

Staff: Holli Bushnell, Office Assistant
Lakeview Cemetery
hbushnell@burlingtonvt.gov

Minutes

Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2025, 4:30pm

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

Attendance:

Committee Members: Chair Carter Neubieser, Councilor Joe Kane, Councilor Allie Schachter

City Staff: Mary Danko – FFL, Cindi Wight – BPRW, Sophie Sauve – BPRW, Holli Bushnell – BPRW

Public: Jonathan Chapple-Sokol – Friends of FFL

Meeting called to order at 4:33 pm by Chair Carter Neubieser

Approval of Agenda

Allie Schachter moved to approve the agenda, Neubieser seconded, and all were in favor.

Approval of Draft Minutes from 03/27/2025

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

Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 4:34pm. As no one present wished to speak public forum was closed at 4:34pm.

FFL MOU and Update –

Mary Danko, FFL director, and Johnathan Chapple-Sokol, Friends of FFL, explained that the work on the oldest parts of the library is about to begin. The Friends of Fletcher Free Library are a 501c3 organized to support FFL, and they have acted as fiscal agent for the library since 2013. In 2019 they started looking at much needed renovations for the library. During Covid it became clear that this was the move that needed to be made. The friends have begun raising money for the renovations, but need to generate a new agreement between the friends and the city to facilitate the use of those funds. The FFL has sent the MOU document to the mayor's office as well. The Library needs substantial renovations, and the city does not have funds to finance these renovations. The library has requested and friends have agreed to raise at least \$32 million to cover the cost. The city will be responsible for the final approval of the project with input from the FFL; they will apply for public funding and cooperate with the friends in philanthropic pursuits (the city supports the FFL in raising money).

The construction project will begin when 85% of funds are raised. The Friends will be in charge of raising funds, and will pay city for construction work on a quarterly basis. A review oversight committee will be formed from several groups to review and oversee the work being done. There is an existing partnership MOU between FFL and FFL, so this new MOU is almost more of an addendum focusing on this specific project. FFL and FFL are asking for PACCs sponsorship when it goes before full council. The

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first MOU between FFL and FFFL was written in 2018, came to PACC and needed CC approval. A couple of years ago PACC supported extended the approval for another 15 years.

Schachter asked why 85% is the mark for construction to begin. She asked if there a plan for if 100% isn't raised and if there would there be a reason to start sooner. Danko explained that 85% is being weighed in on by Mayor's office and CAO but the plan has a built in escalation through 2027. They feel confident that those are the right numbers based on their current timeline. If costs go up they will have to reevaluate, but they are committed to value engineering to the quoted amount. However, the sooner they get started the better. Schachter asked for clarity around if 100% of funds raised would come from the friends, could the city still provide funds to assist. Chapple-Sokol explained that they're not asking for it, but the city is welcome to give it. The agreement says the friends will raise money for this project.

Neubieser asked if the MOU will go directly to council or if it needs to come back to PACC. Chapple-Sokol explained that as long as the mayor's office has no major changes, they'd like to go to city council next. Danko said that they would like to be able to have PACCs support when that day comes. Neubieser confirmed that, assuming there is no substantial changes, PACC approves the MOU to move to council. Schachter moved, Joe Kane seconded, and all in favor.

Danko shared that the fencing around library is there because preservation work is taking place on 1904 part of the building. Library staff will be creating a story-walk outside the fence that will be fun and engaging even with all the intense projects downtown. All the staff are very conscious that a lot is going on downtown. They are hoping that everyone sees how great this will be when it's completed. Schachter asked if there is a timeline to complete the work. Danko shared that it will be completed December at the latest. She thanked facilities and BPRW for their help with the project.

BPRW Update –

Sophie Sauve provided the update. The most prevalent news is that Sauve, Erin Moreau, and Deryk Roach will be co-heading the department following the departure of current department head, Cindi Wight. They will be taking June to get up to speed with all aspects of Director Wight's work and are trying to ensure that when she departs July 1 there will be no surprises, but there are no guarantees.

