CITY OF BURLINGTON
PARKS, ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE

Councilor Joan Shannon, Chair, South District
Councilor Ali Dieng, Ward 7
Councilor Karen Paul, Ward 6

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

AGENDA
Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 8, 2019, 5:30 – 6:30pm
Organizational Meeting
City Hall, Room 12

Approval of agenda
Approval of draft minutes from March 27, 2019
Public Forum
Old Business

1. CEDO – Memorial and Moran Updates, Questions, Discussion (30 min)
2. Parks – Waterfront Park Work Update (20 min)

Councilor Items
Planning scope of work for coming year to report to Council
Adjournment

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Councilor Joan Shannon, Chair, North District
Councilor Ali Dieng, Ward 7
Councilor Karen Paul, Ward 6

Staff: Holli Bushnell, Office Assistant
Lakeview Cemetery
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Minutes
Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 8, 2019, 5:30 pm
Room 12, 149 Church Street, City Hall

Attendance:
Committee Members: Chair Joan Shannon, Councilor Ali Dieng, Councilor Karen Paul

David E White – CEDO, Kristen Merriman-Shapiro – CEDO, Cindi Wight – BPRW Holli Bushnell – BPRW/Clerk's Office, David Hartnett – Community Member

Meeting called to order at 5:38pm

1. Approval of agenda

Councilor Paul moved to approve with the addition of the email from community member O'Brien concerning the Starr Farms Dog Park, Councilor Shannon seconded, all were in favor.

2. Approval of draft minutes from August 23, 2018

Shannon asked to hold the approval of the minutes until the arrival of Councilor Dieng. Minutes were moved to be approved by Councilor Dieng at the end of the meeting and was seconded by Shannon. The minutes were approved.

3. Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 5:42pm. As no one wished to speak, the public forum was also closed at 5:42pm.

4. Old Business

a. CEDO – Memorial and Moran Updates, Questions, and Discussion

David E White started out by confirming that all 3 committee members were familiar with the project. He went on to report that CEDOs last interaction concerning Memorial Auditorium with the City Council was the public forum/town hall style meeting held back in December. The general consensus after that meeting was that the community wants a space for events, conferences, performances, and

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artist/farmer's markets. The cost to renovate the building to accommodate those desires is $32.8 million. Given the large amount of fund required, CEDO has been closely examining the costs and looking at opportunities to leverage dollars. In accordance with another stated desire at the town hall meeting (and with the encouragement of the PACC members), CEDO has also been looking into the possibility of redeveloping the corner parking lot and adjacent motel and brick home.

White reports that CEDO has engaged the services of a consultant to look at market analysis. The consultant's preliminary conclusions were provided to the committee at their February meeting. Essentially, the concern is that to support the cost of running the space, Memorial may need to host around 100 events a year. The consultant is examining whether the community can support that high a number of events considering the large number of other performance venues in the city and surrounding towns. CEDO is also looking at the possibility of hiring/partnering with a non-profit or for profit operator for the finished space.
Currently, CEDO is in the second phase of developing their plan for memorial. They continue to work with a survey consultant and are in the process of creating development proposals. They hope to be able to present PACC with more information in a month or two.

Paul explained that, in an effort to get up to speed with the work of the committee, she looked at the presentation CEDO made at the town hall meeting. That presentation mentions surveying comparable facilities around the country, and she was wondering where those facilities were located. Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro explained that Jeff Glassberg created that survey of facilities, speaking with state historic offices around the country. There are many buildings similar to Memorial in terms of build date, purpose, and the size of the surrounding community. In almost every case, if a city retained ownership of the building (even if the space was being run by an outside entity) there was an ongoing subsidy of around $200,000 to $400,000 per year provided by the city. Though some cities, such as Worcester, MA, renovated and modernized their auditoriums (investing a tremendous amount of funds to do so), many (including Worcester) are no longer being used by the public.

Paul was curious if there were private partners supporting/managing the open auditoriums or if those cities were managing the space on their own. Merriman-Shapiro confirmed that most had a private management company, but that the cities still provided operational subsidies. Paul then asked about the budget documents from CEDOs town hall meeting presentation. The difference in several of the numbers presented in two of the slides confused her. She asked about the financing options for the space and if Memorial would qualify for New Market tax credits or TIF funds. Merriman-Shapiro explained that TIF funds would not be allocated for the renovation but would be available for other things. White will

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provide an up-to-date analysis at the next meeting. He cautioned Paul that the presentation for the December town hall meeting was conceptual. CEDO will be able to provide a more accurate, knowledgeable presentation soon.

