

**MEETING MINUTES ST. ALBANS CITY PARKS COMMISSION MEETING
RECREATION DEPARTMENT, 39 BARLOW STREET, 2ND FLOOR
6:00 PM TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2018**

Board Members Present:

Chair Tom Koldys, Vice-Chair Joan McGinn, Stina Booth, Alec Kaeding, and Angie Storm

Board Members Absent: Barbara Weinstein

Public Present: Kelly Wakefield, Dale Powers, Warren Hamm, Alex Lehning, Jeff Young,

Staff Present: Andrew Gratton, Recreation Program Manager; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Wendy Coy, Minute Taker

AGENDA

1. Open Meeting – called to order at 6:00 p.m.

a. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda - None

2. Updates from WHLA regarding Taylor Park Master Plan – Phasing and Next Steps: Mr. Sawyer presented the Taylor Park Master Plan. The Park Commission had prepared a map for review that showed ideas to be explored and where they should go. The City Council approved it and the plans have gone back to the engineers to start working on finalizing the plan. The Park Commission now needs to prioritize those ideas. Mr. Sawyer distributed the Taylor Park Master Plan phasing diagram and the Taylor Park Conceptual Phasing Plan. The Conceptual Phasing Plan lists the ideas for Taylor Park and their priority and rating. Mr. Sawyer believes that some of the priorities are off. The Commission should look at the list and reprioritize the items. The Commission with input from the Garden Club members and Mr. Sawyer re-prioritized the items on the phasing plan. Mr. Lehning commented the list was starting to look very top heavy. Member Booth asked how the engineers came up with the prioritization of the ideas as the Commission's priorities seem to be very different from the list that they were given. She asked if the ideas that were dependent on each other were prioritized the same. So, if the grading was a high priority and the walkways were dependent on the grading, were both items a high priority. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would ask the engineers. Mr. Hamm asked what improving the Civil War Monument entailed. Mr. Sawyer stated that the floor of the monument needed to be redone to increase the longevity of the monument. He would not consider it an improvement. Member Young stated that moving monuments should be a lower priority. Mr. Hamm stated that if the monuments could be kept at a higher priority, he would be able to get the support of the veterans in helping with the moving of the monuments. Chair Koldis asked about what permits would be needed. Mr. Sawyer answered that the engineers will determine what permits you need based on the phasing. Mr. Sawyer stated that audio and wi-fi needed to be added to the list. Vice-Chair McGinn stated that a sound study needs to be done for the placement of the band pavilion. Member Storm asked if the sound study was for the ability to hear the band or a concern of the residents hearing the music. This is for the ability to hear the band. Mr. Young would like to see the cost comparisons for the walkways and the pavers. Member

Keading asked about the price of the maintenance levels. Mr. Young questioned the absence of the turf situation on the phasing plan. It is very poor especially the green. The green has been raked, patched with sod and reseeded two years in row. It is a high maintenance item. The runoff under the trees causes different type of grass issues. It becomes very hard to seed as the water washes the seed away. Member Keading asked if an archeological resource assessment was necessary as the park is part of the historic district. Mr. Sawyer stated it would depend on the costs.

3. Discussion with Garden Club reps - Which parks/landscaping would they like to own going forward

There are about 15,000 square feet of garden in Taylor park. Kelly Wakefield, president of the Garden Club, asked how much of that should be maintained when it will be ripped out next year. She stated that a more fluid timeline that accurately states dates and times would be helpful. They do not want to put in a lot of effort into a garden that will be removed. The City would like the Garden Club to take responsibility for or “own” specific gardens in Taylor park. Ms. Wakefield stated that they have put a lot of effort in the reflecting pond garden and have more invested in that garden than the round one. Ms. Powers stated that the rectangular garden brings people into the park. They use it as a community garden area for people to come and learn about gardening and to participate in the upkeep. It is also used for the Gardening Club’s Annual Night Out. The Garden Club’s Annual Night Out will be on May 22nd this year. The Garden Club agreed to take responsibility for the care of the round garden, the rectangular garden and the day lily garden. Mr. Sawyer asked that the Garden Club tell him how much they need in terms of materials concerning the maintenance of the gardens. Mr. Young stated that they usually just go to the City and request them. The materials are then dropped off. Mr. Sawyer stated that the City just needs an idea of what is needed. Mr. Young stated that the gardens at the top of Church Street were a part of the Master Garden program at the high school but, since the program ended, the gardens haven’t been maintained. He believes that they need to be reassessed. Some places give a stipend to the Master garden program or the Garden Club to help maintain the gardens. Mr. Sawyer stated that those gardens will probably go out to bid. Mr. Young suggested that the City give the Garden Club an annual stipend to help with the costs of the care of the gardens.

- 4. Consider requests for tree plantings in the parks –** Mr. Sawyer told the Commission that the City has put the Greenbelt trees out to bid. He asked how many trees, if any, the Parks Commission would like. The Commission decided that they would take all the trees that they can get. Last year all trees went to Houghton Park. Trees can start being added to other parks and residential areas. Houghton Park still needs trees. Vice-Chair McGinn stated that Barlow needs to be addressed first. Mr. Young stated that three or four more trees should be planted by the playground in Houghton Park to create shade there. He recommended a company called Tree Works for Taylor Park. They would be best to bring in to maintain the trees. They have already done the cabling of the old trees. Vice-Chair McGinn talked about setting a high priority for this group to create a tree plan starting with an evaluation. Mr. Young informed the Commission that a tree inventory had been done by the State. Matt Leonard should be invited to a meeting to discuss the plan and inventory as he was the person from the State of Vermont that did the tree inventory and he would have valuable input.

5. Houghton Park

- a. **Last years’ plantings –** There are at least two trees that probably will not survive.

- b. **Improvements/Upgrades (short and long term)** – Josh LaRowe came to the Commission last year asking for space to do a zero-scape vegetable garden. The Commission discussed that the garden seemed to be successful, but the community didn't seem to know that it was for everyone. The Commission decided that it needs to be refined and defined so that the community knows that it is open to them. Signage needs to be elevated. Vice-Chair asked if the Commission wanted this plot more like City School or more of the zero-scape concept. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would talk to Mr. LaRowe. Chair Koldis stated that it needs to be more aesthetically pleasing to get people to buy into it. He would like to see a butterfly / pollinator garden. It would be good to see.
6. **Update on Commission Vacancy** – The Commission received one applicant. They listened to the applicant's qualifications and suggested that the application go before the City Council. The other vacancies are for Commission members that did not want to leave the Commission. Vice-Chair McGinn asked if those members had to fill out applications. Chair Koldis stated that he would check but that he thinks that the City Council would accept his recommendations.
7. **Approval of December 5, 2017 meeting minutes** – Member Booth made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Vice-Chair McGinn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
8. **Other Business** - None

Member Booth made a motion to adjourn. Member Kaeding seconded. It passed unanimously.