

**St. Albans City Parks Commission  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday, July 13, 2015  
Barlow Street Community Center**

A meeting of the St. Albans City Parks Commission was held on Monday, July 13, 2015, in the Barlow Community Center at 6:00 pm.

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Chevalier, Chair; Jeff Young; Barbara Weinstein; Wendy Stous, Angie Sturm & Joan McGinn.

**Commission Members Absent:** Brianna Haenke.

**Staff Present:** Kelly Viens, Director of Recreation; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development.

**Visitors Present:** Megan Manahan-Bliss, St. Albans Rotary.

1. Call to Order, Peter Chevalier, Chair.

Peter Chevalier called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

2. Fountain Restoration Update, Chip Sawyer and Rotary Club Representative.

Mr. Sawyer explained that he would be providing an update on the fountain restoration with a focus on using benches as the markers for fundraising. He recalled that when the fountain plans were first presented, it included discussion of the use of bricks to memorialize people who have donated to the fountain with a bench area on the northeast corner of the fountain. Mr. Sawyer added that Rotary further looked into a program using bricks which ultimately didn't make sense financially. Ms. Manahan-Bliss commented that the cost of the bricks in comparison with the amount of time it would take to run such a fundraising program and engineering issues presented at the restoration site ultimately led to the decision to look into other options. She stated that what is now being proposed is to include six, four-foot benches around the fountain. Mr. Sawyer stated that the benches would include lettering but no logos or designs. Ms. Manahan-Bliss presented the donation structure to the commission and stated that the goal would be to just use the front of the back of the bench. She added that a Rotary emblem may be added to the seat of the bench. Ms. McGinn asked if it's correct that the benches have the potential to raise a total of \$60,000 if all of the space for memorialization is sold. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded affirmatively and stated that there is the potential to raise more than that. Ms. Weinstein stated that she is in favor of the proposal and believes it's a great way to show recognition while providing an option that is maintenance-free. Ms. McGinn asked if the material of the benches will be granite. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded affirmatively. Ms. McGinn asked if the benches would be insured in the event of vandalism. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that Rotary will not carry insurance on the benches. Ms. Viens noted a similar bench that has been at the Complex for four years which hasn't withstood any damage. Mr. Sawyer stated that staff can ensure the benches are covered under the City's insurance policy once installed. Ms. McGinn asked if the option for engraving would solely include someone's name. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded negatively.

Ms. McGinn commented that she personally supports the pavers which she believes is less intrusive of the finished product. She asked Ms. Manahan-Bliss what the cost for pavers would be. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that the bricks would need to be all sold up front before being laid and would be more labor-intensive due to the cost to hire someone to lay the bricks. She stated that the cost quoted for the entire brick fundraising project was roughly \$200,000 and would have taken significantly longer. She added that the Rotary also took the concerns of the engineers into consideration.

Ms. Weinstein asked if any thought has been given to the possibility of a more symmetrical placement of the benches so they can be located on both sides of the fountain. She responded that it's not ruled out but there are some elevation factors that came in to play when the plan was proposed. Mr. Sawyer added that it's important not to obstruct pedestrian traffic or the rectangular garden. He didn't rule out a way to add space for more benches in the future.

Ms. McGinn asked how the benches are mounted. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that are placed on a concrete pad and secured with a screw that goes into the granite. Ms. McGinn asked if the benches have been ordered and if so, how many. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that all six have been ordered. Ms. McGinn asked where staff stands on the infrastructure of the pool itself in terms of what's to be done and when it will be completed. Mr. Sawyer responded that staff is working with the sole bidder, Matt Tabor, whose bid came in higher than expected. Ms. McGinn asked if the benches would be placed in a shady area. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that it's somewhat shady.

Mr. Chevalier stated that he is a proponent of the benches and agrees with Ms. Weinstein that additional benches should be placed on the opposite side of the proposed location. Ms. McGinn asked why the benches wouldn't be equally distributed throughout the entire park. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that the fundraising is specific to the fountain which is why the benches would be arranged nearby. Ms. McGinn asked what the maximum earning potential is for the benches. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that the maximum earning potential is \$18,000 per bench. Ms. McGinn asked who is completing the engraving work. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that Dana Rocheleau has been speaking with Ploof's Monuments. Ms. McGinn asked if the benches would serve as memorial benches or for anyone that supports the park and the fountain. Mr. Sawyer responded that it can be for both. Ms. McGinn asked what each bench costs. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that the benches are \$5,000 each. Discussion ensued over the pay structure of the fundraising program for the benches. Ms. Viens reiterated that the Parks Commission's purpose for this agenda item is to weigh in on the physical placement of the benches.

