

Parks Commission Meeting

March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 5:30pm

645 Pine St., Front Conference Room & Zoom

Commissioners in Attendance: Lantieri, Boehm, Davis & Bergmann

Staff in Attendance: Sauve, Cahill, Santor & O'Daniel

Public in Attendance: none

**1. Agenda**

**1.1 Motion to amend/adopt agenda**

Davis made a motion to accept the agenda with the amendment of removing item 4.1. Boehm seconded. All were in favor, none opposed.

**2. Consent Agenda**

**2.1 February Meeting Minutes**

**2.2 City Hall Park Special Use Permit (ONE Arts)**

**2.3 Oakledge Special Use Permit (VT Commons School)**

**2.4 Pomeroy Park Special Use Permit (UVM Office of Student & Community Relations)**

Boehm made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda.

Davis had a question about the City Hall Park request. It was confirmed that the request was for amplified sound, which satisfied her question.

Bergmann seconded. All were in favor, none opposed.

**3. Public Forum – Time Certain, 6pm**

**3.1 Verbal Comments**

Lantieri opened public forum at 6pm. No one was present in-person or on Zoom, so public forum was closed at 6:01pm.

**4. Deliberative Agenda**

**4.1 Appendix D, Sections 5 & 7**

**4.2 Legacy Funding Request**

Cahill began by referencing the memo included in the agenda packet, noting that it was succinct. He continued by sharing that 451 Ethan Allen Parkway is a 7 acre parcel that is a little past CP Smith and abuts Ethan Allen Park and that it has been a topic of conversation in the conservation realm for a long time because it is largely wetland and it would be an extension of the park if acquired. Cahill continued that the owners were considering developing the frontage of it, but had an ongoing dialogue with the City in regards to when and if they were to do that, they would be open to deeding the remainder of the property to the City. He shared that those same owners have now put it on the market and they have agreed to do an appraisal, so the current request is to use the acquisition bucket of the Legacy Fund to pay for that appraisal, which involves Conservation Board, Parks Commission and Board of Finance approval.

Lantieri asked if the Legacy Fund has been used for appraisal fees before.

Cahill answered yes since it is a cost associated with an acquisition.

Boehm made a motion to authorize the use of the \$3,500 from the Legacy Fund to move forward to the City Council for review and approval. Davis seconded. All were in favor, none opposed.

#### **4.3 Chapter 20, Section 12: E-bikes on the Greenway**

Peterson began by introducing himself and clarifying that this is a discussion, not an action item, with updates on Ordinance changes to Chapters 6 and 20. He continued that the main goal of these updates is clean up and clarity, noting that the current language has not kept up with the types of devices people are using, such e-bikes, motor assisted bikes, scooters and other micro mobility devices. He shared that the updated definitions are aligned with State law and make it clear where these devices can and cannot operate. Peterson continued that other updates include: a more accurate City center boundary and inside of that area only riders 16 and under can use sidewalks, motor assisted devices are not allowed on sidewalks anywhere in the City, and Church Street rules have been clarified so bikes and micro mobility devices are only allowed in the vehicle travel portions of Bank, Cherry, College and northern end of Main Street. He shared that there are also discussions being had about engineering and design in terms of creating more definitive space for these devices as well. Peterson continued that the Ordinance also confirms what is already standard practice – that these devices are allowed on bike paths, bike lanes, shared use pathways and crosswalks. He then touched on the safety section update, which is that all riders yield to pedestrians on shared use paths and stop before entering street crossings when coming off of a sidewalk. He closed by sharing that this was worked on and refined by the Walk/Bike Council and that it will go to the Public Works Commission later this month and then the Ordinance Committee and City Council.

Lantieri noted that the main section he saw that referenced Parks was in Chapter 20, Section 12 “defining the Greenway”.

Peterson confirmed and said that he did take a look at Parks & Rec’s specific section, noting that there are not many definitions or regulations. He continued by suggesting that Parks look to other communities in Vermont who have similar types of trails to see how they are approaching things like e-bikes.

Cahill asked if there was a specific area that Peterson would foresee the Commission and staff putting attention towards.

Peterson answered that looking at it through the lens of what problems are we trying to solve would probably be a good place to start.

Lantieri chimed in that he’s in favor of having one definition for everything to eliminate confusion between the general public right of way and the Greenway, so aligning what’s happening on the Greenway felt logical to him.

