

**Burlington Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2021**

Commissioners in Attendance:

Chair David Norden, Vice Chair Steve Nelson, Commissioner Tom Murphy, Commissioner Kevin Sullivan, Commissioner Paul Raymond

Staff in Attendance:

Director of Parks & Recreation Brendan Egan, Program Coordinator Kelly Lehman, Superintendent of Recreation Maintenance Bill Baker

Chair Norden called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Chair 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 129 434 9376.

Minutes**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Norden asked for a motion to approve the minutes of March 3rd, 2021.

Commissioner Paul Raymond made the motion seconded by Commissioner Tom Murphy.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Commissioner Murphy – aye

Commissioner Sullivan – aye

Commissioner Nelson - abstain

Commissioner Raymond – aye

Commissioner Norden – aye

VOTE: 4-0-1 (Vice Chair Nelson was absent for March 3rd)

Public Participation

No Public Participation

Director of Parks & Recreation Report

presented by Director of Parks & Recreation Brendan Egan

New Maintenance Facility

Director Egan scheduled an additional tour for those who were not able to make the first tour before the last Recreation Commission meeting. The architect from Weston and Sampson was present, as well as the construction manager from CTA Construction to answer all questions. The staff was impressed with the facility.

Regan Playground Light

The Regan Playground light work is completed and just waiting for Eversource to hook up the main power. After it is connected, the timing sensor will be programmed for motion and duration. Director Egan will work with the neighbors over the next few months to adjust the angle and the duration of the time for the light to stay on after it is triggered. It is estimated to have power in early April.

Rahanis Playground

Rahanis Playground parking lot went before the Conservation Commission following our last Recreation Commission meeting. Megan Cavalier with the Engineering Dept. presented. The Conservation Commission had some technical questions on drainage and pitch. The project was supported and moved to their next meeting tomorrow night where Director Egan anticipates it will be approved. Once it is approved, it will go out to bid.

The Mill St parking lot needs to be completed by June 25th to be in place for our Summer programs. The Patriot Road side will begin after Mill Street side is completed. Parks & Recreation will work with the High School athletic department to arrange for parking during tennis matches; and to communicate where to park.

Chair Norden questioned how long they will be out for bid. He is concerned about the schedule and use of the park for tennis matches and summer programs. Director Egan explained that bids sit on the state's Central Registry, for 2 weeks. Work will begin in May and will affect people who will be using the park during the day in May. The Parks and Recreation Department will use social media to direct residents on where to park.

Capital Items

Director Egan and Chair Norden attended the Capital Budget Committee on Tuesday, March 16th to discuss the FY22 requests: the sunshade, seedavator and the accessible van.

The committee recalled the sunshade being presented in prior years, understood the need for it, and seemed to support it. They had some positive comments about the condition of the fields and seemed to be in support of the seedavator as well. Director Egan explained that the accessible van may be pushed off for at least another year due to the limited number of trips occurring at this time and explained that the department will apply for a grant through the DOT for a van.

The Committee did not vote on any items during the meeting.

They did have some questions about possibly returning to a grass field at the High School, but after discussion understood the benefits and the need for a turf field. Commissioner Murphy

added that the School Committee voted last night in support of replacing the high school turf field as their warrant article.

Ways & Means

Last week, the Parks & Recreation Department met with Ways & Means to present the FY 22 budget. The discussion centered around the new facility and transitioning out of the existing one. The current facility will still be up and functioning for a few years as they build the new DPW garage. The space will be used as transition space for DPW, Animal Control and our department. Ways & Means approved the FY22 Parks & Recreation budget unanimously.

Program Division Recognition

The Parks & Recreation Program Division was recognized by the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association for their work on virtual programming. Director Egan recognized Program Coordinator, Kelly Lehman; Assistant Program Coordinator, Jessie Hampson; Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, Emma Jones; and former part-time Recreation Therapist, Kate DeAngelis for their hard work, creativity, and dedication to the department and residents of Burlington. They received the Program Outreach Award for their work on virtual programming including a plaque that will be hung in the office. Director Egan is appreciative that the division was recognized for their hard work and dedication; and he thanked Program Coordinator Lehman and her team.

