

**St. Albans City Parks Commission
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, July 5, 2016
Barlow Community Center
39 Barlow Street**

A meeting of the St. Albans City Parks Commission was held on Tuesday, July 5, 2016 at the Barlow Community Center at 6:00 pm.

Parks Commission Members Present: Chair, Peter Chevalier; Tom Koldys, Stina Booth & Joan McGinn.

Parks Commission Members Absent: Jeff Young, Angie Sturm & Barbara Weinstein.

Staff Present: Kelly Viens, Director of Recreation.

1. Call to Order, Peter Chevalier, Chair.

Peter Chevalier called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

2. Review submission for Taylor Park fountain foundation and give recommendation.

Mr. Chevalier read aloud the following memo from Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development:

“It has been our busiest summer ever, but we haven’t forgotten about the needs to address the western bank of the Taylor Park Fountain. I have been talking to landscapers and others about solutions and options.

We are resolved that the current gravel treatment is not working. We also realize that there will be a tendency for some people to try to walk down the bank from the top walkway. I have asked for more ideas for a more stable way of maintaining the bank while either allowing or a specific egress from the top walkway or at least providing an acceptable, if not encouraged, surface to walk down. Also the treatment needs to be easy to take care of. In addition, while landscaping and color would add value, it is not essential and must be easy to maintain.

Please see attached two visuals of ideas for the bank that I received. One is made up of two walls, a mixture of plantings and a central set of steps. The other is a simpler treatment of granite cobbles with some landscaping pots as well.

The affordability of the chosen solution must also be taken into account. The City has a budget of \$20,000 to accomplish this task this year, but that does not mean we need to spend all of that money, which could go to other purposes as well.”

Mr. Chevalier noted that he believes the granite cobble option is crushed granite stone. Ms. McGinn questioned how that option is different from what’s currently there. Ms. Booth commented that it doesn’t sound much different. Ms. Viens stated that typically when you think of a cobblestone, you think of a brick vs. crushed stone. Mr. Chevalier noted that the first option is more colorful and his initial thought is that it blocks the pathway to get to the fountain. Ms. Viens stated that these ideas are a jumping off point and the Commission can recommend a material but note that they’d like a walkway included in the design. Mr. Koldys and Ms. Sturm both agreed that they’d like to see steps and a walkway included. Ms. Sturm stated that the steps could be wider than shown in the photo. Ms. McGinn agreed that it would be helpful to know the width of the stairs and how the foundation transitions into the east side of the fountain. Ms. McGinn commented that she doesn’t care for the red bricks and would prefer a grey stone that blended better with the fountain. Mr. Koldys agreed and stated that he’d like to see something more natural looking.

Ms. Viens read aloud the list of comments and concerns to circle back to Mr. Sawyer:

- Like the steps but would like to know how wide they will be and would recommend they be at least 15' wide.
- Would like to maintain walkway around fountain.
- No red bricks; would like a more natural stone.
- How does the foundation taper as it goes around the fountain? Does it blend into hill or simply end?
- Use of plants that are easy to maintain, do not grow tall or in a bushy form and tie into the rest of the Downtown.

Ms. Viens noted that another important question for the group is whether or not they would like plantings and how they feel about plantings. Ms. Sturm noted that the handouts look very stark. Mr. Koldys agreed. Ms. McGinn commented that she would prefer a manicured plant that is not too bushy. Mr. Koldys asked the group what they felt about replacing plantings with benches. Ms. McGinn responded that she thinks it would look barren. Mr. Chevalier agreed. Ms. McGinn commented that annuals might be a better fit than perennials. Mr. Chevalier stated that he is not for the bushes that are portrayed in the handouts and believes they would need a lot of maintenance and upkeep. Ms. Booth wondered if there was a plant that would cover the ground instead. Ms. McGinn wondered if clusters of planters similar to the ones used in the Downtown would work if the steps were made wider. Ms. Viens noted that those change annually as well. Mr. Chevalier stated that he has a hard time visualizing that. The general consensus of the commission was to rule out the second foundation option made of granite cobbles. Ms. Viens asked the group if any of them feel the existing garden now looks too big for the fountain. Discussion ensued about where the foundation should be tapered and the ideal width of the stairs. Ms. McGinn recommended using a 10' set of stairs that widened at the bottom to 15'. Ms. Viens stated that she will forward the commission's suggestions to Chip Sawyer.