Sauve agreed but noted that the consequences should be thought through as well, such as the potential for lack of enforcement.

Peterson agreed and suggested thinking about how signage could help.

Sauve shared that last summer there was a heightened number of calls around e-bikes on the Greenway and concerns for safety and that the hope is to get ahead of it for the

upcoming season. She continued that the Department is thinking through the potential for a Greenway etiquette push to hopefully help.

Peterson responded that the Walk/Bike Council is hearing the same concerns, especially around speed and passing behavior, and the goal is to reduce conflicts between faster-moving devices and pedestrians especially in constrained areas, so anything we can do together on education and etiquette would be helpful.

Cahill asked if there was a name for the newer devices that look like motorcycles.

Peterson referenced the State laws, sharing that they are called EPAMDs (Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Devices). He continued by sharing that there are 3 classes of electric bikes: Class 1 is an e-bike equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance when the bike reaches a speed of 20mph, Class 2 is an e-bike equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel a bicycle and uses a throttle to reach the max speed of 20mph, and Class 3 is similar to Class 2 just no peddling required and the throttle can reach the speed of 28mph. He then shared that devices that can go faster than 28mph are not e-bikes, but could be an EPAMD. Peterson noted that speed has been a discussion with the Walk/Bike Council because there are some people who can cycle on regular bikes faster than e-bikes can go, which makes the speed discussion tricky. He continued that we can call out the different classes of e-bikes, but if the Commission is interested in discussing restrictions, it is important to keep in mind that not everyone will follow them and it may leave some path users out. He noted that personal responsibility does need to play a role.

Boehm asked for clarification around what body has decision making power about the Greenway.

Peterson responded that the City Attorneys could weigh in on that and help clarify.

Lantieri confirmed that the Public Works Commission is already considering this for shared use paths in particular.

Peterson confirmed yes and that with the regulations the way that they will exist once approved, one could make an argument that the Greenway is a shared use path which would fit under this banner of regulations, but that if there are other areas that need specific rules for safety reasons, like at the Bike Park, then Parks Staff and Commissioners could consider additional updates to rules.

After a brief pause for Public Forum, the discussion continued without Peterson focusing on policy vs. ordinance and what Parks staff and Commissioners might need to explore further in terms of updating and/or changing what exists for both for the Greenway and Leddy Bike Park. The consensus was that they would follow these ordinance changes through their next steps and if it feels like something is left out for the Greenway that it would be discussed further with Parks staff and Commissioners.

#### **4.4 Recreation Update: Programs & Reorganization**

Santor began by introducing herself and explained that she oversees the recreation programmers and that she would be sharing a quick overview of where things are at and their programs and welcomed questions. She continued by speaking to the past organizational structure of the recreation team before the RIFs last spring, when there was a Recreation Superintendent above her and then various programmers underneath

her. She continued that after the RIFs, both adult programmer positions were cut and they were directed by the Mayor's office to cease adult programs. Santor shared that it seemed like they did not fully understand the implications of the RIFs so there were a lot of conversations throughout the summer about how that was not a good idea, to the point where they were ready to potentially reinstate the full time position but that was paused in the fall to think through some additional places that position could land instead. Santor continued by sharing that the entire Rec team moved from the CORE to the Miller Center last fall and then earlier this year 2 of the remaining rec programmers resigned from their positions, leaving the athletics coordinator, the outdoor programmer and Santor, which is making them nervous as they gear up for their busiest time of the year. She continued that they are hiring for one of the open programmer positions right now, who will oversee all of the licensed childcare programming and are hoping to hire for the other open position soon, which would give them a team of 4 instead of 5 like before the RIFs with the plan that everyone is a little more generalized and less specialized in their roles, giving the team a little more leeway to offer other programming to the City. Santor continued that while this has been a somewhat forced change she does feel that it is a good thing and is giving them a chance to look holistically at their offerings to see if they are truly serving every age of community members and be strategic about what they can offer with the staff they have. Santor then shared the interim post-RIF organizational chart after and explained which positions were eliminated during that process and what temporary reporting structure changes took place. She then shared the new organizational chart, noting that Lewis will be overseeing all of Rec – with two recreation manager roles, one for Miller, which Santor is in, and one for Leddy, which will be a new role and is currently going through the approval processes, with the appropriate programmers and admin under each location and manager. She continued that there will essentially be 2 separate recreation teams in terms of space, but they will have to operate very closely to offer programming.

