



THE CITY OF WORCESTER
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PARKS
PARKS, RECREATION, & CEMETERY DIVISION
50 Skyline Drive, Worcester, MA 01605

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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Minutes for
Thursday, May 5, 2016 – 6:30 PM

Commissioners Present:

Nick Chacharone
Eric Goldstein
Meg Mulhern
George Sedares
Lawrence Sullivan

Administration Present:

Jeff Tomaino, Park & Recreation Coordinator

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Chairman Mr. Goldstein called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM

- Mr. Goldstein went on to the acceptance of the minutes, there were no minutes available.
- Mr. Goldstein asked Mr. Antonelli to go on with the report:
- Mr. Antonelli introduced first item of business:
 - Request of Centro to serve alcohol on the Worcester Common.
 - Mr. Antonelli informed the Commission that Centro Las Americas has been having the alcohol component for the last few years without any incidents. He suggested approval of it but he asked for the board to hear Mr. Juan Gomez who came in on behalf of Centro Las Americas.
 - Mr. Gomez explained that this would be 26th year of the Latin American Festival and in the past they have worked very closely with the City to make this event a success. He explained that this year there would be an additional police officers, he is expecting a greater attendance this year. He explained there might be some minor changes in terms of the set up but only if approved by Parks Division.
 - Ms. Mulhern made a motion to accept, Seconded by Mr. Sedares. All were in favor. Motion was approved 5 – 0.
 - Request of DPW & Parks & the Green Hill Park Coalition to demolish the existing Forum Theater for the renovations of the WWI Memorial at Memorial Grove in Green Hill Park
 - Mr. Antonelli went on to the following item he explained that the Green Hill Park Coalition is looking to renovate the WWI Memorial and they are requesting the removal of the old Forum Theatre from that location. Mr. Antonelli had a PowerPoint presentation with pictures that showed the declined condition of the theatre. Mr. Antonelli also stated that the Forum Theatre has not been used in the past 5 year and before that it was intermitted use of the theatre. He stated there has never been any consistent use of this theatre.
 - Ms. Mulhern asked Mr. Antonelli if he thought that the theatre was not being used because of the disarray.
 - Mr. Antonelli said he believes there's a combination of things, one is that site is not easily accessible, it's condition and it's location. Mr. Antonelli showed many pictures of the deteriorated theatre, as well as pictures of the original memorial, the original plaque and where the plaque was before it was removed and placed at a different location within Green Hill Park.

He showed that originally the WWI Memorial was that entire area before the theatre was built. He reiterated that the theatre is not being used at all, hasn't been used in 5 years and the area was originally the WWI Memorial. Mr. Antonelli asked to let Mr. Brian McCarthy speak on behalf of the Green Hill Park Coalition.

- Mr. McCarthy said that theatre has been there for approximately 25 years, he said that in the past he has participated in the maintenance of the Forum Theatre he has stained the wood but now it's too late to do a renovation. Mr. McCarthy said he spoke to the person in charge of the Forum Theatre and they stated that they are not interested in using the theatre now or in the future. Mr. McCarthy said that standing from the restoration of the Memorial Grove issue he feels the theatre has to go.
- Mr. Antonelli asked Mr. Goldstein to open the floor to questions.
- Ms. Mary Dappeau asked if there was a fee for the use of theatre and how much it was.
- Mr. Antonelli answered her question; he said that there is a fee for the use of our facilities specially if there was needs to for staff.
- Rev. John Griffin said that he felt that the reason why the theatre was in such disarray is because it was not up kept with. He also said he felt that if there is more community had no awareness of this theatre and that if the colleges knew of the existence then perhaps there might be more interest in use of that theatre. He went on to say that it did not make sense to him that if this area is going to be renovated why the theatre has to be torn down why it couldn't be part of the renovation.
- Mr. Antonelli explained that the area where the theatre is on the Memorial. He also said that the city has another 2 areas of this sort that can be used and are not being used and the plan is to renovate it to bring back the WWI Memorial.
- Ms. Beth from Channing Street spoke to commend Mr. McCarthy on his great work, but she would hate to see the theatre go.
- Ms. Carolyn Packard said that she felt like there were already too many memorials to include the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Green Hill Park, she feels like memorials are only good for sitting, and she feels like the theatre should be saved to have activities for the living. She asked how many acres the memorial takes up.
- Mr. McCarthy answered about 7 acres.
- Ms. Mary Depeau asked what the fee was 5 years ago for the use of the theatre because she felt like sometimes the fees can be discouraging.
- Mr. Sedares explained that he has a good background and experience with theatres and that based on the pictures this theatre cannot be restored. He said he would go personally take a look but based on the pictures the theatre could not be rehab able because it might not structurelly capable of being rehabbed.
- Ms. Mulhern asked who would be responsible to remove the theatre if removed and who would pay for the clearing of it.
- Ms. McCarthy explained he had a contractor that would do the work. He added that when he started working on this restauration of the memorial and in his own heart he didn't want to see the theater go either but having been a facility manager all his life he knows what it would cost to repair the theatre the electrical is all destroyed the speaker towers are gone, he feels that the city might not have the money to fix it and in its current state someone can get hurt on it. He also feels that the theatre doesn't belong in the middle of a memorial that is for 400 people that died in the war.
- Rev. John Griffin spoke again to suggest revenue from the golf course be used to rehab the theatre.
- Mr. Sedares asked if there was any other potential spot within the park to rebuild a similar Forum structure down the road.
- Mr. Antonelli said that there is definitely acreage within Green Hill Park and he is willing to look into it and see if there are other locations.

