

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

Board Members Present:

Chair Tom Koldys, Stina Booth, Alec Kaeding, and Angie Sturm

Board Members Absent: Barbara Weinstein, Joanie McGinn

Public Present: David Barber

Staff Present: Andrew Gratton, Recreation Program Manager;

AGENDA

1. Call to order

Chairperson Koldys Called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm

2. Brief updates on Taylor Park Master Plan phasing and next steps

Tom stated that there was no update to be had so far. The consultants are waiting to hear back from multiple engineers including the electrical engineers to get costs and estimates for our plan.

David Barber raised the concern of removing the mature shade trees in the park. Citing Burlington's city hall park and how they are removing almost all of the mature shade trees from that park and the pushback they are receiving. He expressed that we should only be removing the trees if they are diseased and need to be removed before they fall and cause harm. David also wanted us to look into the size of the trees we are replacing them with and if financially possible to go for the 6 inch trees as opposed to the 3 inch trees as they will take better and grow quicker. David also mentioned concern with the walkway grading and how that would be phased.

David explained that he thought the first step would be to have a tree inventory taken of the area before any decisions were made. Also to look at what trees we are replacing them with, species, size, and location.

Chairperson Tom mentioned that updating the tree inventory was 1st priority for the parks commission. Alec mentioned that he felt a professional was needed. All agreed.

Chairperson Tom also mentioned that the Parks Commission number one concern is for the care and conservation of the current trees in the park.

David also mentioned the old lilacs in the North end of the park and how they have a high value. He thought they should be reused, saved or sold as opposed to discarding them if the plan was to get rid of them.

Angie says we are a bit far out to think about that but it is definitely something we will look at and address with all the parties needed before we make decisions.

Tom talked about how we want to preserve and reuse as many of the pieces of the park as we can when it comes time to start moving forward.

Also Tom mentioned the fact that we aren't going to demolish and remove current pieces of the park for new pieces unless they absolutely must be. If we need to shift a sidewalk for a tree or something we will look at what all the possibilities are.

David asked if there was any money being raised or put together to move forward with the park. Tom mentioned that we have not raised any money past funds used to pay the consultants for their time and plans. He also mentioned that it is a "tiffable" area of the city. There was talk about grants that may be possible for different areas of the park.

3. Looking Ahead- Barlow Park summer 2018 priorities and plans

Tom explained the main need for Barlow was trees and Andrew agreed that last meeting we talked about 3-4 trees in areas around the playground at Barlow.

Alec asked what the deal with the gates on the playground was. The gate is frost heaved and hard to move and shut properly. Andrew mentioned that the latch was an issue and the frost heave is creating an issue. Angie talked about how it was a pain to shut the gates for adults and kids. Alec mentioned that it may need to be dug up and fixed. Andrew said he will talk to public works about the gate issues.

Tom asked about the benches over in the North East corner tucked away by the baseball fields. Are they still in good shape? Andrew mentioned one bench was broken and that it attracts the wrong type of attention to a shady, dark area. Talk about if we could reuse them somewhere else and get the negative traffic out of that area. Andrew mentioned maybe thinking about using the area for something else like a bocce court or volleyball court without interfering with the field at all.

Tom wants to measure the dimensions of the area and see what we could do in the area going forward.

Stina mentioned that we should start to look at the ADA compliance in our parks and that the fact that a lot of our parks have issues with ADA compliance. Talked about ideas and issue that Heather Blackburn brought to the table a few meetings ago and different ways to deal with them. How there are all types of disabilities that we need to think about. Alec mentioned ideas that he has seen in his parks in Burlington and how there may be simple ways to make Houghton more

accessible. Building a walkway to and around the park with a specific type of stone that works well and feels like concrete when it hardens. Stina also mentioned inviting Heather to a future meeting for more information and thoughts on how we can make our parks for accessible for people with disabilities.

3. Looking ahead – Houghton Park Summer 2018 priorities and plans

Alec asked when the Houghton Park fields were going to be done. No one seemed to have an answer on the subject.

Tom brought up how we have been talking about a water fountain in Houghton Park for a year now and how we need to get that taken care of. Andrew passed out some magazines with water fountain ideas. People wanted to get a fill station for water bottles. Alec mentioned that the dog attachment makes spreads diseases and kids will use it and get sick. The fill station would be a way for people to fill bottles or dog bowls.

Brief talk about how much money we have for things like this. Tom mentioned that we requested \$7,000 for a few different things that we are looking at.

