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By City Clerk's Office at 2:40 pm, 7/16/21

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
April 12, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Via Remote Participation

Commissioners Present: Jane DeBarbieri, Scott LaBombard, Kenneth Magarian, Douglas Morash, Vincent Olinski, Michael Tirrell, Sara Unger and Robert Veronesi

Staff: Scott Hathaway, Deputy Supt. and Jim Blascak, Program Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. via remote participation with Michael Tirrell, Chairperson presiding asking commissioners for a voice roll call by calling out a "Yes".

Sara Unger, yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.
Motion passed.

Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions regarding the zoom March 8, 2021 meeting minutes and if anyone wanted to set motion. He called out each commissioner for a roll call vote. Motion made by Robert Veronesi to accept the minutes of March 8, 2021 motion seconded by Jane DeBarbieri, Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger abstain out most of the meeting, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard abstain not at meeting.
Motion passed.

Public Participation via zoom:

1. Jeff Burke, Dan Dziuban, Paula Hebert, Cheryl Crowe, Madeline Calabrese, Bill Westerlind, Ryan Dunphy and Cindy Gaylord
1. Michael Tirrell welcomed Cindy Gaylord, Chair of Historic Commission who is here tonight with an update on Mechanic Street Cemetery or old burial ground and stated although she is not on the agenda she will give a brief update.
2. Cindy Gaylord informed commission that the Historic Commission will be cleaning the head stones in the old burial grounds this spring and again in the fall. She requested approval of an interpretive sign to be place at Mechanic Street Cemetery that would have four legs and have a short description of prominent names in cemetery.
3. Michael Tirrell thanked Cindy Gaylord and informed her because she was not listed on the agenda the commission is unable to approve or vote her request tonight and asked her to attend the May 10 meeting and bring examples of the interpretive sign.

Business or Items for Discussion:

1. Michael Tirrell welcomed Jeff Burke with an update on the Skate Park. Jeff Burke went over what was said at the last meeting and he presented an updated slide presentation with the pros and cons of the

need to update the current skate park due to safety and that the park is outdated and no one uses it. He went over his presentation. Why does Westfield need a new park- The current park is outdated and every obstacle is unapproachable for beginners, banks are too steep not appealing of families, the current park is not getting the attendance it should, skateboarding is a vastly growing and affordable sport, recent Olympic sport, provides a safe place for families, peers and adults and it supports local businesses when people come to visit. He went over other communities are building new parks, Springfield, Easthampton. Greenfield, Longmeadow, Pittsfield, Worcester and Leominster. He explained Easthampton is doing a fundraiser April 29 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. as a benefit to raise money for their skate park and set up a checking account for businesses to donate at a tax deductible. He asked Dan Dziuban to go over his view of the current skate park. Jeff Burke said if you build a good modern skate park people will come and use it and it will be popular once again and will rediscover Westfield.

2. Dan Dziuban said he is the co-owner of Theory Skate shop for over 20 years has been running the Westfield skateboard camp each year and back when it first opened there were a lot of kids signed up over the years however, the numbers declined because they were going to other out of town skate camps. He said he talked to Jim Blascak about moving the skate park program somewhere else because the current one was not good for beginners. He went over how he currently runs a traveling portable skate park program with ramps that he brings and takes down each day. He says since he has been doing this the numbers have increased in his camps to around thirty children and we are currently using Chapman Playground on the basketball courts. He also said he brings his traveling camps to other cities/towns that don't have skate parks and said skateboarding is exploding in New England right now a lot of new skate parks are being built.
3. Jeff Burke informed commissioners that they hosted contests the past 20 years in Western MA and some communities offer skateboarding for after school programs and possibly since the current skate park is near the boys and girls club they could use it as well and it is a shame no one is utilizing the current skate park. He went over ways other communities raised funds for their skate parks, Braintree, Sandwich, North Adams, Easthampton used local taxes from marijuana. Quincy used taxes from hotels and applied for grants and the Tony Hawk Foundation can match up to \$ 50,000 to help provide a way to fund it in terms of a budget and project management. Westfield can apply for block grants, preservation funds, local taxes including marijuana, hotels, and apply to the Tony Hawk private foundation, federal and community block grants, public fundraising, put in a budget, have a capital plan in place. He said if you want to know how the city of Easthampton is fundraising you can attend the Fort Hill Brewery in Easthampton on April 29 times 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and all beer sales will be donated towards their new skate park. They also created a tax deductible charitable account for businesses to donate as well. He ended with ideas of moving forward with the renovations of the Westfield Skate Park and said that he and Dan Dziuban will help out. First the city needs to get proposals and design that will be good for the next fifty years or do you want a design for the thirty to forty years he feels we build it right the next time around and have it the state of the art park. Jeff Burke went over the process to move forward. First the commission needs to support the renovation of the current skate park and give it the greenlight, identify and choose designer, work with designer to create a budget, hold a public meeting and include skate boarders and hold a public design meeting, finalize the design after public input, draft construction documents and put design out for construction and source of funding in place before going out to bid.
4. Michael Tirrell thanked Jeff for his presentation and asked commissioners if they had questions and said we will revisit this in the next coming months. There were also questions about where do we want the existing area to be renovated or a new location. He feels it should stay in the footprint of the existing skate park because it is near the school and questions will be is it the size comparable to the Quincy skate park. Jeff Burke said he believes it is 8,000 square feet.