Ms. McGinn noted that she recently visited the Duke Gardens which has a similar fountain to the City's with a tiered foundation. Mr. Koldys asked what was on the tiers. Ms. McGinn responded that it had stone of some sort and the walkway was a fine, packed gravel.

3. Choose musical pieces for Taylor Park installation (D&V).

Ms. Viens explained that this item is on the agenda for the commission to decide if it's something they're interested in. She explained that there is \$6,000 available. Mr. Chevalier noted the handout and stated that there aren't a lot of options to choose from. Ms. Viens pointed out 5 sambas available as a set for \$2100. Mr. Koldys noted the congas that are \$80 each. Ms. McGinn asked how it was decided that the musical pieces would go in Taylor Park. Ms. Viens responded that they don't have to go in Taylor Park but noted discussion in prior years about having some sort of play equipment in Taylor Park such as a splash pad or playground equipment. Ms. Viens explained that the musical pieces would be a good mix of play and art and might be a better match for Taylor Park. The suggested location for the musical pieces is the end of the park closest to the Armory. Mr. Koldys pointed out two pieces and suggested that one would be a better fit in Taylor Park and the other would be a better fit for Houghton Park. Ms. McGinn stated that she would place the musical equipment where the most amount of children congregate. Mr. Chevalier stated that his concern for placing the equipment in Taylor Park is that it could interrupt speakers or events. Ms. Viens stated that Public Works can bag the pieces during such events to avoid disruption. Mr. Chevalier also noted his concern for them being placed in Barlow or Houghton Park because they are located in more residential neighborhoods and would be loud if someone used them later at night. Ms. Viens explained that the grant would be available through a program called Play Everywhere and RiseVT highly recommended the musical pieces because they incorporate both play and art. She added that the location in Taylor Park close to Fairfield Street is not near residential homes and gets a lot of drive by traffic. Mr. Chevalier asked if the commission needed to select the type of musical piece to be installed. Ms. Viens responded negatively. Mr. Chevalier commented that he likes the conga pieces. Ms. Booth recommended that the pieces chosen not

be too colorful and like the metallic look. Mr. Koldys recommended the samba set since multiple children could play on it at the same time. Mr. Chevalier noted that there are also chime pieces that fall well below the budget. He asked if the installation price was included in the price shown. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively. Mr. Chevalier commented that he was hopeful they could get the sambas in just green and not the rainbow color and recommended the alto chimes. Ms. Viens asked if the consensus is to forego the drums if they only come in a rainbow color. Mr. Chevalier suggested painting them. Ms. McGinn asked what the difference is between a samba and a conga. Mr. Koldys responded that congas are paired together. Discussion ensued about price and which pieces to select while staying within budget. Ms. Viens added that the more expensive items would be an excellent grant opportunity in the future. **The recommendation of the commission was to purchase drums that are unicolor whether they are sambas or congas as well as a hand pipe and cadenza.** Ms. McGinn asked Ms. Viens how she envisioned the placement of the instruments. Ms. Viens responded that she envisions them to be in a square section filled with pea stone.

A motion was made by Tom Koldys; seconded by Angie Sturm to recommend the sambas, hand pipes and the cadenza for the musical pieces in Taylor Park. Vote was unanimous, 4-0.

4. Revisit proposal made at last meeting by Tom Koldys suggesting Houghton Park as spot for outdoor classroom.

Mr. Chevalier stated that he wanted to revisit the proposal discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Koldys stated that he spoke with Barbara Weinstein a couple days after the last meeting who let him know that Chip Sawyer had a planning grant that he could work on to determine the feasibility of creating an outdoor classroom at Houghton Park. Mr. Koldys explained that he passed that information along to Molly Magnan at the school and is very interested in moving forward.

5. Update on tree plantings at Houghton Park.

Ms. Viens explained that she brought the tree planting list to Allen Robtoy, Director of Public Works. Mr. Robtoy wanted to get the Tree Warden's approval before planting. Ms. Viens stated that the list and map of proposed plantings was sent to Curtis Comfort for review. Mr. Chevalier commented that he would like the commission to be notified if any of the trees can't be planted where they were originally proposed. Ms. Viens stated that she would definitely alert the group if the trees can't be planted where the commission originally plotted them. Ms. Viens added that Mr. Robtoy let her know today that another cottonwood will also be removed soon.