Sauve noted that it's important to keep in mind that the new Leddy manager position has yet to go to City Council for approval, so until that happens it does not actually exist. Davis asked when that position would be going to City Council.

Sauve answered in 2 weeks.

Lantieri asked if this was in alignment with what was discussed a few months ago.

Sauve answered yes and that it has become more and more clear that this position is needed. She continued that adult programming should be within all of the existing programming buckets instead of having a position dedicated to it.

Santor chimed in that recreation programming is a unique area that has the capacity to be fully revenue generating, which it has not been in the past but she feels that they are on more solid ground now and is hopeful that they can get there. She closed by offering an opportunity for Commissioners to collaborate and support with the recreation team by helping them get more settled and organized into their space at the Miller Center. There was consensus that they would be interested in doing this and Santor said that she would be in touch soon to get that scheduled.

#### **4.5 FY27 Budget Process**

Sauve shared that the safety tax passed, which is a huge relief and means less cuts overall. She continued that Department budget presentations will happen in late April/early May which is a little later than originally planned, but it gives everyone a little more time. She also shared that there will be another all-staff informational session with the Mayor's office next week.

Boehm asked if the org chart they were shown is what the Department feels will fit within the budget with the impending cuts.

Sauve answered yes.

Davis asked if there were any concerns with getting the new Leddy manager position passed by the City Council.

Sauve did not think so since it is such a logistical position in terms of operations at that facility.

Boehm asked what constituted Council approval for positions.

Sauve answered all new, full-time positions need to be approved by City Council.

Lantieri noted that grade changes for existing positions also need to be approved by City Council.

#### **4.6 Comprehensive Plan Update**

Sauve shared that they are currently working on a statistically valid survey that will go out to residents, but that there has been a lot of push and pull trying to sort through prioritizing what goes in it since it will be for all of the upcoming plans that will be updated through this process. She's planning to have an intern go out into the parks throughout the summer to ask people more questions that the Department is looking for feedback and answers on, noting that the conversations and anecdotes can be more informative than numbers. Sauve shared that they are aiming to have the first open house public meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup>, but that has not been confirmed yet.

#### **4.7 General Fund Capital Project Selection & Prioritization Process (CP3)**

Sauve began by sharing her screen, noting that Ashley Parker, the Director of Capital Planning, created this and presented it to City Council last month and suggested bringing it to the various Commissions to explain how capital planning is prioritized now within the City.

Davis asked how they came up with the prioritization numbers.

Sauve answered that while she's not an expert, she believes they are based on Department proposals as well as the Mayor's prioritizations. She continued that BPRW has a capital plan list for the next 5 years and ranked every single project per the criteria listed in the deck which gets incorporated into an overall list across the City. She shared that it does not mean it's a guarantee but they are at least on the list and conversations can be had.

Lantieri asked if this differs from what BPRW has been doing up until now.

Sauve answered that they did not give rankings to projects before, but that the Planning team would break things down and prioritize safety/health/welfare projects with the help and insight from staff. She continued that BPRW has also tried to make sure all parts of the City are being considered, not just one area over and over. Sauve then shared that she will likely be sharing the BPRW capital list with Commissioners in April so that they are in the know about what they are working on for fiscal year 27.

## **5. Standing Items**

### **5.1 Parks Foundation Update**

Lantieri shared that they are getting ready to re-launch the Playgrounds for All campaign.

### **5.2 Director's Report**

Sauve asked if anyone has questions about the Monthly Report.

Davis asked who puts that together.

Sauve answered that she was but now Jules, the Marketing and Communications Manager, is.

Davis asked if anything is done for work anniversaries.

Sauve answered no, just acknowledgement.

Davis noted the Book Fair and asked who organized that.

Sauve answered KJ.

### **5.3 Commissioner's Items & Volunteer Hours**

Davis shared that she went to the Miller Center in February and spoke with staff and said that she did roughly an hour of volunteering.

Bergmann did not have any hours to report.

Boehm did not have any hours to report for herself, but she shared that Mobley had 4 hours to report between Comprehensive Plan work and bringing bagels to the Miller Center staff during February vacation camp week.

Lantieri had 1 hour to report.

Davis asked if they could volunteer at upcoming Department events like the Book Fair or Kids Day.

Sauve answered yes.

## **6. Adjournment**

### **6.1 Motion to Adjourn**

Boehm made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Davis seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07pm.