

**St. Albans City Parks Commission**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

**Barlow Street Community Center**

**39 Barlow Street**

**Commission Members Present:** Tom Koldys, Angie Sturm, Jeff Young, Barbara Weinstein, Stina Booth, Joan McGinn

**Community Members Present:** Jordan Weinstein

**Staff Members Present:** Kelly Viens, Director of Recreation; Therese Carlisle, Taker of Minutes

1. Call to Order: Tom Koldys 6:03.
2. Presentation regarding custom cement benches/tables/etc. for Houghton Park. This item will be postponed due to the absence of Mike Beyers. He will be invited to the January meeting.
3. Proposal from Jordan Weinstein regarding placement of political signs in our parks. Jordan spends a lot of time walking around the City; this is what he likes to do. It is the Political season and many of the signs that are present throughout the City are in violation of the sign laws. This has recently been a point of irritation for Mr. Weinstein. On October 5<sup>th</sup> Mr. Weinstein was walking with his daughter when he noticed that some of these political signs were leaning against the plantings on Main St. Mr. Weinstein makes the point that these are the plants that the city has paid for and planted to beautify the city. Mr. Weinstein proceeded to remove said signs then deliver them to City Hall and report his crime. City Hall did not want the signs. It was the hope of Mr. Weinstein that this act would bring this issue to the attention of City Hall. It is Mr. Weinstein's opinion that the city must maintain diligent distance from the supporting of any candidate that is running for office, it is essential for the City government to remain neutral. It is in his hopes that a policy can be formed to prevent these signs from being placed on City property. Ms. Sturm voices similar concerns and passion for this issue. Ms. Viens confirms that there is a policy preventing this and it is often not the candidates that are putting these signs up. Mr. Koldys contributes that, in years past, he often thought and felt this was not acceptable but in time of seeing the regular reoccurrences of them the thought has fallen to the back of his mind. Mr. Weinstein states that the statute for this states that nothing is permitted to be placed in the right of way or to be visible from the highway, the enforcement for removal of these signs falls to VTrans. He also states that if they are called they will occasionally come and remove the signs but that they are busy and have other things to attend to. Ms. Viens believes this also falls under the law not allowing billboards in the state. She will remove political signs that are placed at Hard'ack and they will "re-sprout" within a few days, like dandelions. Mr. Weinstein is hoping that this Commission can create a way to better enforce these laws in the Parks. Mr. Young contributes that the City has no desire to dedicate the time and funds to this fight. He also adds

that these laws are inclusive of ALL signs including lawn sale signs. Ms. Sturm wonders if there are maintenance employees that mow and take out the trash that would be able to remove the signs at the time when they are at the Parks. Mr. Weinstein reinforces his passion for this issue, stating that throwing up our hands on this issue is not acceptable. Brainstorming continues of ideas to improve this issue.

**Angie Sturm moves that the Parks Commission recommend to the City Council to review the placement of signage on City Property and adjacent right of way. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. McGinn, all are in favor.**

Jordan Weinstein exits the meeting.

4. Revisit/Update request from Josh Lareau regarding permaculture installation at Houghton Park. It has been confirmed that Mr. Lareau has been waiting on the Commission to indicate a size and location and he will follow with a mock up drawing of what he proposes. In previous meeting minutes Mr. Lareau indicated that Mr. Chad Spooner did not feel that the green space near the basketball courts would be suitable. Ms. Weinstein suggested a space along some open fencing that is sunny, near the Hunt St. entrance. More discussion about where a good location will be for this permaculture. The idea of him planting along the bank of the stream was mentioned, in an attempt to help prevent erosion. A smaller plot than originally proposed will be recommended, also recommended will be the space located East of the horseshoe pits. An invitation will be extended to Mr. Lareau for the January meeting.
5. Discuss upcoming public input forum regarding Taylor Park. Chip Sawyer has provided some information about moving forward with the Grant. It is stated that the Parks Commission will be acting as an interested party. A large forum will be held and many community members will be invited as interested parties to share ideas. At this point it is unsure who will moderate this meeting, likely to be Chip Sawyer. Mr. Young trying to gain more understanding of why it is that this commission is not the lead on this grant. Ms. Weinstein voices that as the Park Commission it makes the most sense that they should be the lead in this grant, as it is focusing on Taylor Park. Ms. McGinn brings up the fact that there is going to be a burdensome amount of work and planning to go along with the use and implementation of this grant. The time investment she is not able to sacrifice from her own life and is happy to allow the City to do much of the work. She feels that as the information gathered is being processed and put into action that there would be an appropriate time for the Parks Commission to have input. Mr. Young hopes that the Commission will be charged with having time to sit down with the planner. Mr. Young sharing his previous experiences working with Professional Planners. All Planners that he has worked with have taken control of the project and implemented their own ideas instead of the wants of the community and Commissions. Mike Willard was a great Planner to work with. Ms. Viens reinforced the need for involvement from City Hall. This will be a joint venture. Much of the animosity surrounding this topic seems to be stemming from previous experience when the City installed benches in Taylor Park. **Chip Sawyer will be invited to the December Park Commissions meeting.** Throughout the process the City will do it's best to be sure that all voices and ideas are heard. The bottom line is that not all ideas and opinions can be met.
6. Other Business. Ms. Sturm brings up her desire for more knowledge about parks; this has been brought up in the past. Ms. Viens refers to a conversation she had with Chip Sawyer regarding this issue. Mr. Sawyer would like more feedback about what would be gained from enrolling in

these classes with the National Parks and Recreational Association. Ms. Viens to share all incoming e-mails that are still in her inbox with the group, Mr. Young will also share any links that he finds will be useful.

Mr. Young brings up the issue of a sidewalk in Taylor Park. The sidewalk is extremely rough, falling apart and will need repair very soon.

Continuance from #5 while waiting for an invite to the large community forum Ms. Sturm brings up the point of trying to be proactive and seeking out any entities that this Commission may like to communicate with before the forum? The conversation grows and the Commission talks about inviting many of the community members that will be at the forum. Reigning it back in a bit is the idea to allow the forum to happen and then call in individuals that the Commission may have further questions for.

Ms. Viens to locate the list of priorities the Commission set up, update the list and bring it the December meeting.

Mr. Young noticed that the Hunt St. entrance of Houghton Park was blocked off today. Ms. Viens confirmed that it has been this way for much of the summer to prevent automobiles from driving into the park.

7. Consider approval of meeting minutes: 9/6/2016 Motion to approve minutes from 9/6/2016 was made by Jeff Young, seconded by Stina Booth and all voted in favor.
8. Adjourn. Motion was made by Jeff Young to adjourn, seconded by Stina Booth, all voted in favor. Meeting adjourned.