



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes
April 8, 2025
Parks and Recreation Commission

Commission Present: Bergmann, Boehm, Johnson, Keech and Lantieri

Not Present: Etter, Mobley

Staff Present: Wight, Sauve, Cotton, Hutchison, O'Daniel, Kaeding, Rogers, Doyle and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:33 p.m. by Lantieri.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda by Keech, second by Boehm, motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda by Boehm, second by Bergmann, motion carried.

Public Forum

Public forum opened at 5:35 p.m.

Seeing nobody to speak, public forum was closed at 5:36 p.m.

Coach of the Year

Jen Cotton congratulated Jeff King, said he has been coaching for the youth basketball league since 2019 and in some seasons has coached two teams. Stated that he wanted to focus on only one team this season (his son's) but when he saw the department struggling with coaches he took on another team. Cotton said lucky to have each season and he is also offering pick-up basketball at Apple Tree Park in the summer with neighborhood kids and will try and the department will make a more coordinated effort with him this season. Cotton also said she sees him playing adult basketball and acknowledged his love for the game and the children. Said that she reached out to the family and children that coaches and collected video's to share.

Lantieri asked if Coach Jeff had any particular moment he wanted to share and he said the tournament that the City puts on every year, two years ago a 6th grader had spoken about the tournament and was so lit up by the experience at the tournament and they also won that year and that was really touching, Cotton added that they had won back to back titles.

Boehm thanked and as a parent said coaches are all the lifeblood of helping these children.

Volunteer of the Year

Natalie Hutchison said she was very excited to give the volunteer award to Taylor who teaches the seniors to sew over at the ONE Center and was so sad to see the class come to an end, she added that she was a natural teacher and brought so much joy to the class and taught so much about sewing and very excited that she will be teaching an adult class in the evenings.



Lantieri thanked and asked if any great experience or story that will stick with her and she said nothing in particular only that she feels exactly the same way about the seniors and looked forward to meeting with them each week, grew great relationships and bonds with the people and happy she got to do for the past two years.

Keech asked what sort of projects she worked on with the seniors, Taylor said she started with stuffed animals and then they were bringing different items and went at their own level and skill and got to know all the styles and what residents were working on.

Request for Permit Fee Waiver from Ignite Church

O'Daniel passed over to Reverend Alvin Mitchell to explain who the Church is and said she had been in contact and working with for a few years and looking to continue in our parks.

Rev. Mitchell said every other Saturday give out clothes, sleeping bags, blankets, underwear, shoes, some second hand, have Samaritan House partnership that also donates new shoes, volunteer over at Anew Place and at Turning Point helping, have big concern about the homeless population and not just to get the numbers down but to help them. Do barbeques etc. in the park, everything is done by donation, don't have money to pay for a permit. Do clean up after, have cleaned Battery Park in the past, try to leave better than found before. Every other Saturday go into City Hall Park and then will be in Battery Park from June through December and then would come back and ask the Commission for permission again.

Keech said Mitchell spoke of City Hall Park as using only a couple of times and then Battery the rest of the time and asked if any other parks were in need and was told no as the majority are in those parks and get the outreach to go to classes and those two places are where most people are located and staff let them know where they are and what is available.

Boehm also asked about BBQ's and if that was available in the past and was told yes, definitely in Battery Park, probably not in City Hall Park, want to get trust with the patrons.

Lantieri asked Wight if a different permit for grilling was needed and was told no.

O'Daniel stated there would not be any rooms and meals and Ignite are wonderful stewards of the space when using.

Motion to approve the request to waive the fees and removal of all refuse created after each use by Boehm, second by Bergmann, motion passed.

Penny for Parks Approval

Sauve said as is tradition she was proposing the budget for this fiscal year as has been done in the past. The items highlighted in green are proposed for FY26 and she continued to go through each item with an explanation;



- The Battery Park, Chief Greylock replacement \$15,000
- Calahan Park Courts/Stormwater Design \$100,000, originally had in FY24 but could not get to and did apply for a grant to match once ready for construction at end of 26-27 but need design drawings done
- Ethan Allen Park Playground Replacement, \$100,000 commitment from Park Foundation
- Liddy Park Playground and Restroom Design \$15,000 looking to line up to get funding \$15,000 is meant to be a destination playground and will come back for funding
- North Beach Park Improvements, list/do every year to keep upgraded and safe/usable
- Perkins Pier Anchor Pads and Cables in mooring field is a safety issue that needs to be replaced, \$25000
- PP Marina and Maintenance Office, would like to replace eventually but just make workable at this time
- Schifilliti Restroom Construction \$65,000 and will be combined with a grant.