Ms. McGinn asked if there was any update on the exercise equipment. Ms. Viens responded that Bob Pettinelli's plan is to install all of the equipment at once. Ms. McGinn asked about the stuff that was to be relocated away from the road. Ms. Viens responded that nothing has been moved yet. She added that staff is waiting for July 1st before ordering fencing. Ms. Viens stated that the City Manager and City Council liked the recommendation from the commission for the fence but there was some concern that it may not be enough fencing. The consensus was to try it out and see if additional fencing is needed. Ms. Viens stated that she is also waiting for a call back from VLCT to confirm that the codes will be met for the new water fountain and then Public Works will install it.

6. Other Business.

Ms. McGinn asked if there should be some suggested time lines for the duration of the meetings. Mr. Chevalier agreed. Ms. Viens stated that there is always the option to set an end time to the meeting. Mr. Koldys commented that he liked the idea of setting an ending time to try and keep the meeting on track. Ms. McGinn suggested an end time of 7:30 pm.

Mr. Chevalier announced that he will be stepping down as Chair and from the Parks Commission due to family reasons. Ms. Viens thanked Mr. Chevalier for his contributions and support. Mr. Koldys thanked Mr. Chevalier and asked him to continue to share his ideas with the commission. Mr. Chevalier stated that he would be willing to come to another meeting if needed until his position is filled. Ms. Viens stated that she

believes it would be a natural progression for Tom Koldys, Vice Chair to become Chair but would like Mr. Chevalier to show up for one more meeting so a vote can take place. Ms. Viens stated that she will make an item on next meeting's agenda to vote for a new Chair and Vice-Chair and also to decide on a duration for future meetings.

Ms. McGinn asked if there is any update on the bandstand and trash bins for Taylor Park. Ms. Viens responded that trash bins are coming with the Lake Street project order and she has not heard anything about the bandstand but will follow up with staff. Ms. McGinn noted that the commission's recommendations impact the City budget and asked if the best course of action is to make recommendations and hope that there will be money to fund ideas and projects. Ms. Viens responded that each Park has its own budget and the Barlow Street budget is under the Recreation budget that she manages. The Houghton Park and Taylor Park budget is managed by Allen Robtoy. Ms. Viens stated that she's not sure if all of the parks will be lumped into one budget for the next fiscal year. Ms. McGinn noted that when the commission was first formed, they discussed changing out the lighting in Taylor Park to match the streetscape lighting. Ms. Viens responded that she will follow up on that. Mr. Chevalier noted that the way it was explained to him when the commission was first formed was that there wasn't going to be a budget and the commission's duty would be to make recommendations. He added that the commission has certainly progressed and it's his opinion that the commission's work warrants some form of a budget at some point in the future. Mr. Chevalier encouraged the commission to push for a budget in the future. Ms. Viens agreed and commented that this commission has given thoughtful consideration to so many project. Mr. Koldys wondered how much the lights are affected by the overall plan for Taylor Park. Ms. McGinn suggested having whoever is responsible for the plan to come and present it to the commission at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Viens agreed.

Ms. McGinn noted the prior discussion about placing port-o-lets in Taylor Park and enhancing them with art panels or lattice work. Ms. Viens responded that she passed the commissions' recommendation along to Mr. Manahan which was to place port-o-lets in the area of the monument with a planting of some sort or a panel to use as an enhancement. Ms. Viens stated that she never heard back from Mr. Manahan. Mr. Koldys commented that some sort of visual barrier would be better than nothing. Mr. Chevalier agreed that they are an eye sore. Ms. McGinn suggested using some type of lattice. Ms. McGinn stated that she would be happy to pass any suggestions along at the Merchant's Meeting tomorrow. Mr. Chevalier suggested using a tall planting in the large pots that are used in the downtown. Mr. Koldys agreed that the plantings and pots are a good suggestion.

7. Consider Approval of Minutes: 6/7/16 (D&V).

A motion was made by Tom Koldys; seconded by Stina Booth to approve 6/7/16 minutes. Vote was unanimous, 4-0.

8. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Joan McGinn; seconded by Tom Koldys to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 pm. Vote was unanimous, 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Smith
Community Relations Coordinator