- Mr. Colin Novick explained that his supposition is that the theatre is not a crushing need at the moment he explained that East Park has a theatre with a roof/cover, electricity and sitting area on the back and to his knowledge it does not see that much use.
- Mr. Antonelli explained that the East Park band shell was built as an amphitheater with the sitting in the back and that facility does not see any use other than for the July 4th celebration.
- Mr. Sedares made a motion to table until the next meeting, Second by Mr. Chacharone. All were in favor. Motion was approved 5 – 0.
- Mr. Antonelli said this would be the first item on the agenda for the May 26th meeting.
- Presentation of the final design for the Coes Knife Playground
 - Mr. Antonelli had a power-point presentation of the final design for the Coes Knife Playground; he stated that he would be focusing only on the playground area not the Stearns Tavern. Mr. Antonelli introduced Brandon from Weston and Sampson to go over the presentation.
 - Brandon explained that they had gone out to the public looking for feedback on what they wanted there and they came up with a couple of take away points one was the 7 hills theme and that it would be totally accessible. Many people mentioned Major Menino Park in Charlestown so they took a lot of inspiration from there and implemented it to this park. He went over the Master plan showing all of the different accessible playgrounds to include safety surfacing, and accessible walkways. There is a group spinner that is totally accessible, toddler bucket swings, individual rockers, 9 free standing play features in the 2 -5 area all ground accessible. The 5 – 12 playground has 5 full play features all accessible from the ground, and more free standing elements there's sway bar area which is wheelchair accessible and it rocks and sways, it's social gathering space, there's also a group swing that fits more than one person on it so a person with a disability can swing with a friend or a parent, there's a group seesaw, and more stand up spinners. The total numbers are as follows; 57 total play features, 19 are elevated accessible features, 38 ground level accessible features.
 - Ms. Mulhern asked if there was a wheelchair swing.
 - Brandon explained that there isn't, and he said that they do make wheelchair swings but they are dangerous. This is why they integrated the sway swing and the group swing rather than the wheelchair swing.
 - Mr. Antonelli explained that he had reviewed a playground in Belchertown where they had the sway swing that the wheelchairs can go right on it and he believes it's a great piece of playground equipment.
 - Mr. Goldstein opened the floor to questions and comments.
 - Councilor Gary Rosen District 5 spoke he said this has been talked about for years and this was a dream and now the dream is here, he also went on to congratulate all the groups that were involved such as neighborhood groups, the Coes Zone Task Force and other environmental groups and people from all across the city who have supported this project in many ways specially financially. He believes this will be great for the neighborhood and the entire city. He expressed that he was thrilled.
 - Councilor Konstantina Lukes stated that she has to admit that within the last 4 years she has seen so many advances, and she has to attribute it to the community activism and the level of support from council.
 - Mr. Jose Garcia stated he lives on Mill Street and he likes what the city has done because it has a lot of benefits to the city and the community. He asked if the monkey bars had totally been left out of the playgrounds, he feels like the monkey bars are good sources for kids to build strength on their arms and shoulders. The other thing he mentioned was that many people use Mill Street for walking so he wanted to know if there would be any stations that would be for adults to do any push up, sit ups, etc. So as they are running up or down the street they can maybe pull up and do some exercises.
 - Mr. Antonelli explained that this was one of the items that came up in some of the discussions coming up to this master plan. He explained that there is space to add those but they are not included in this initial master plan just based on the overall cost, but there is the availability to be able to add those at a later time when funding becomes available.