5. Robert Veronesi responded if the current skate park is not safe why we don't shut it down and why is it open and questioned if the city will be held liable.
6. Kenneth Magarian responded that the initial skate park back in the 90's was a special and unique at that time. He feels we should get together and come up with a plan and bring it back next month.
7. Jeff Burke responded that very few builders could build a skate park with a design because they were not skateboarders themselves. They tried to do the best they could with the construction of the Westfield skate park no one knew how to do it and when they finished they shook their heads.
8. Michael Tirrell said regardless of the existing park that was designed we can investigate the feasibility to utilize that spot and investigate again to see if feasible to repurpose.
9. Scott LaBombard asked Jeff Burke is it good to do it in phases to make it a bigger and better skate park. Jeff Burke responded that we can do it in phases and plan it out the way you want it built and do it the right way and some other communities do it with funds they have and then wait until they have additional funds to go to the next phase. He said that Boston took 20 years to build in all phases.
10. Dan Dziuban responded East Windsor CT did a park in phases and added an "L" shape and it is awesome.
11. Scott Hathaway suggested that we contact Peter Miller, Community Development who found grants and funds for Cross Street Playground so possibly they can get grants to refurbish the skate park.
12. Michal Tirrell responded we can revisit in a few months and add to the next agenda and vote to support the reconstruction of the current skate park and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Kenneth Magarian to review existing conditions of skate park and to investigate what option we have to repair, correct, or improve and whatever is necessary to bring the skate park up to date and explore safety with a design that is safe, acceptable and be usable with the help of Jeff Burke and Dan Dziuban and we certainly hope they will help. Motion seconded by Douglas Morash. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes. Motion passed

13. Scott Hathaway said grants will be the key to move forward. Jeff Burke said he has already contacted the Tony Hawk Foundation and will let them know that we are good to move forward.
14. Michael Tirrell will work towards the community preservation fund for this types of project as well. He thanked Jeff Burke for updating the commission and his presentation tonight.
15. Michael Tirrell welcomed Paula Hebert, Westfield CFCE Program Coordinator who is here tonight requesting to use Municipal Playground to expand the playgroup on Wednesdays on following dates 28, May 5, May 12, May 19, June 2, and June 16 times 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. and asked her to go over the event.
16. Paula Hebert thanked commissioners for using Municipal Playground in the winter months for the student parent program and they want to expand the program dates with spring and summer. They will follow governor/city guidelines wearing masks, staying socially distanced and will have family student activities and projects that will be used outside in warmer weather. She has contacted the

board of health and will have 10 to 15 people. She said she needs to amend the permit to start on May 5th and end June 16 and not use other dates.

17. Michael Tirrell said 10-15 folks is not a large crowd and the health dept. has been good with programs that follow guidelines and asked if anyone wanted to set motion.

Motion made by Scott LaBombard to approve amended permit as presented, motion seconded by Jane DeBarbieri. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

Motion passed

18. Michael Tirrell welcomed Cheryl Crowe on behalf of Neil Liptak and a permit request with behalf of Westfield Artworks to use Park Square for open mic nights. Cheryl Crowe went over dates ten weeks on Monday evenings May 3- July 12 with rain date of July 19 and 26th. She said we will have about ten musicians there and they will follow the safety guideline regarding staying socially distanced and wearing masks. She has talked to the Health Dept. and they approved as long as they follow guidelines. On open mic nights people can play music and sing and they will be spread far apart from each other.

