

**Burlington Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2021**

Commissioners in Attendance:

Chairman David Norden, Commissioner Paul Raymond, Commissioner Tom Murphy, Vice Chairman Steve Nelson

Staff in Attendance:

Director Brendan Egan, Program Coordinator Kelly Lehman, Acting Superintendent of Park Maintenance Bill Baker

Absent:

Commissioner Sullivan

Chairman Norden called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

Chairman Norden announced the virtual meeting reminder pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting law imposing strict limitations of the number of people who may gather in one place. This meeting of the Recreation Commission is being held via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. Voting will be done by a roll call vote.

Director Egan announced that residents who would like to attend or listen to the meeting may do so live via the BCAT Government cable access channel; or by dialing 408-418-9388 with the meeting number 179 186 2489.

Minutes:**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Norden asked for a motion to approve the minutes of December 16th, 2020. Commissioner Nelson made the motion seconded by Commissioner Murphy.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Commissioner Murphy – aye

Commissioner Raymond – aye

Commissioner Nelson – aye

Commissioner Norden – aye

VOTE: 4-0-0 (Commissioner Sullivan absent)

Public Participation

No Public Participation

Parks & Recreation Report

Presented by Director Egan

New Maintenance Facility

Progress on the maintenance facility is moving along. It is currently being heated at night by temporary heaters. Some of the overhead doors are installed; spray insulation and interior sheetrock are nearing completion; painting has begun in Building A; and they are working on the HVAC, installing ductwork,

plumbing and electrical in both buildings. In Building B, plumbing is nearing completion and getting ready for inspection. The boilers have been set in place in Building B Mezzanine; and they are working on the piping to the boilers.

Contractor CTA has given an updated formal schedule to the town. "Substantial Completion", 90% or more complete, is looking to be about 1 month late. Director Egan hopes that they may be able to make up some time if the weather holds out. Director Egan is working to schedule a tour of the facility. Submittals for the equipment that will go into the garage; the presses, saws, and lifts, are coming in. Only a few changes need to be made to those submittals. Director Egan is working with Acting Superintendent Baker to get them approved.

Budget

The Administration is working hard on the budget. There was a Department Heads meeting last week, followed by a meeting with the Town Accountant. The meeting was for chairs of elected boards and commissions; and Ways & Means was involved. FY22 is going to be difficult considering the economic climate; building permits are down; local meal taxes are down about a third of what they usually are; and hotel taxes are almost non-existent. This sets us up for a difficult FY22 and probably a year or two after as well. Director Egan hopes that after the vaccinations we will be able to return to typical operations.

Although the residential real estate values have remained high and constant, the commercial values have decreased. There are many questions about what the market will look like over the upcoming years. The biggest question is whether or not people will return to working in offices or continue to work remotely. Director Egan suggested the best possible case scenario is a level funded budget. Administration is working with Ways and Means to find a solution that works and hope to have some guidelines by the end of next week.

Internally, the Parks & Recreation Department has been working on the budget. Although, they are hoping to not have to cut staff too much, part time positions will most likely be impacted.

Chair Norden added that a level fund for 2022 would be great and hopes that the Parks & Recreation Department is able to find a way to not affect the full-time staff.

Commissioner Nelson asked Director Egan how much would have to come out of the budget in order to meet contractual obligations and become level funded. Director Egan indicated that he would confirm with the BMEA Contract about the contractual increases. Director Egan believes the Town's top priority would be to not have to cut staff; the general fund and the accommodated accounts would all be level funded. Commissioner Nelson indicated that they will need about 2 ½ percent on the School Committee budget to meet the contractual obligations. Commissioner Murphy added that the 2 ½ percent is without COLAs; and that it is closer to 3% when the COLA is factored in.

The second round of budget guideline discussions is occurring tonight, about a month behind schedule. Murphy indicated he thought one of the topics will be about how much to access the Free Cash and Stabilization Funds. Commissioner Nelson asked for the balances. Commissioner Murphy responded that the Free Cash balance has more than ten million; and that there is approximately six or seven million in the Stabilization fund.

