seeks to address how those spaces can become activated in terms of canopy growth and ecosystem resilience.

Brown-McKnight shared that she feels that Burlington citizens are deeply invested in conservation. Other departments offer programs to better the ecological impact of households. She's interest in seeing BPRW do something similar.

Barlow asked when the last update to the open space plan was made. Gustin explained that there was an addendum for nature based climate solutions about 3 years ago, but the majority of the plan is 25 years old with a small update on urban agriculture and trails in 2014. Barlow asked if there will be any kind of policy discussions around preservation of existing open spaces for things with passive recreational use? Gustin shared that the plan could include that sort of information, but it's more intended to provide guidelines around green design standards on all manner of properties. Sophie Sauve added that the tree canopy study is intended to develop ordinances around tree. Currently the only ordinance about trees states that you cannot hitch your horse to them. Dan Cahill shared that arms forest is a good example of the kind of reassessment the open space plan can provide. Gustin concluded by sharing that they're wrapping up phase one and will be kicking of phase two of stakeholder discussions and public outreach in the spring with the aim to bring it to council before the summer. There is also a survey available online.

BPRW Moran Plant and Community Sailing Center –

Owen Milne from the Community Sailing Center shared a few slides of proposed plans for kayak and paddleboard storage on adjoining property. This is a service they previously offered but had to discontinue when they moved to their new location. This would provide the community greater access to the lake as parking and transporting large equipment such as a kayak or paddleboard prevents community members from making use of their facilities. They have an ideal sloped access point to the lake which they built into their facility specifically so small crafts can launch. They are proposing using a small parcel of land to the north of their facility in the urban reserve and developing it into small craft storage. They've reviewed the 1998 waterfront plan as well as the conservation easement on the property. The new area they are looking at is comparable in space to the area they previously used back

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in 2019. They intend to keep as much greenery around the area as possible to limit visual impact of the project. Since they previously provided this service, the sale of paddleboards and kayaks has exploded, and they are expecting a significant increase in demand for this service from previous rates. They think they can provide access to over 700 people by adding this service back in. They've been to NPA meetings at ward 2, 3, 4, and 7, held community events in their building, and have been incorporating feedback into their design throughout the process. They will be presenting to the planning committee next week and will be taking their feedback into the next step of the process.

Brown-McKnight asked about the cost implications, and Milne shared that the sailing center will be paying for it. There are existing funds from Rep Ballint as well as some from the great lakes fishery committee. A portion of the revenue generated will be returned to the city through a revenue sharing program. Brown-McKnight asked how much space the project would take up, and Milne confirmed that it will be roughly the same size as the space they previously used.

Gustin added that Milne presented to the conservation board and the board voted unanimously to reject the plan. Brown-McKnight asked if there will be revisions. Milne shared that there were 5 areas of concern that the conservation board identified and the sailing center has looked at their concerns. They've reviewed the concerns.

Moving on, Brown-McKnight explained the addition of the Moran Plant to the agenda so that there is a public record of the process, decisions, and possibly concerning the encampments. Wight provided a brief slideshow presentation. First, BPRW confirmed that they will be activating the space for events in no later than May 1. It will be ready for visitors by then. CEDO is still generally helping the Moran project as they have since the beginning. Currently they are working on phase 1b which will increase safety, improve accessibility, and develop performance space. The performance space will require the most work which includes removing a beam, adding more electric, and adding a water source. They also will be working on hardening (paving?) the gravel path that runs to the building and slicing the hoppers so that people can no longer use them to climb to the top. They are not planning on doing any formal programming over the summer due to the construction work, but hope to have events starting in September. Some of the events that were attempted last year did not work, and they are switching things up to improve the use.

Brown-McKnight asked what the process is for turning FRAME into a park. Wight explained that there are a number of steps. For example, the existing road needs to be turned in to an actual road, not part of a parcel. Currently there are several parcels that make up the area that will ultimately become the FRAME park, and each parcel is owned by separate entities. This makes it complicated, but BPRW has been doing a lot of prep work to turn FRAME into a park in name while it remains under the ownership of DPW who is currently the parcel holder. This would be similar to what BPRW and DPW have worked out at Perkins Pier. The whole parcel would include A-Dog, Moran/FRAME, the tiny additional park/fishing pier would be then called Waterworks Park. The first step is establishing the road. Brown-McKnight asked for a timeline and Wight was not able to provide one as work is dependent on DPW.

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Barlow asked why there needs to be a street in order for there to be a park. Wight explained that in order to be a park, all areas of the parcel need to be included. The greenway is considered a formal park and the fence is considered a firm boundary, but the road isn't part of either parcel. DPW will need to turn that part of their parcel into a road to unite the parcels as well as make use of streets funding. Barlow asked if we could name it something different from the road adjacent to it, as there appears to be 2 Lake Streets.

Finally, in terms of unhoused encampments, as it is not officially a park Urban Rangers can't simply trespass them. They need to involve a CSL and CSOs and work with DPW to clean the space. If it were officially a park it would be much easier to handle the unhoused situation and figure out who is actually responsible for the space.

BPRW Ordinance Review –

Wight explained that BPRW has been going through Appendix D which is the rules and regulations for city parks. These need to be approved by parks commission and council, but they also come before PACC for their support (and the possibility of ending up on consent agenda). None of these ordinance have been updated in at least 20-25 years. Working on section 1 which includes permitting information and section 2 is being examined by the waterfront team. There will be opportunities for public input at Parks commission and city council. There have already been some instances of public commenting on events in parks (a concert happened at Pomeroy which caused some discourse), and the conversation was extremely civil.

Barlow asked if the cat forum could be recorded. Brown-McKnight shared that she would request it be recorded.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:29pm. The next meeting to be held on 2/27/2024 at 645 Pine St and via Zoom.