19. Michael Tirrell asked if there are any admission fees or concession stands and Cheryl Crowe responded no it is a free family event. Michael Tirrell asked for a motion and a roll call vote.

Motion made by Jane DeBarbieri to accept the permit as requested for open mic nights, motion seconded by Douglas Morash. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

Motion passed

20. Michael Tirrell welcomed Cheryl Crowe and Bill Westerlind, Westfield Artworks permit requests to use Park Square and pavilion for open poetry reading April 24, May 1 and May 8 on Saturdays (rain date May 15) Times 12:30 p.m.- 3:30 p.m. and asked Cheryl Crowe to go over request.

21. Cheryl Crowe let Bill Westerlind from Westfield Artworks go over event. Bill Westerlind thanked the commission for allowing the group to have events and appreciates it and said national poetry month is coming up and they want to celebrate it by having people read poetry and the events are open to the community to listen to them. He said they will follow all city/state guidelines, wear a mask and social distance. People will be excited to read their poetry and to get outside. He explained this is a free event like the open mic night and they have been doing this for three years now.

22. Michael Tirrell asked them to contact the health dept. and they don't have a concern if they follow guidelines and the commission has their blessing and asked if anyone had any questions and called for a motion.

Motion made by Vincent Olinski to accept the open poetry reading at Park Square and pavilion as presented motion seconded by Robert Veronesi. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

Motion passed

23. Michael Tirrell welcomed Cheryl Crowe and Westfield Artworks for a permit to use Park Square and pavilion for a book author show for local authors to sell and talk to patrons on May 23, times 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (rain date June 6) and asked Cheryl Crowe to go over event.
24. Cheryl Crowe explained that most local book authors don't get the recognition they deserve and don't get paid much and they would like to have an event where authors could sell their books and talk about them to people so they get to know their local authors. They would set up a small area inside the pavilion for authors who have a disability and would have a table set up for the authors. There will be plenty of space for social distancing with a few at a time and they will allow people with disabilities inside pavilion only. So far they have about ten authors but may have up to twenty.
25. Scott LaBombard brought up that he thought people were not allowed to sell for profit and asked is this for profit or nonprofit.
26. Cheryl Crowe said these authors don't make much money and that is a good question. We want to do something for the quiet authors. The Westfield Artworks is not charging the authors or anyone for anything else and we want to give back to the community. If people want to buy a book from the author there they felt that it would help support the quiet local authors.
27. Scott LaBombard said personally he does not have a problem and thought there was an issue or did not know if city wise we are allowed to have functions with people who are there to make a profit off sales of items and asked Michael Tirrell if there was ever an issue.
28. Michael Tirrell talked about other events that were allowed in the past at Park Square and discussion made regarding we allow politicians to accept contributions at organizational meetings and he did not have a problem with it.
29. Sara Unger mentioned other vendors at events were able to sell their items for the October fest and there were several craft vendors.
30. Scott LaBombard said he is fine with it he just wanted to make sure we were compliant and Michael Tirrell said it was a good point to bring up.
31. Cheryl Crowe brought up where the library sold books at Park Square and Scott LaBombard responded he believes they follow under the 501 designation. Cheryl Crowe responded that is a good question and she assured them there were many vendors and does not believe the money went anywhere but for themselves and is still trying to learn the ropes.
32. Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions and Douglas Morash asked if this was a new event and if you they done this before with poetry he says we know the open mic program was held in the past.
33. Cheryl Crowe responded yes a new event they wanted to follow more authors that are quiet and not get forgotten that is why the Artworks of Westfield and herself reached out to Susan over a month ago to bring the idea to the community so they know who they are and they are certainly not a huge group.
34. Jane DeBarbieri asked where the Artworks of Westfield advertises because she and her friends would like to attend the events mentioned tonight. She asked if she could put the information in the Penny saver or newspaper for those that do not have internet or social media and then they will know what is going on.

35. Cheryl Crowe responded they are big on social media and will post events in the newspaper and the reporters are very good about writing articles for Artworks of Westfield and also everything is listed on the website and Facebook page that her board members have created.

36. Michael Tirrell asked for a motion and a roll call.

Motion made by Jane DeBarbieri to accept the permit book author show at Park Square and pavilion as presented motion seconded by Douglas Morash. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

Motion passed

37. Michael Tirrell welcomed Cheryl Crowe and Madeline Calabrese, Curator at the Harold Grinspoon Sculptures requesting to place another tree art sculpture at Gateway Park and Cheryl Crowe recommended "Joy" as the tree art sculpture.