- Ms. Sue Swanson spoke on behalf of the neighborhood and she was very pleased to see how all their suggestions and dreams and wishes had come together. She also asked if there were any spaces for community gardens.
 - Mr. Antonelli stated that depending on how they finalize the layout, there might be some space next to the parking lot.
 - Ms. Swanson also asked about in terms of park plan she wanted to know what the park capacity was and how many parking spaces would it have and would there be any plans about parking on Coes Street.
 - Mr. Antonelli explained that there is the availability of Coes Street but there is also an availability to build on the other side going down Coes where it is relatively flat.
 - Ms. Swanson thanked them for a really wonderful work.
 - Mr. Scott Ricker stated he was strongly disappointed because he believed the replacement of the Stearns Tavern had compromised the entire playground for it to be truly accessible. He had concerns about parking he also thought it was wrong to not put a wheelchair swing set because of it to be perceived as unsafe.
 - Ms. Swanson spoke to Mr. Ricker about one of his concerns she told him she appreciated Mr. Ricker's comments but one of the things about this playground was to make it all inclusive and there are other ways of being included other than just the physical aspect there was the social aspect, and that unfortunately not all playground features are a hundred percent accessible.
 - Mr. Ricker felt like the playground misses the mark and it's not totally accessible and he felt like it caters to Seven Hills and the need for the Seven Hills building to be occupied.
 - Ms. Leslie Safer spoke and thanked everyone that had anything to do with this master plan. She felt like the people putting this plan together had fun with it. She also said that she knows that this focusing on children with disabilities but she questioned the timeline and sale of Davidson Farm Land and she wondered if the lack of access might make people more interested in checking out Mill and Coes Street. Her other concern was ticks that could be in the wild flowers so she wanted to mention it.
 - Ms. Kathy Joseph lives in the neighborhood and she works for Seven Hills she said she believed that this was a great job and she agreed and disagreed on the wheel chair swing because she took a trip to Menino Park and they took someone in a wheelchair and it didn't work.
 - Mr. Ricker said that it was because it was a power chair.
 - Ms. Joseph said that was the point that someone was always going to be disappointed, because you can't please everybody.
 - Brendan from Weston & Sampson spoke regarding the swing issue, he explained that in the case of the swing they brake often because they are often abused not by children with disabilities but by able body users, they get so vandalized that even the manufacturer didn't recommend them, and this is why they went with the next best thing which was the group swing.
 - Ms. Mulhern made a suggestion of adding more parking spaces, or maybe the possibility of parking on Mill Street.
 - John asked about the timeline on this project.
 - Mr. Antonelli explained that he needed to have a final plan relatively quickly to turn in paperwork to the state for reimbursement by June 1st, to be completed by the Fall, funding has been secured by the City Manager.
 - Ms. Mulhern made a motion to accept the Coes Knife Playground final design as is, Seconded by Mr. Sullivan. All were in favor. Motion was approved 5 – 0.
 - Worcester Youth Soccer League – Use of Field before opening
- Parks & Recreation Commission Appointment
- Mr. Antonelli explained that there has been a new appointment for the Parks Commission to take the place of Mr. Goldstein whose term has expired. Mr. Matt Wally who will start in the May 26, 2016 meeting.
 - Mr. Goldstein made a motion to elect Ms. Mulhern as the new Chair and Mr. Sedares as the Vice – Chair, Second by Mr. Chacharone. All were in favor. Motion was approved 5 – 0.
- Grant Applications –

- Coes Knife - Awarded
- TD Green Streets Grant – Awarded \$20,000 RFP went out for the work
- National Fish & Wild Life – Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Program Grant
- Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant – Betty Price – still at the state level
- PARC & LAND Grant Program – Grant through the state but it needs to be approved by the Federal Government through the National Parks.
- Economic Development Initiatives - NA
- Park Vandalism & Graffiti – NA
- Donations – NA
- Capital Improvement Programs
 - Apricot Street Playground - NA
 - Ball Property - NA
 - Banis Street Playground - NA
 - Beaver Brook Park - NA
 - Bell Pond – NA
 - Bennett Field – New wall is under design, no work expected this fiscal year, field is closed
 - Betty Price Playground – Grant Application Submitted
 - Blackstone Gateway Park – NA
 - Blithwood Park – NA
 - Boynton Park – NA
 - Burncoat Park – NA
 - Burncoat Playground – NA
 - Cascades Park – NA
 - Castle Park – In design - out to be around June
 - Common Master Plan Implementation
 - WWII & Civil War – Continue moving along scheduled to be completed by June
 - Coes Knife Park
 - Stearns Tavern
 - Playground
 - Coes Pond – the building is undergoing renovations now moving along, expect to open July 1, 2016.
 - Columbus Park – NA
 - Cookson Park – NA
 - Cristoforo Columbo (East Park) – NA
 - Crompton Park – Continues to move forward should be completed by the end of May 2016
 - Dodge Park – NA
 - Elm Park - Finishing up walkways and benches
 - Task Force
 - Bridge
 - Newton Hill
 - Fairmont Park – NA
 - Farber Field – NA
 - Grant Square – NA
 - Great Brook Valley Playground – NA
 - Green Hill Park Renovation
 - Green Hill Farm – Continue in process of completing 3 new buildings and in the process of demolishing old toilet building.
 - Greenwood Park – NA
 - Hadwen Park – NA
 - Harrington Field – NA
 - Harry Sherry Field (S. Worcester) - NA
 - Holland Rink - NA
 - Holmes Field - NA