Shannon asked when an update might be available, and White answered that CEDO hopes to be ready in a month or two and should be able to provide the committee with 2 or 3 additional ideas. Shannon asked White to confirm that CEDO will be ready with an update for July. She also asked if he felt this would be a good opportunity for another town hall style meeting. While White believes CEDO will be prepared with an update by July he would like to confer with PACC before bring the public back into the discussion. Shannon also asked if PACC could be provided with a list of non-profit and for-profit partners from other municipal auditorium projects. Merriman-Shapiro will email committee members with this information.

Paul asked about the projected operating costs, posing the question of how much the building is currently costing the city to maintain. White did not have the exact amount the city is currently spending on hand, but will be able to provide that information in a future update. As for the projected operating costs, White believes that an operating partner will either pay for those costs or provide enough in rent to cover the costs. Some of the rent provided by an operator would also be allocated to a reserve fund for future repairs.

Dieng asked if It would be possible to get federal grant money for the project. He also asked White if there was a timeline for the project and what CEDO was focusing on in terms of the 4 original options that were presented at the meeting back in December. White responded that federal grant money is a possibility, but, as an application was just submitted, CEDO will not know the outcome of their application until August at the earliest. In terms of a timeline, this is a long-term project. CEDOs goal is to have everything ready to be on the March or November 2020 ballot (the November 2019 ballot is also a possibility) when the public can vote on the bond and on use of TIF funds. In terms of the 4 original options, CEDO has been focusing primarily on the “super block” concept. This is due to public interest, the potential of TIF funding, and the greater potential for non-profit or for-profit partnerships.

White moved on to an update on the Moran FRAME concept. In February the City council approved the FRAME concept and passed a resolution approving the issuance of waterfront TIF bonds for the project. CEDO has since been looking into HUD funding. Merriman-Shapiro, who is heading the project, has put out a request for qualifications and will be bringing in a design team. She will be starting work on the permitting process by the end of this month. Her hope is to bring the designs to DRB in June. She also met with the SHPO earlier in the day of the PACC meeting (5/8).

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Shannon asked what the funding parameters are for the project. Merriman-Shapiro reminded everyone that the bonding for TIF funds already approved and allocated by the voters must be completed by the end of the year (12/31/2019). It is possible to bond earlier in the year, but all permitting needs to be completed first. Additionally the city should not pay bond interest any earlier than needed.

Paul brought up that, while Merriman-Shapiro visited all the other NPA meetings in the city, she did not come to Ward 6 as they did not meet in January. Merriman-Shapiro informed Paul that she did attend the next Ward 6 NPA meeting, but she would be happy to come back and discuss the FRAME with community members again. Paul also asked if there is a timeline available for FRAME. She also wondered if waterfront residents have been contacted and/or engaged concerning the project as it impacts them directly.

Merriman-Shapiro reports that the timeline to bond before the end of the calendar year is on track, but it is very tight. She and CEDO are working hard to keep the process on track. In terms of waterfront residents, they have not been specifically contacted though they have had the same access to information on the project that all other city residents have had. Zoning will notify people whose property abuts the project during the permitting process, and CEDO will engage with them should the need arise at that time. Also, Merriman-Shapiro intends to work with the community again once phase one is complete. Paul also asked about the 20% contingency factored into the cost of the project. 20% is rather high and Paul wondered if there might be some funds left over. Merriman-Shapiro admitted that the current working numbers are still in the conceptual phase. Engineering details need to be acquired before a budget can be finalized. That said, she will certainly provide an update as soon as numbers are finalized. If there are funds left over, the town hall meeting has provided CEDO with a list of additions that the community wants. CEDO will take those into account and choose the most desirable options to add on to the project.

Shannon concluded this topic by asking that any additional funds be used to create a "safe port in a storm" at the FRAME.

b. Parks – Waterfront Park Work Update and Starr Farms Dog Park Discussion

Cindi Wight informed the commission that work at Waterfront Park has consisted of installing 4 new power stations in the park that will provide more power and limit the # of generators needed. It is a simplified and streamlined layout that will reduce the number of vehicles that need to drive onto the site. A new empty conduit has been installed that runs north to south that allows producers to run cords under the ground. This will limit the ramping on-site to keep it safer during events. There are linear irrigation lines that run east to west that will limit punctures of lines as tent

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companies will be able to find them. New light poles will be up no later than 5/23 and will have outlets in them.

The north end of the park has been brought up significantly for a more even grade that is crowned for better drainage. There are new catch basins and drainage infrastructure on the east side. There is existing infrastructure on the west side. Finally, a contractor is hydro seeding the area this week (5/8/2019) with an annual rye. It is a preferred seed for cool weather and quick germination. If conditions are optimal, BPRW will give it a first mow in 3 weeks. They will then cut in the regular waterfront turf seed mix for warmer weather growth and hardiness.