Mr. Young commented from his experience with the granite Civil War Memorial, that if the edges on the granite benches are square, they will likely break off over time. Ms. Manahan-Bliss responded that she will look into it.

**A motion was made by Jeff Young; seconded by Barbara Weinstein to approve placement of benches as presented. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

Discussion ensued regarding the logistics of the project. Mr. Young noted his concern for liability issues regarding the fountain pool. Mr. Sawyer stated that under the new design, the fountain pool is actually safer because the steps on the western edge have been removed and culturally, the City has allowed people to get inside the pool. Mr. Sawyer added that the Parks Commission might want to consider making a policy recommendation to council that no one be allowed in the pool. Mr. DesLauriers agreed that the discussion of liability surrounding the fountain pool should be further discussed and would like to first know for sure that it should be the charge of the Parks Commission. Mr. Sawyer stated that he could bring it up at a Department Head meeting. Ms. Sturm commented that if such a policy is made, she believes it's important to start educating the public well in advance of such a decision.

3. Create Art in the Parks Policy.

Mr. DesLauriers recommended holding another meeting before the next regular meeting to focus the entire meeting time on creating an Art in the Parks policy. Ms. Sturm asked if there is any other committee or education council that meets that would have anything to do with art in the City. Mr. Young responded that there was an Arts Council which was led by Jim Walsh but is no longer functioning. Mr. DesLauriers stated that the goal for creating an Art in the Parks policy is to establish

guidelines for the display of temporary art work in the park that is not for resale. The Commission decided to hold the next meeting on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am.

Ms. Weinstein stated that Mr. Sawyer had recommended two things to consider as factors when creating policies; scale and sense of place.

4. Consider Approval of Meeting Minutes: 9/11/14, 9/23/14, 10/6/14, 10/28/14, 11/3/14, 12/1/14, 2/9/15, 4/6/15 & 5/4/15 (D&V).

Ms. Viens noted that the Commission had already approved the above list of minutes with the exception of 5/4/15. She added that she is still working on the June minutes.

**A motion was made by Jeff Young; seconded by Barbara Weinstein to approve 5/4/15 minutes. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

5. Other Business.

Ms. Weinstein asked what the status was for fixing the issue with the flag in Taylor Park being snagged on the maple tree. She heard that Mr. Robtoy was going to be pruning the tree which she didn't think would resolve the problem based on Mr. Young's recommendation. Mr. Young stated that the problem only exists when the flag is flown at half-mast so there is no pruning that can be done to fix the issue of the flag being torn. Ms. Viens noted that she hadn't heard anything from Mr. Robtoy about pruning the tree. Mr. Chevalier stated that he would follow up with Allen tomorrow.

Mr. Young stated that the City did contribute the funds requested for the flowers and they've all been installed.

Ms. Stous asked Ms. Viens if a date has been made available yet for the new playground installation. Ms. Viens responded negatively.

Ms. Weinstein stated that she spoke with Mr. Sawyer about applying for a grant for the creek that runs adjacent to Houghton Park. Mr. Sawyer stated that he first needed to wait to obtain numbers from the State and the EPA about the water quality. He advised that once those numbers come in, it might be an appropriate time to apply for a Planning Grant. Mr. Young commented that it will be a long-term process. Discussion ensued about looking deeper into the planning process in the winter for the creek that runs along Houghton Park.

Ms. Weinstein noted that she ran into a lady who works at Mylan that recommended the Commission speak with Elizabeth Marshia, the assistant to the General Manager, to have a discussion about what they might like to see at Houghton Park. Ms. Weinstein expressed that she'd be happy to follow up with Ms. Marshia if the group allowed. No objections were made.

Mr. Young commented that there is a work day in Taylor Park from 9 am – 12 pm this Saturday for anyone that would like to volunteer.

6. Adjourn.

**A motion was made by Peter Chevalier, seconded by Wendy Stous to adjourn at 7:33 pm. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Smith  
Administrative Coordinator