

MINUTES OF THE RECREATION COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
March 8, 2018, 4:00pm

Committee Members present: Councilor Jon McCallion, Chair
Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent, Vice-Chair
Councilor Martin P. Dumont Sr.

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
Development Services Director Shanna Saunders
Recreation Director Kristen Davenport
Assessing/Code Clerk, Christien DuBois

The meeting was called to order by Councilor McCallion at 4:00pm

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Dumont moved to accept the May 5th minutes, seconded by Vincent, motion passed 3-0.

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

City Manager Belmore stated that he had discussed with the Finance Committee setting up a capital reserve fund (CRF) for park repair and improvements, which received support. The money received in revenue from the renting of Millennium Park would go into the proposed capital reserve fund to fund repairs and renovations.

McCallion asked if spending from the reserve fund would need to go before Council for a vote.

Belmore stated he would need to check State Law as it was a good question. That's said, if State Law allowed it the Finance Committee could be designated as agents to expend funds up to their \$25,000 limit, if that is the way the CRF was worded.

McCallion asked if excess money from events could be placed into this fund.

Belmore stated that funding in its current format would be a part of the budgeting process, and is not a dedicated revolving fund.

McCallion stated that several items in the City's parks need to be renovated and if a fundraiser was done for improvements, the money shouldn't be placed in the General Fund but rather the proposed capital reserve, especially with money that could potentially be donated.

McCallion stated that this fund could be used to finance many smaller projects instead of going through the full budgeting process.

Belmore stated the proposed CRD was to make it part of the normal budgetary process. Should funds become available during the year the Council could make a supplemental appropriation and place any donated monies into the capital reserve fund. When a capital reserve fund is

created there has to be a spending agent and most of the time, the spending agent is the City Council. The intent is not to fund small items but rather to save and spend on larger renovations and improvements. Belmore continued that the capital reserve funds can always be repurposed or closed if a need arose.

McCallion asked if the Finance Committee could be the designated agent and asked if the money left over from Hilltop School could be appropriated into the proposed capital reserve fund. Belmore stated that he had discussed this possibility with the Finance Committee but the Committee was not inclined to agree to do so.

RECREATION PROGRAM FEES

Belmore stated Recreation Program fee changes had been researched and developed by Recreation Supervisor Davenport. Davenport summarized the proposed fee changes and compared the proposed fees to the existing fees of surrounding communities.

Dumont asked what the capacities of the programs are. Davenport stated that it varies based on staffing and summarized the capacity of the programs last year.

Vincent asked if there was a hardship plan for parents who couldn't afford the prices. Davenport said that there was not.

Dumont stated that last year there was an issue with camp staff and asked if there was a pay increase this year. Saunders stated that they did increase the pay.

Vincent asked if there was an extra credit opportunity with the High School to help attract staff.

Saunders stated that they do work with the High School for staffing. Davenport stated that she attends the job fairs at the High School as well. Saunders stated that this year there have been many returning staff and they are hoping there is not a staffing shortage this year.

McCallion asked if there were many non-residents attending camp. Davenport stated she believed there was 1 last year.

Belmore stated that in the future, the City would like to implement more frequent price changes over time instead of a larger increase all at once.

Vincent asked if this program sustains itself financially. Belmore stated that the fees did not cover the expenses of the entire program.

Dumont, Vincent and McCallion all stated they supported the City Manager's approval of this proposal.

MALLEY FARM-RECREATIONAL FIELDS

Saunders passed out maps of the Malley Farm Fields that displayed wetland soils and stated that they provided a general overview of the soils, but the City would need to hire a wetland scientist to confirm the wetland areas.

McCallion stated that some of the groups that he has talked to would be willing to donate money to help create new fields. McCallion asked if a group was willing to fund a project to increase the number of fields, how an outside group would go about it and is there existing room now to place a field without impacting wetlands. Saunders stated that they could probably fit one more field. Vincent asked about wetland buffers and how it would impact a proposal. Saunders stated that there is a 100ft wetland buffer.

Vincent said he would support the project as long as there was no cost to the City.

Belmore stated that the Softball group maintains the fields and the property and the City generally does not utilize the field for any programs.

Vincent asked what a soil scientist would examine. Saunders stated soils, vegetation and hydrology. The Committee consensus is that they would support a proposal as long as it was of no cost to the City.

MISC

Davenport passed around a Recreation Office booklet that provided information on all of the City's parks. Belmore stated that Director Davenport did a good job compiling the Recreation Department packets. Davenport provided an overview of what the packets included and stated the names of the organizations that have supported the Recreation program in the past.

Belmore stated that in the City's ordinances, Queensbury Mill Park is considered a park, and asked if it really should be included as a park. Davenport stated that there was once greenspace at this spot, but when the downtown was redone a bus stop was included and only flowerbeds now exist. Belmore asked if this should be eliminated from the Ordinance. Saunders stated it is not used as a park anymore. McCallion stated he did not believe it was a park.

Dumont moved to recommend to the full Council that the Queensbury Mill Pocket Park be removed from the City Ordinance, seconded by McCallion, Motion passed 3-0.

A discussion occurred about Ash Street Park and the improvements that had been done to it in the past.

Belmore and staff provided an overview of park repairs that would be included in his proposed next FY budget such as repairing the steps going from the Pines Park to the SAU Building. The City had reached out to the CTC to see if students could help, but the project was too large for them. Saunders stated that the current idea is to replace the steps as is. A trail had been proposed but a trail would be too large of a process. The proposal however, includes naming it as a trail to flag it as less than code compliant steps or being handicap accessible. Belmore stated that another thing the City was looking at is to make improvements to Millennium Park, specifically the ball field and that the goal is to continue improvements every year. In addition, Belmore stated that another item for repairs is the skateboard park.

Dumont asked if the skateboard park gets used often. Saunders stated that the skateboard park is constantly used. Vincent asked about the liability risk of these parks. Belmore stated that the City works with Primex closely to help mitigate liability issues.

Dumont asked about upgrades for Jules Bisson Park. Saunders stated that the City had applied for a grant. Belmore stated that this is the same type of grant that the City received for Noble Pines Park Improvements – water spray features and the pavilion.

Dumont asked how much the grant is for. Davenport stated it was \$45,000 with a match from the City of \$45,000 for a total project cost of \$90,000. Saunders outlined what the improvements would be if the grant was approved.

McCallion stated that every year Liberty Mutual does some work in the parks. Davenport stated that the Pines Park recreation facility needed some new painting and including bench painting and repair. Vincent asked about allowing the opportunity for companies to do work for the City in exchange for the ability for them to advertise. Saunders stated that the City has attempted this in the past but few have approached the City.

Belmore stated that City staff has been involved in a Salmon Falls tabletop exercise to address responding to a catastrophic spill, how the City would handle the cleanup. There will be a full scale exercise in the summer to practice; the Mast Point Dam Park will be closed during that exercise in June.

Dumont moved to adjourn, seconded by Vincent, motion passed 3-0 and the meeting adjourned at 4:51pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christien DuBois Assessing/Code Clerk