Listed community needs and smaller amenities, a place for public arts and a net zero budget, expecting \$584,392, bond funds of \$100,000 toward Boathouse Improvements, North Beach Bond had some funds, for pull through in the past but did not get done and would like to move to this year and address the restroom and laundry later and allocating another \$50,000, accessible surfacing bond of \$50,000, \$300,000 capital has been allocating through the bond.

Keech asked about the Boathouse improvements and if dredging would have to be done first and Sauve said yes and hoping money will be left over, feasibility is to see what needs to be done to maintain and identify both needs.

Bergmann asked about Baird Park and asked if anything is planned for Baird and Sauve said has not happened yet, working with UVM landscape class and doing design and other work to come up with preliminary and then will bring to public, also confirmed it was budgeted for this year. Sauve said doing comp plan first, also will be doing the project internally and once going will be quicker, working with marketing person to bring to QR code easier.

Lantieri asked if the Commission would hear once the comp plan begins and was told yes by Sauve.

Motion to approve the PFP budget as submitted, by Bergmann, second by Boehm, motion carried.

Appendix D, Section 1 Updates

Wight explained fund raising should always go to commission, any fundraiser.

She continued to go through each section with the commission beginning with (H) and all commissioners gave input/feedback for title and content. Definitions of different types of parks and uses and regulations of the various parks were also reviewed.

Wight will bring a clean copy at the next meeting for review and approval from the commission.



Appendix D, Section 2-4

Wight explained she reached out to the team as there was a lot to cover and would discuss one section at a time, the group decided to go with section 4 to begin with, Beaches and Waterfront Areas. They went through proposed changes with the commission beginning with animals and dogs. Then went on to discuss items that are prohibited in general at beaches and waterfronts, discussed the rate structure for parking and entrance and ended at that section for this meeting. Will resume with the other two sections at the next commission meeting and for approval of section 4.

Public Comment

Keech stated he was not very well prepared, was hoping what he prepared and sent earlier was what all would agree upon, read some of the changes that he had made to the document. Added a bullet under The Meeting, Sign-In Process, "The sign-in sheet will contain the statement, "Discriminatory comments will not be tolerated, overly disruptive behavior is not allowed, and time limits may be strictly enforced.". Added bullet under Interactive discussion to read "Discussion will be open to topics pertaining directly to the Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront or any topic lead by another branch of the City of Burlington that involves any form of interaction with PRW staff", also under Interactive Discussion, second bullet at the end of the paragraph "with the Chair managing the flow of discussion.". Add to, The Response, Follow-Up-Process, first bullet, at the end of the sentence, "before the next meeting."

Bergmann said in the scenario where you have 30-40 persons come in for public forum would you have to send a response or feedback to each and Keech said that he felt they deserve a response and a lot of the time people do come in and the Commission learns a lot and unless someone is leading the pack would have to respond to all and has never seen any meeting that highly attended in the past.

Boehm also said on follow up process if no additional information is required, would it be necessary to respond at the next meeting, is there a need for follow-up if no question was asked, would it be necessary, Keech said he would respond to that person and wanted to let them know that they were heard. Keech said if a question was asked and they did not know the answer he felt they should lean on department to find out, said every situation may not be easy and will have to feel the way through but ultimately it would be on the commission to respond.

Lantieri liked open ended and that you don't have to respond, when it was stated that everyone receives a response and Bergmann said the way it is currently worded a response would be required to all.

Boehm said if it is the responsibility of commission they would take the responsibility and Keech said it was not his intention to have the department take responsibility of the response.



Lantieri asked if under The Response, Follow-Up Process, that could be deleted all together and then add under the Acknowledgment of Comments section, second bullet at the end of the sentence add “If additional information is required, collaborate with the Parks Department to gather necessary data, allowing a flexible timeline to accommodate department priorities and resource availability.”

Motion to approve the public comment with the amendment to delete the Follow-Up Process and both bullets and add the language to Acknowledgment of Comments, second bullet, last sentence to read “If additional information is required, collaborate with the Parks Department to gather necessary data, allowing a flexible timeline to accommodate department priorities and resource availability” and change sign-in sheet to add the statement “Discriminatory comments will not be tolerated, overly disruptive behavior is not allowed, and time limits may be strictly enforced”, and accept as Parks procedure, by Bergmann, second by Boehn, motion passed.

