

## **February 16th Parks Commission Meeting Minutes**

Commission Members Present: Carolyn Grodinsky, Bryan Pfeiffer, Kip Roberts , Emily Boedecker

Staff: Alec Ellsworth

Public: Danis, Marilyn

Agenda addition - Bark for Life, motion by Bryan, seconded, Carolyn, all voted in favor.  
January Minutes approved, Bryan motioned, Carolyn seconded, all voted in favor..

## **Discussion with Jesse Baker and Bill Frasier, City of Montpelier**

### **Parks Commission Coordination and Planning with the City**

#### **Budget**

**Bill:** Process could be improved, Commission has always been pretty independent during his 20+ year tenure. City Council is asking all city departments to make cuts, not only the Parks Department. Bill gives Parks Director guidelines, based on what the City Council says.

This year the process was drastically different – sat the entire leadership team down together and prioritized what could get cut. Geoff missed this meeting. City Manager's office plans to do this again with the leadership team. Also goal is to have all depts engaged and caring about service City delivers to residents. Example given if trash bin overflowing should not just be DPW who calls it in to be taken care of.

The Parks Commission should play a role earlier in the budget process when the council is setting the goals in November.

**Dona Bate** - Helpful for Parks Commission to give something written to City Council when the Council is writing the guidelines for the budget.

Parks Commissioners can get on the Council agenda anytime they want, contact mayor's office. Good for Parks Commission to share their vision for Parks with the Council and see if it's in line with the Council vision.

#### **Park Impact Fees**

**Emily** – useful conversation for Parks to know the funding mechanisms to acquire land. This is one of the strategic goals of the parks commission to increase options for trails and access to parks for all residents.

**Bill** - State law dictates how to do Impact Fees. Mike Miller raised concerns about current process for impact fees. Current ordinance has been rescinded, can be reinstated in future with different set up. One important process is to set up the fee, what you plan to do with these fees, and track expenditures.

**Bryan** – Would City be interested in restoring Impact Fees through an ordinance? **Bill** – yes

**Carolyn** – should the Parks have a standing meeting, perhaps twice a year, that Parks meets with the Council (e.g add it to the Parks calendar). **Dona** - yes

**Bryan** suggested Parks Commission create an annual workplan, include annual update and review with the City Council, and select a commissioner to be the liaison with the City Council.

### **Departmental Consolidation**

**Jesse** – Council has taken several votes to move Recreation Dept from schools to City. Council has approved a transition plan to move by July 1, 2016

This is a major task with all energies focusing on this right now. Later this year will look into possibilities with Parks Dept, Senior Center, Rec Dept, Cemetery Commission. Long-term goal to integrate these separate groups to create a larger organization/Dept when opportunities arise. Key question as part of this is how do all the Boards integrate in with the new setup? Long term plan is to do things better, and to do things more efficiently, share resources such as grant writer and administration.

**Bill** - Right now focus is on transitioning getting Recreation Dept on board. Parks is full city dept today, Cemetery is quasi City dept so would likely look to Parks Dept first. Staff would be interested in getting Parks Commission input on transition.

**Dog cards:** Are approved and printed. Alec to print more to have ready to hand out at Town Meeting Day, at Quirky Pet, Guys, Library.

### **Canine Code of Conduct sign:**

Commission reviewed layout of sign/design. Decided to add Parks Commission name and Parks office phone number to signs. Signs will be put up at 1) Winter Street entrance, 2) Hubbard Park Drive, 3) boulders, 4) seven fireplaces. Bryan made a motion to request approval for the dog signs and location, Carolyn seconded, all voted in favor.

### **Trail name changes:**

Parks Dept. is making a number of trail signs. So this is the time to change the trail names as the signs are being made. Trail names to be reflective of what the trail is. Alec and Geoff to come back to Commission with proposal for the names of the trails, and a budget. Signs will be set at major trail intersections.

### **Nature Trail Bridge Project Proposal:**

Alec presented overview of this project. Bridge would be located over the vernal pool, near the new shelter, and connected to the Nature Trail. Could be built by a Yestermorrow Class, materials and design would cost \$3 – \$5 K, labor would be free. Parks Commissioners should look at the design. Where would the funding come from? Donna Bate suggested a fundraiser - you could “buy a foot on the Bridge”. Commissioner expressed two concerns, the budget and if this was appropriate in the park. Commissioners asked for more details from Alec/Geoff at the next meeting.

**National Civilian Community Corps Crew** – Americorps Program that gets you a crew of 8-12 people. Stay for 6 weeks, all want to be housed together. Parks and Cross Vermont Trail

Association interested in co-hosting. Commissioners suggested posting on Front Porch Forum to find out about possible places to stay. Commission told Alec to go for it!

Bryan moved to adjourn the meeting, Kip seconded

**Future Parks Commission Agenda Items**

Nature Trail Bridge Project Proposal

Dog etiquette in Montpelier Parks – Green Mt Club and CVHS, Carolyn

Summer Project Overview – Geoff (land acquisition)

City Council Parks Liaison

Summer – merging Parks with City

Taking minutes

Parks Impact Fee

Budgeting process