David was shocked there are no water fountains at Houghton Park with all of the sports down there.

Alec thought we should decide and press them to get it installed. Andrew explained if we can decide on one he will talk to Kelly to see what we can get.

Time spent looking at different fountains and attachments. Talk about how expensive they are. Alex mentioned that some may be able to get with a grant. Andrew mentioned partnering with Rise VT or asking them if they could help in a way.

Angie talked about mounting it to the building as those fountains are a bit cheaper. Alec mentioned that if we put it on the building it wouldn't be ADA compliant and if it was just on the path we are looking at it would be accessible to all.

Angie mentioned what we are looking for is a normal adult size with a kids/ ADA compliant drop down fountain and a fill station on the side as well.

Stina asked what the status was with the signage by the workout equipment we were looking at that says "Sponsored by Rise VT, kids stay off." Tom says that there was a reason but he cannot remember why it has not moved forward and that it may be lost somewhere in the meetings that we did not have minutes for.

Angie asked who we should talk to about the trees that did not make it on the stream side. Tom mentioned that Chip may have more information on that. Tom said he would follow up with Chip on the trees, about warranty and status. He felt that if they don't survive they are under warranty.

David mentioned that the number one reason trees die is that they are buried too deep.

Tom mentioned an inventory that needs to be done on the new trees and shrubs that were installed along the stream bank. Alec mentioned some new cottonwoods that need to be taken care of before they get too big. He also mentioned that the stumps need to be ground or burnt so more don't continue to come up.

Tom talk about the flowers and butterfly bushes we were thinking about for Houghton Park and that maybe we should wait to think about these until the trees are completely taken care of and are under control.

Alec asked about the parking lot/ strip that there is at Houghton and what the deal with it is. Thinks it should be looked at as it is in rough shape.

David brought up that Chad Spooner had the parking issue under control there from people that were parking too long and leaving cars overnight. The Parks Commission had addressed this concern last year.

Angie said that it was more about the condition of the parking lot and how she wants to step into the park and actually FEEL like you're in the park. Talk about the 3 different entrances that make you feel like you are in the park.

Alec mentioned that we would have to tear up part of the park for ADA compliance and make a Handicap spot with van access. He also mentioned that we should make the spots deeper so that people have room to walk behind their cars without being in the road.

Talk of structured turf or pavers for the parking and the sidewalk area. Alec said that it was able to be plowed.

Alec said that the delamination has taken a toll on the parking area at Houghton Park. Then the snow plows make it worse as the year goes on.

Tom unrolled a new large map of Houghton Park he had printed and everyone looked at it. More discussion about making the parking area bigger and adding a sidewalk to the front of the parking area that would connect with the new sidewalk that was installed on the south side of the park. This would connect the sidewalks and aid in traffic and defining entrances to the park.

David brought up the original size of the park and how large it was before it was made smaller. How the brook was in the park and was a great addition to it.

Tom also brought up the fact that we talked about shifting the baseball diamond so that it didn't hit into the playground area.

David asked about how old the building was down there. Unknown.

Talk about how great the park is and how much better it would be with a few minor changes.

Talk about moving the building back if we are looking at changing the building. Also talk about how great a skate park would be at Houghton Park. The potential it has and how much use it would get. Tom mentioned at Barbara really thought the indoor park would be great to have as it would be used year round. Andrew brought up the concrete park Burlington built and how popular it is. There are lot of grants and companies that offer matches on these types of parks. Continued talk about skate parks and their potential there.

Alec mentioned that these parks can need security for the fact that they will be out there after darks and how it would be patrolled.

5. Update on commission positions and vacancy

Not anything to be updated, still looking to fill a seat on the commission.

6. Other business – to be considered immediately

David asked about the Hard'ack/ Aldis Hill trails and if there was a map or app for the trails up there. Andrew talked to him about the new app TrailHub that has a map of all the trails.

7. Consider approval of meeting minutes (2/6/18)

Tom mentioned that his last name is spelled Koldys not Koldis

Angie's last name is spelled Sturm not Strom.

In section 2, Taylor Park Master planning committee created the map to be presented, not the parks commission.

In section 2, Member Young is no longer a member anymore

In section 2, the parks commission strongly supported that moving the monuments was of the highest priority to the commission.

Angie makes a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

Stina seconded. All approved.

8. Other business for future agenda

No other business.

9. Adjourn

Alec makes motion to adjourn at 7:53 pm. Angie seconded. All approve.