38. Madeline Calabrese went over the location and asked commissioners if they received the tree art photos by email of the ones that are available and if they came up with the one they would want for the second location. She mentioned that the taller trees could go behind the planter in that area and really be noticeable.

39. Cheryl Crowe responded that she has received so many compliments on the tree art at the planter in Kane/Wojtkiewicz Park and that is simply pops it's tall and beautiful when you are at the light or driving by. They are excited that Mr. Grinspoon the artist is willing to put another one at Gateway Park. She said the photos are really beautiful tree art sculptures and she wanted something with more color to it.

40. Michael Tirrell responded that the first tree was well received by the community it was simple to install in the planter and the other planter has a another good view coming in and out of the city at Gateway park across from the 9/11 monument. Traffic is a little heavier near the Westwood and other businesses it does not matter to him if we don't put it in the planter he was looking at continuity. He then showed a screen shot of a map of the location at Gateway Park entrance and pointed to the areas and planter.

41. Scott Hathaway said if Madeline Calabrese wanted to put it behind the planter so he could plant smaller plants in the planter he thought it would be a good idea to match the other planter on that end of the city.

42. Madeline Calabrese brought up the trees on both sides and you are looking between them at the end.

43. Michel Tirrell said it would certainly be more prominent there.

44. Madeline Calabrese responded to the commissioners that no one has made a tree art selection of the options from photos she has given and there has been no communication made yet.

45. Cheryl Crowe said she liked the metal one called "Joy" because it was in beautiful colors.

46. Madeline Calabrese said "Joy" has two different color schemes and they have a second one in the works because this one will be going to an art show this summer. She said it does not preclude it from being installed after the show is easy to install in one piece.

47. Cheryl Crowe says she really likes "Joy" because the colors just pop and she loves it.

48. Michael Tirrell pulled up the tree art photos on the screen and said "Joy" tree art will be in an art show this summer but options can be to install after the event.
49. Madeline Calabrese showed on her screen another tree art that is like a sister to "Joy" She asked the commission to pick one or two tree art selections and she will check with Harold Grinspoon to see if he approves. She also showed smaller selections and taller ones.
50. Sara Unger had a concern if the tree art is super colorful because it is across from the 9/11 monument it might not go so well since it is near the memorial. She felt maybe a more patriotic color theme would be a better fit.
51. Scott LaBombard said he feels the same way he brought up a tree art with branches that looked like the Twin Towers red white and blue. Possibly that would be more appropriate with the theme.
52. Sara Unger brought up another photo on the bottom screen that had same colors and stated she is not a big fan of the super colorful ones for that location. She thought that would better fit in a family oriented park.
53. Madeline Calabrese brought up Nicholas Morganelli comment on the screen and he had a concern so close and the colors of tree art with the 9/11 Memorial Park. He thought the veterans might want their input with the red white and blue theme.
54. Michael Tirrell is suggested we send this to the previous subcommittee group members like last time and take a tour at the proximity to the 9/11 Memorial Park and determine if it should go in the planter or be better off in another area or behind the memorial and the subcommittee group can decide what is appropriate once they view the area.
55. Sara Unger brought up behind the planter would be away from the memorial.
56. Madeline Calabrese brought up a photo on line not listed called "Freedom" it is a single post with the flag we can modify it with a panted one and it has a lot of stars and then there is one that is smaller pieces that will interact with it. She will send a photo to the subcommittee group to take a look at.
57. Michael Tirrell responded that the sub-committee members Douglas Morash, Jane DeBarbieri and himself will convene as a group and anyone else that would like to participate. Scott Hathaway said he would attend.

Michael Tirrell asked to set motion and asked for a roll call Motion made by Robert Veronesi to accept tree art sub-committee members as presented to review tree art location and designs and bring it back to the next meeting motion seconded by Scott LaBombard. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

Motion passed

58. Nicholas Morganelli texted in zoom and he can bring the tree art to the city council when we have a plan in place.
59. Michael Tirrell thanked Cheryl Crowe and Madeline Calabrese for their presentation tonight and is looking forward to talking to them at the next meeting in May.