- Indian Hill Park – Under construction for a parking lot, basketball court, drop off area for parents to drop kids off should be completed sometime in July
- Indian Lake Beach – NA
- Institute Park – Moving along
 - Restroom Facility & Gazebo
 - Salisbury Pond – Working with DEP and Weston and Sampson on study of the pond
- Kendrick Field – NA
- Knights of Columbus – NA
- Korean War Memorial – NA
- Lake Park – NA
- Lake Park State (possible Synthetic Field) - NA
- Lake View Playground – NA
- Logan Field – NA
- Morgan Landing – NA
- Mulcahy Field - Update
- Oakland Heights Playground – NA
- Providence Street Playground – NA
- Ramshorn Island – NA
- Rockwood Field – NA
- Salisbury Park (Bancroft Tower) – NA
- Shale Street Playground – Working on Master Plan
- Shore Park – In design for a new building expected to start construction right after the 2016 swim season
- Spillane Field – NA
- Tacoma Street Playground – NA
- TY Cobb – NA
- University Park – NA
- Vernon Hill – NA
- Wetherall Estates (Duffy Field) – NA
- 149 West Boylston Drive - NA
- Winslow & Pleasant - NA
- Aquatic Master Plan – NA
- Open Space and Recreation Plan – Continue to review on a regular basis in an attempt to check off action items that were part of this document and continue to develop master plans
- North Lake Ave Linear Park – NA
- Community Development Block Grant – NA
- Art-in-the-Park – NA
- Dog Park, Licensing & Control of Dogs – Master Plan in the recommendation stages anticipating an additional meeting at the beginning of June 2016.
- Rectangular Field Development – Master Plan on recommendation stages additional meetings to come sometime in June.
- Misc items:
 - Keep Worcester Clean –
 - January 2016, February 2016 & March 2016
 - City Council Orders
 - Greenwood Park Field
 - Greenwood Park Trash
 - Parks Fee Structure
 - Petitions
 - Elm Park
 - ATV
 - Purchase Street Trees
 - Forestry Operations – Update

- ALB (Asian Longhorned Beetle)
 - EAB (Emerald Ash Borer)
- Budget Update – Operational & Capital -
 - Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Division – to be completed soon
 - Capital Improvement program – to be completed soon
 - City Five Point Financial Plan - NA
- Summer Youth Employment Program – Positions available for lifeguards, gatekeeper, and maintenance
 - Ms. Mulhern asked how much the lifeguards class was
 - Mr. Antonelli answered \$250.00
- Recreation Worcester – Up and running through Inspectional Services
- Holiday Tree – NA
- Worcester Common Ice Skating Rink - NA
- Waterfowl in Park – NA
- Out-to-Lunch – Starting up in June
- Trash – NA
- ESCo – NA
- Park Permits – Continue to exhaust almost every space available for use.
- Access/ ADA – NA
- Mobile Concession - NA
- Misc Information –
 - Easter Rising Article
 - Elm Park Photo
 - Blithwood Photo
 - Green Hill Photo
 - ATV Articles
 - Craft Brew Race Article
 - Lost WWII Monument Article
 - Indian Lake Article
 - Working for Worcester & Earth Day Cleanup Articles
 - City Manager T&G Event Article
 - Green Hill Park Cross Country Skiing Article
 - City Council Youth Parks & Recreation Sub Committee
- NA
- Golf Course:
 - Green Hill Golf Course Caddy Program
- Golf Course Donations
 - Francis Ouimet Fund – there might be a 3 year commitment to help run a Caddy program
- Tabled Items: - Smoking in Public Parks – NA
 - Ms. Sedares made a motion to adjourn, Second by Ms. Mulhern. All were in favor. Motion was approved 5 - 0. Meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM
- Next Parks & Recreation Commission meeting: May 26, 2016 – 6:30 PM