Director Egan announced that maintenance division will be installing hand sanitizer stations in six of the parks; Simonds, Wildwood, Regan, Veterans, Rahanis, and TRW. The units will be able to hold a gallon of sanitizer.

Completed the posting process for the position of Superintendent of Recreation Maintenance. We have two internal candidates, Acting Parks Superintendent, Bill Baker and Acting Lead Working Foreman, Mark Gerbrands. Interviews are scheduled for next Wednesday.

Town Meeting is scheduled for January 25th at 7:30. It will be a hybrid meeting with most attending virtually. The meeting link can be found on the town website. The Parks & Recreation Department will not have any articles going before the Committee. Director Egan will distribute all materials prior to the meeting.

Recreation Maintenance Report

Presented by Acting Superintendent of Recreation Maintenance Bill Baker

The crew has shut down and removed the holiday lights; and put away all the holiday decorations. They have gathered the picnic tables that need painting or repairs from the parks. We are going through the supplies that will be moved to the new building; and are inspecting equipment to ensure it is in good working order. He added they poured a new cement pad and installed another bench on the Town Common. As Director Egan mentioned, we are installing the sanitation stations in the parks; and we continue to keep up with trash removal, recycling, and sanitizing the playgrounds and portable toilets.

Commissioner Murphy acknowledged Acting Superintendent Baker and the crew for a timely response to a resident's concern about trash and debris that had accumulated near the football field.

Chair Norden asked if Acting Superintendent Baker has seen any loitering or vandalism recently. Acting Superintendent Baker Bill indicated that they haven't seen any evidence or damage.

Program Coordinator Report

Presented by Program Coordinator Kelly Lehman

Virtual programming started this week. A number of fitness programs have been cancelled due to low or no enrollment; but the rest of the programming is going well. Therapeutic Recreation Specialist Emma Jones created 4-days of programming for participants in our Therapeutic Recreation division, Monday through Thursday afternoons including Adapted Zumba, Book Club, Art Club, Adapted Yoga, and other special events.

Winter program enrollment is lower than typical but was expected.

We received some mixed reviews of the new splash page on our website that was used for registration. More than most of the residents liked the new system and we are continuing to improve the user experience adding more keywords which will allow for broader search opportunities.

Chairman Norden inquired about more outdoor classes for the Spring. Program Coordinator Lehman indicated that the Spring programs will most likely be run more like they had been in the Fall, with the ability to run more programs outside; and expressed her hope to be able to run programs closer to how they had normally been run prior to the pandemic, all of which is dependent on the Governor's guidelines and vaccination regulations.

Program Coordinator Lehman announced that the part time Recreation Therapist, Kate DeAngelis has left the Town of Burlington to become the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist for the Town of Lexington. Program Coordinator Lehman and the Recreation Commission wish Kate DeAngelis well and success in her new role.

New Business

No new business

Since the last meeting, Director Egan shared the 10 year plan with the Commissioners and as discussed during the last meeting Director Egan would like to schedule a meeting at the end of next week or the following week to discuss possible warrant articles.

Chair Norden suggested January 27th at 3 o'clock. He hopes that the Commission will have a better idea of the budget by that time. Director Egan will provide the backup for the warrant articles to the Commissioners prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Murphy shared information from the last guideline meeting indicating they would like to minimize the effects on the operating budgets. For the last few years most warrant articles have been funded by the meals tax and hotel tax, which as Director Egan mentioned are way down. They will use money from the stabilization budget to stabilize the operating budget so warrant articles will most likely be postponed for a year.

Old Business

No old business

Executive Session

No need

The next Recreation Commission meeting will be scheduled for 3:00 on Jan 27th

Chairman Norden asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Murphy; seconded by Commissioner Raymond.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Commissioner Nelson - aye

Commissioner Murphy - aye

Commissioner Raymond - aye

Commissioner Norden - aye

VOTE: 4-0-0 (Commissioner Sullivan absent)

Chairman Norden adjourned the WebEx meeting at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terese Castellano