Off-leash Areas Reset

Wight said that she met with others and has been hard to do the commission sub-committee and the Parks Commission Chair and Vice Chair decided to move this topic back to the full Commission to work on, listed the background and the authority, which is to manage and regulate off-leash areas, Chapter 5 Code of Ordinances. Appendix D, Section 7 states over 20 years ago was when pilot was run and never finalized or adopted and does not reflect current policy. Wight said that she sent the full task force report as reminder and what the Dog Task Force final report included an Off-Leash Dog Policy that “includes a comprehensive and updated framework that would be adopted and overseen by the Parks Commission” and as part of that was asked to make a recommendation regarding the creation of additional off-leash areas. Wight proposed next steps and using this meeting as a reset to dedicate time at each commission meeting and if comfortable would like to add a comment, all were favorable.

Wight said that Neil, lead Park Ranger would be happy to come talk about off-leash areas, Texaco has been used as an off-leash area with much success, Rangers have done something similar at Leddy and had success on middle and north end with no complaints in two years. Took similar model to Oakledge Park and was also successful, have had approaches that have had some success and differences with cats and dogs are very different, but she stated if her dog were at the beach or cove she would know where it was.

Lantieri set a ground rule that the discussion did not have to speak about cats, that is not part of the purview of this commission, said got recommendations from the task force and can say what would each would like to do moving forward and asked Keech to go last to share thoughts as he had already previously shared.

Boehm thanked Wight for the overview and to help to understand what is being asked of the commission, asked if the end goal is to have a document that is a recommendation on off-leash



areas to the City Council and would be written up by the commission. Wight explained that currently have some areas that do have off-leash but not currently authorized as has expired.

Johnson said some feedback he received was areas that are slightly in favor of, raised more concerns of how could that be out of date, how many people were aware, North Shore and Calahan, were areas that would be where more scrutiny is needed, would like to get better feedback from, couple of voices that were concerned about off-leash areas in the morning hours, but mixed and others felt made sense. Several areas that can see particularly with beaches and the Cove, not sure of access area, wants to make sure careful of conservation and safety.

Bergmann said there had been a lot of work and thought gone into this and confusion, has own bias and does not feel all should be subject to that. Trying to take own feelings out and stay open.

Keech said in terms of the favor of the survey, feels not a good survey, people could vote as many times as wanted, had a citizen come and speak to this group also, has concerns with any dog off-leash, particularly with the cove and eventually become a dog area in the entire area. Stated he typed in search are of where off leash dog areas are and Texaco and Schmanska popped up due to where people are with dogs. Asked to consider who the dog park task force is, said Wight has dog, Alec has a dog, all other committee members have dogs and nobody on the committee from Dogbite.com and feels not how to make policy, and should be about the public. Said before moving forward need to figure out as a commission if should have these areas, and no sense looking at the document. Noticed can't have children under 12 years old in a fenced in dog area but then we are going to allow dogs in an unfenced area, does not make sense to him, feels not measuring correctly and does not feel this supports the mission statement of Parks.

Lantieri said all come from different perspectives and the ability to discuss from the interest of self and others and look at the purview of the commission responsibility. Asked how functionally happening at Leddy and not other places, also concerned that is an unfenced area that is next to the water. Glad to have the opportunity to discuss and this commission's process.

Keech wanted to make sure that City Council will not move on this until this commission has made its decision and Wight said it was sent to the Parks Commission and could ask the status but it was sent to this commission.

Wight will ask Park Ranger Preston if he can make the May meeting and might be a good place to start at the next meeting and not worry about a policy and then go from there.



Standing Items:

Park Foundation Update

Lantieri said moving ahead, universal design and policy, himself the foundation and staff.

Off-Leash Dog Sub-Committee

No report to be given but does think this is the correct move to take to get officially going as a group. This item will be removed from future meetings.

Director's Items

Wight gave a few highlights;

New Web Site, little getting used to, asked all to let team know if they notice any issues, moved to get onto the city platform

Really fun throwback adult book fair, lots of fun and all had a great time

Moving forward with section 8 at the cemetery and the formal design to bid

Highlighted the Marina had all returning staff but one person

Removal of membrane at Frame will be happening

Commissioner's Items & Volunteer Hours

Lantieri had an additional 3 hours of planning and other related items, Route 127 meeting happened and if it will be repurposed or not

Boehm had 1 additional hour

Keech had 2 additional hours

Johnson had 3 additional hours and asked if helpful to have commissioner to edit the decision for task force report that he would be happy to volunteer.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to go into executive session at 7:52 pm to discuss personnel matters regarding reappointment recommendation by Keech, second by Bergmann, motion carried.

Motion to go out of executive session at 8:07 p.m. by Boehm, second by Johnson, motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Boehm, second by Johnson at 8:08 p.m., motion carried unanimously.