This project provides the final cap on Waterfront Park as required by DEC. Funding was 86% TIF $, 6% Capital (annual lighting), 8% Park Impact fees and less than 1% efficiency VT (super small but will be a tiny bit!). Full cost with contingency is $814,000. BPRW does anticipate needing to use most of the contingency, incorporating additional electrical costs and enhanced seeding of the area.

Shannon asked if the new lights at Waterfront Park will be Dark Skies lights. Wight believes that is most likely the case. Once the seeds are planted BPRW staff will double rope off the area of new plantings. The goal is to keep both people and pets off the new grass while it establishes growth.

Wight also reports that BPRW will be opening Waterworks Park on June 27th. A time for the opening has not been set yet, but it will most likely be in the afternoon. She will inform the committee when a time has been set. Dieng asked Wight to clarify where Waterworks Park is located and Wight provided him with an explanation. She will also send pictures of the site.

Wight next provided the committee with an update on issues at the Starr Farm Road Dog Park. Essentially, BPRW has listened to the desires of community members to make the park area smaller and enforce the hours. There is a new site coordinator which should help mitigate the issues with after-hours and inappropriate use/behavior, and BPRW is currently working up several different designs.

Shannon asked if the park should really be reduced. Wight responded that a reduction in size is one of the highest desires in that community. The park is just too big. Reducing the size will make the space more sustainable, keep the dogs a little further away from surrounding houses, and allow BPRW to plant a buffer to minimize noise.

Dieng was concerned that the issue was not just with the size but the smell and general neglect of the park. He asked if it might be possible to move the dog park to

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a different location. Shannon reminded him that a great deal of discussion and research went into the location selection before any dog park was developed. Wight confirmed that residents do not want to remove the park, but would rather modify it to better fit the community's needs. They also would like to see the rules enforced more strictly.

Paul commented that, according to the email of Mr. O'Brien, the primary complaint is a tremendous amount of barking and noise between 9 and 10 in the evening. She asked if perhaps BPRW could ensure that a member of BPD could be present to enforce the hours, preventing the problem from happening between 9 and 10 at night. She also felt that there may be some merit to adding a dog park at Ethan Allen Park as well as reducing the size of the Starr Farms park.

Community member Dave Hartnett took the opportunity to remind those present that, while residents of the area would love to see the dog park removed entirely they know that removal is not a likely option. Those residents would likely be mollified if the rules were enforced consistently, the size of the park was reduced to something more manageable, and a buffer was put in place to minimize noise.

Shannon asked if there was a way to require Burlington residents to register their dogs in order to use the dog parks. Perhaps they could be issued a password to an electronic lock or key card with their registration? While Dieng reacted positively to this suggestion, he did wonder if this would curb the after-hours use which is one of the most problematic issues.

Wight believes that the rules just need to be enforced. With the new site coordinator and volunteers the solution could be as simple as a combination lock. Volunteers would simply ask patrons who are using the park after hours to leave when they lock the gate for the night.

Dieng asked if BPRW and the city council could work with area vets to require city registration before care is administered. The general consensus was that this would not be effective. Bushnell reports that the Clerk's office requires an up to date rabies vaccine in order for a dog to be registered with the city.

Shannon asked Wight if problem dogs access to the park could be revoked based on the number of their infractions. Wight believes this is a possibility, but more research needs to be done. Shannon asked if Wight would be able to present an update at the next meeting and Wight agreed to do so.

5. Councilor Items

a. Planning scope of work for coming year and to report to City Council

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Shannon stated that she feels that PACCs main focus in the coming year should start with the items discussed at the current meeting: Memorial Auditorium, Moran, and the Starr Farms Dog Park. She asked Paul, Dieng, and Wight (White and Merriman-Shapiro had already departed) to provide input as well.

Wight would like to discuss the new Tree Ordinance that BPRW is currently developing. This item should be ready to review in the fall.

Paul asked if the agenda could have a standing item of an update on City Hall Park. All agreed this would be a good idea.

Dieng asked for the French Friendliness Resolution could be on the next agenda and Shannon agreed.

Shannon concluded by stating that, while in the past meetings had been held monthly regardless of topics for discussion, she would prefer the meetings focus on specific topics. This would decrease the number of meetings for department heads and take some stress from them. The committee agreed this would be a positive change.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:58pm. The next meeting will be held on July 11th, 2019 at 5:30pm, location TBD.

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