Commissioner Raymond shared how it is nice to see the Program Division getting the recognition they deserve and how it also helps Parks & Recreation when it comes time to ask for funds and support from the town.

Commissioners Sullivan and Norden offered their congratulations and expressed their appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the Program Division staff.

Recreation Maintenance Report

presented by Superintendent of Recreation Maintenance Bill Baker

We are preparing for the spring season. We placed a turf blanket on the in-field at Francis Wyman to stimulate early growth. All the tennis and pickle ball nets are up at Simonds and Rahanis parks. We have been repairing gates and damaged fencing at the parks and schools. Some of the crew has been in the woods at Simonds Park cutting up and removing dead and fallen trees. We have also been cutting back the limbs at the Francis Wyman garden to allow more sun for the garden. We completed painting and repairing the picnic tables, as well as the benches along the parking lot at Mary Cummings Estate Park.

We started lining fields for soccer and lacrosse and completed an updated inventory list of equipment to identify what will be moving to the new building in May. We are almost finished cleaning up behind the shop to make space for storage containers from the Highway Department.

We have been working on repairing the basketball courts at Simonds, but only have one court completed because we need over 50 degree weather (days and nights).

All of the barrels have been placed at the parks and schools; we have been keeping up with the trash in town, and sanitizing the playgrounds weekly.

Discussion

Commissioner Nelson asked when the port a potties will be placed at Mary Cummins Estate Park. Director Egan received bids on Friday; they will be going up the first week in April. Commissioner Nelson also asked about fixing the pot holes at Mary Cummings Estate parking lot. Superintendent Baker stated that they resurfaced the lot with stone dust a month ago; it is a continuous maintenance effort.

Chair Norden shared how happy he was to see Wildwood and Simonds completely filled with people out enjoying the parks.

Program Coordinator Report

presented by Program Coordinator Kelly Lehman

Program Coordinator Lehman acknowledged the Program Outreach Award sharing that she and her staff view it as a department award because it is a complete effort with the support of the administrative staff, the maintenance staff, and the office staff.

Our Easter events kicked off this past weekend. This year, because it wasn't possible to operate a typical egg hunt, the staff hid eggs in parks and facilities with QR codes which had different point values. The department received positive feedback and will build on this type of programming in the future. Additionally this week, the department is hosting a virtual Bunny Hop, Operation Bunny Egg Drop and Paint with the Easter Bunny.

Spring programs will begin in our facility starting on April 5. Enrollment for programs has been going well with the exception of fitness classes which typically will pick up once the seasonal classes have finished.

April is Autism Acceptance month. The program staff has put together a small calendar of events including a virtual speaker, virtual yoga classes and the maintenance staff is putting blue lights on the common. We hope to raise acceptance for people who live with and care for people with autism.

The program staff has declared May to be Springapalooza! The department has partnered with the Library and the Conservation Commission to offer programs to help people get outside as much as possible. Events include a Fairy Trail & Gnome Roam, Stuffed Animal Picnic, and Virtual Garden Tea Party amongst others. We are still working on the details and expect to have information out in the next two weeks.

The Governor's office released camp and recreation program guidelines yesterday. The program staff will use the guidelines to develop summer programs.

Discussion

No discussion

New Business

Presented by Director Egan

Pickleball at Simonds Park

Commissioner Sullivan spoke to a resident who is concerned about the level of noise that is generated on the pickleball court at Simonds Park – the court closest to Church Lane. Pickleball is noisier than tennis with wooden paddles and a plastic ball. Commissioner Sullivan reached out to Director Egan who has been working on some possible sound mitigation solutions.