This is the high season for BPRW; it's very busy, but hopefully as a group Sauve, Moreau, and Roach can co-manage the transition. They are currently using their time to learn about the divisions that no longer have a manager. This is the discovery phase. They are working to keep their teams going while identifying who should supervise what staff and plan for Wight's departure. They are also working with Mayor's office, providing weekly updates, and taking small bites at a time. It's very helpful that Wight is still here so there is overlap during the transition.

Wight feels the transition is going smoothly and that the team is doing a great job stepping up.

Schachter thanked Sauve for the work the team is doing, weathering transition with grace and intentionality. She asked if there are any critical functions that the city council could provide support in

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or be aware of. Sauve shared that they're taking the time to get the lay of the land before reaching out for support. Some folks are doing things outside their job descriptions because we just lost 8 people, but we don't want this to be the case for a long period of time. That said, if it's a duty that the employee is ready to take on, it will be reviewed internally first. Wight added that some people are upset about the loss of adult programs, but the good news is, they're not gone forever. The programs have just been cancelled for now. Right now BPRW is focusing on summer camps because they're the highest priority. Wight hopes people can have a little bit of patience while things are re-shuffled.

Schachter once again offered to help if there is anything she or the other councilors can do. Neubieser was glad to hear that there is a conversation happening about eliminating some things. With budget cuts it makes sense so we don't overwork people.

BPRW Ordinance Review and Approval –

Wight explained that BPRW and the Parks Commission have been working on updating the ordinances throughout multiple PACC meetings. At this point, the Parks Commission has completed through Sections 1 and 4 of Appendix D. There have been no significant updates in 25+ years. The commission has been focusing on sections 1, 2, 4, and 5 based on the community and department benefits. Section 1 is what protects our parks (permits and regulations). A lot of it is updating language to reflect current organizations in the city. They are trying to make it easier for people to follow the rules when using our parks by adding permits that reflect those uses (officiants who perform weddings for example). They changed the special use permit to special approvals (requiring Commission permission) for example. They are trying to make these items very explicit.

Licenses are a huge change. We used to have a lot of guidelines around busking in parks, but that mostly happens on Church St now; no one ever asks about it. It doesn't mean that someone couldn't busk in parks, just that they need to go before the commission for permission. Made BSD youth athletics as the second highest use for spaces. Everything will need to be in writing going forward.

In the approved uses in parks section they had to add parks that didn't exist when the original ordinances were written. They combined neighborhood and community parks into one group as these are meant to be used by the people who live in that neighborhood. Some parks will be classified as regional parks (Battery, Leddy, Oakledge, North Beach) – the update makes sound levels consistent throughout all spaces. City Hall Park has added changes which allow BCA to use the space for their projects and they changed the consistence on when sound checks can be done. Waterfront Park must follow act 250 requirements. A lot of the work has been identifying primary parks for outdoor entertainment. They also added park natural areas (suitable for passive recreation and education) as a category and added an appeals section and section where alcohol is covered.

Schachter asked what prompted this update. Wight explained that Ben Traverse originally asked for guidelines regarding CHP because of Juneteenth events in the park. That inspired the team to start making the changes. It can be hard to know how to navigate when you first come into a role, and figuring out things like this has been a process for Wight. She wasn't sure it should be a priority initially,

**CITY OF BURLINGTON
PARKS, ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

**Councilor Carter Neubieser, Chair, Ward 1
Councilor Joe Kane, Ward 3
Councilor Allie Schachter, East District**

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but modern language, easy for staff and public makes life easier for everyone. For example – Leddy rates were not updated in 40 years. Now the rates are no longer in there. The goal is to have them done by the end of June. They've added some new language to the Beaches and Waterfront section regarding use (dusk to dawn instead of exact times, parents cannot leave a child unattended at North Beach, children must be 12 or up to be at the beach alone). Mostly they are just updating language to be current.

Neubieser thanked Wight for the hard work. He asked what the plan is to move the changes through council. Wight asked to have a motion to send the ordinance changes to the consent agenda for the next city council meeting. Schachter moved to place the ordinance changes on the city council consent agenda. Kane seconded and all were in favor.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26pm. The next meeting to be held on 6/26/2024 at 645 Pine St and via Zoom.