60. Michael Tirrell welcomed Ryan Dunphy, School Athletic Director requesting a permit for Whitney and Sadie Knox as back up for the WTA softball program and asked Ryan to go over the program.
61. Ryan Dunphy thanked the commission for having him tonight and said this is a renewal for the Westfield Technical Academy School softball program April 26 – June 30 times 2:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m. and they will have 40 – 60 games. He said he no longer needs the Sadie Knox Playground permit and to cross that one off or keep it just for a backup plan.
62. Scott LaBombard said if he has any concerns that Westfield Little League and St. Mary's can work together if he needs Sadie Knox ballfields.
63. Michael Tirrell asked to set motion and asked for a roll call Motion made by Sara Unger to accept permits as presented motion seconded by Robert Veronesi. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.
Motion passed
64. Michael Tirrell brought up Scott Hathaway and the basketball nets at playgrounds. Scott Hathaway said that the department was receiving several calls regarding basketball nets and hoops at playgrounds and he has contacted the health dept. and they gave the ok to put them back up. He said people were upset that pickle ball people could play their sport but the basketball players could not. He said the swings are up at playgrounds as well.
65. Michael Tirrell said as long as they were cleared with the health dept. regarding basketball nets and placing swings back up at the playgrounds and said everyone should be happy now. Scott LaBombard responded that people will be a lot happier now.
66. Michael Tirrell brought up grants for AED units at other parks and playgrounds he said he talked to Jim Blascak about what areas that would need them with various sports going on and we will take an inventory and hopes we never have to use them but unfortunately Scott LaBombard had to use it and saved someone life and that was a great story.
67. Scott LaBombard said that miraculously the AED unit helped save someone and he went over details of the day at Municipal Playground and how a lot of people were performing compressions on a man and he will never forget the moment that it was everyone involved that helped this person to the ambulance and dispatch police that took the call from unit. He grabbed the unit and it walked him thought the directions on how to use it on the man and he wants everyone to know that you can never hurt anyone with it and not to be afraid if you ever in a situation to use it. He hopes the AED units will be installed all over the city. He said Jim Blascak just had to order a new filter and it is good to use again and the unit stores the basic records each time it is used.
68. Michael Tirrell responded absolutely all folks interested to know more about the AED units can be found on You-tube and it has instructions as you use it.
69. Scott LaBombard said yes the unit walks you through it and it monitors the heart beat and you are protected under the special citizens act where you can't go wrong with the AED unit it is that easy to use so don't be afraid to use it he said. He proudly said the stars were aligned that night in the sky and his wife and him were at the playground about to play pickle ball and this guy needed help so he grabbed the unit and unzipped it to turn it on and it walk him through it and he was happy he could help him that night and he will never forget the incident for the rest of his life.

70. Michael Tirrell brought up the possible new board for the Westfield Artworks and asked Bridgette Matthew Kane, City Councilor to go over details.
71. Bridgette Matthews –Kane thanked the commission and informed them she is the Ward 3 City Councilor and that a new proposed ordinance will be created for a new Westfield Public Arts Commission that would vet the arts projects in the city and relieve this commission of the requests. It has been sent to the law dept. to see if it is legal and once this happens she will circle back to the commission on the update. She said that a member from this organization or a board member would sit on the new commission and act as a liaison. She wanted to bring this to the commission attention and would love to hear any thoughts.
72. Michael Tirrell thanked her and appreciates her walking through the process and looks forward to hearing from her in the coming months.

Schedule of bills-Michael Tirrell asked if everyone had a chance to go over them. (Emailed)

Reports-

1. Scott Hathaway went over his reports and said the gates are closed at Whitney and are open dusk to dawn and we have someone open it in the morning and once softball starts they will close the gate. Right now the police close it for us but don't want to do this every night. He went over Cross Street update, pre-emergent application currently going on at fields and a barricade placed at Cross Street Playground to prevent cars from driving on. He already went over the basketball nets and swings.
2. Jim Blascak went over staff hired for spring, programs numbers and programs that are full. Cross Street playground should be completed by May 1.

Michael Tirrell asked to set motion to adjourn and asked for a roll call Motion made by Scott LaBombard motion seconded by Robert Veronesi. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Robert Veronesi yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

Motion passed

The next meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2021 -Via zoom

Documents used:

Schedule of bills-Emailed

Staff Reports-Emailed

Pictures emailed of tree art

Reviewed by Douglas Morash, Secretary of Commission

Typed organized by zoom video: Peggy Goralczyk, Head Clerk