Director Egan explained that he is working with a Student Environmental Activists (SEA) group at the high school on a planting project. One of the student's parents is in the energy field and has donated money for the planting project. We are going to plant baby blue spruce trees which will grow 12-15 feet high and 6-8 feet wide at their maturity, to create a natural buffer. Director Egan has also been working with a company in Florida that has a noise cancelling type of screen for pickleball courts. It does not completely block the noise but does muffle it and is being used on pickleball courts in communities nationwide. They are quite expensive, so Director Egan is working with them on pricing. Once they are ordered, it is a two-week turnaround to receive them. We should have the screens installed by late April; and will begin planting the spruce trees in May.

Director Egan mentioned that there was a question about parking on the side street as well. He explained that it is legal to park on the side street, but will place a sign there to ask visitors to park in the Simonds parking lot as a courtesy to the neighbors. Lastly, our pickleball courts are "first come first serve" open play. They are not reserved online. We have put together a simple set of rules with a self-policing rotation process.

Discussion

Commissioner Sullivan asked how tall the trees will be when they are planted. Director Egan explained that they will be about 6 feet tall. They grow about a foot a year.

Commissioner Sullivan also asked if the commission could re-visit the issue to confirm that the noise has been diminished after the screens have been installed and after the trees have grown a bit.

Chair Norden asked about the funding for the noise muffling screens. Director Egan mentioned that we have some funds remaining from the tennis and pickle ball court re-paving project.

Commissioner Raymond expressed his appreciation to the resident who offered to donate funds for the planting project.

Chair Norden asked if anyone has been approached with creating a pickle ball league. Program Coordinator Lehman mentioned that she had been approached prior to the pandemic. At this time, with only the four courts available, in order to have a league, we would have to take over all four courts at least one night a week.

The commission spoke about how to make a pickleball league possible in the future. There is a possibility to run a temporary league like we had on the Regan basketball court by manually

setting up the nets and working with the highway department to move the berm on the back line.

Rahanis Playground Tennis Court Resurfacing Bid

Director Egan stated that we opened the bids on Thursday March 11th and received four bids. The low bidder is Vermont Recreational Surfacing and Fencing with a bid of \$48,339. We have worked with them in the past on the Simonds Park tennis and skate park project. Director Egan recommends that the Commission vote to accept the bid in the amount of \$48,339.00 for the Rahanis Playground tennis court resurfacing and award the contract to Vermont Recreational Surfacing and Fencing.

Commissioner Raymond made the motion; seconded by Commissioner Nelson,

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Commission Murphy - aye

Commissioner Sullivan – aye

Commissioner Nelson - aye

Commissioner Raymond – aye

Commissioner Norden – aye

VOTE: 5-0-0

Simonds Trust Warrant Article

Director Egan explained this is the last warrant article for the year. We do not have an amount yet but accounting suggested to go forward with a ‘to be determined’ amount. Director Egan would like to ask the Commission to vote to accept a disbursement from the will of Marshall Simonds in an amount to be determined for the improvement of Simonds Park.

Commissioner Nelson made the motion; seconded by Commissioner Sullivan.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Commission Murphy - aye

Commissioner Sullivan – aye

Commissioner Nelson - aye

Commissioner Raymond – aye

Commissioner Norden – aye

VOTE: 5-0-0

Old Business

Director Egan heard back from Town Administrator Paul Sagarino regarding the ownership of the Marvin Field property. Town Counsel has reached out to the City of Boston again and the City has responded that they are on hold due to the mayoral transition. Director Egan suspects once it gets discussed it will move forward allowing the Town of Burlington continued use of the field.

Commissioners Raymond and Nelson expressed their thoughts about the issue. Commissioner Nelson suggested some courses of action on behalf of the Town if the City of Boston engages in legal action.

Executive Session

No need for Executive Session

Chair Norden asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Raymond made the motion; seconded by Commissioner Nelson.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Commission Murphy - aye

Commissioner Sullivan – aye

Commissioner Nelson - aye

Commissioner Raymond – aye

Commissioner Norden – aye

VOTE: 5-0-0

Chair Norden adjourned the WebEx meeting at 4:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terese Castellano