

Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 6 PM (via ZOOM)

In attendance:

Commission: Joanne Baecher-DiSalvo (Chair), Gene Calamari, Anjali Chen, Mike Jacobs, Patrick McKenzie, Angela Reeve. A quorum is in order.
Aaron Podhurst (Superintendent).
Mary Lambert (Village Board of Trustee liaison to Parks & Rec Commission)

1.Call to Order

2.Public Comment - Joanne asked that anyone listening in on the call with a public comment pertaining to any item on this evening's agenda wait until that topic is discussed. There were no public comments at this time during the meeting.

3.Old Business -

- **Meeting Minutes** from August were approved.

- **Skatepark** - review of proposal and possible sites. Vote as to proposed location to be taken at October meeting.

Mike Jacobs presented a brief recap of the proposed sites that have been discussed to date.

He reminded folks that back in January 2020, the P&R Commission held a large public meeting at the Library where four possible sites were presented at that time (1. Zinsser Park - north end of the parking lot; 2. Chemka Pool top lot - area north of the Hillside Park tennis courts; 3. Farlane Drive - Village owned parcel adjacent Reynolds Field; 4. Burke Estate - area adjacent the access driveway up to the baseball field and owned by the Hastings UFSD.) Possible sites have been whittled down to two -- Zinsser Park, and Burke Estate.

Zinsser Park - there are actually two possibilities at Zinsser --

1- "End of the parking lot" - is on the north end of the Zinsser parking lot, and is approximately 5,000' sq. The advantages of this site would be that it is a level paved surface. The disadvantage would be that using this area would eliminate approximately 10 existing parking spots.

2- The "wooded area with slope" - just past the north end of the parking lot. It is Village owned land, but the topographical challenges existing in this area would mean it would be much more expensive to develop as a skate park.

Burke Estate - Mike Jacobs reported that he met with Maureen Caraballo (Hastings UFSD) to discuss the neighbors concerns with noise and visibility of the offered parcel of school owned land down near Farragut Avenue. Ms. Caraballo indicated that the school is open to the suggestion of making the location further up the access road (reference the two telephone poles

that have an easement of approximately 10'.... The new proposed location would be further up, approximately 100' west of the Farragut Ave sidewalk.

Mike reminded all to consider the five criteria discussed at the January 2020 P&R Commission Meeting that we are using to determine what would make for a most successful skate park:

- Access
- Visibility
- Activity
- Comfort
- Feasibility

(reference www.skatepark.org, reference Jan 2020 P&R Commission Meeting Minutes)

Joanne invited Public Comment at this point in the call:

_ Anne Runyan, Farragut Ave, Hastings. Ms. Runyan expressed continued concern regarding noise, safety of people crossing Farragut, and concern that the access road to Burke would be used as an extension of a skate park. She noted that the criteria outlined in skatepark.org does not allow for community input. She also expressed that with the economic impact COVID-19 has had on everyone, a skate park may seem frivolous and would only benefit a few people.

Joanne noted that the “feasibility” category of the criteria outlined in skatepark.org does take into account the public vocalizing input as to the proposed property/site.

_Franya Barnett, Farragut Ave, Hastings. Ms. Barnett thanked everyone for the consideration being given to the Farragut Avenue residents. Her concerns remain the same as expressed in prior meetings. She feels that Zinsser is a better location when considering the environmental and economic impact where at Zinsser you would not be cutting down trees to pour concrete. In the winter months, the trees are barren. If you cut down trees, it will change how an area feels.

_Sawyer Dogins, Hastings. On behalf of the skate community, please know that COVID-19 has greatly affected the youth residents as well. Skating would give youth an opportunity to get outside, and turn screens off to “heal your brains” and relieve stress. Mr. Dogins shared a video compilation of local residents being interviewed and asked “How would a skate park benefit you?”

_ Aaron Podhurst, Superintendent, shared an email he received on Sep 10 from Kai MacMahon. Mr. MacMahon strongly supports a skate park, noting that skating is now an olympic sport. He suggested the sport is misunderstood, and rather skating is a means of exercising body and mind. Skating would be a positive outlet in the Village for generations.

_Martin Sexton, Farragut Avenue, Hastings. Mr. Sexton supports a skate park in Hastings, but supports any location that would be less public, and therefore affecting less residents. He

offered to actively fundraise for an alternate site to Burke. Zinsser's multi-use nature makes for a great site.

_Aaron Golembiewski, Hastings. Questioned if there was a heat map analysis, and asked if Uniontown had been considered.

Mike Jacobs answered no on both fronts.

Joanne Baecher-DiSalvo asked all the Commissioners to review the emails that she forwarded this afternoon... emails that she received from residents pertaining to a proposed skate park.

Angela Reeve as Commission secretary gave a brief overall recap of the emails that Joanne forwarded to the Commissioners on Sept 10, listed in brief here:

_Sep 10, email from Libby Copeland. Opposes both Burke sites for these reasons: 1- Noise at all hours and a decrease in quality of life; 2- Kids crossing Farragut Ave at the service road; 3- current financial climate as a result of COVID-19; 4- development of Burke, opposes cutting trees for concrete.

_Sep 10, email from Martin Sexton. Opposes Burke as a site for a skate park, for these reasons, 1- proximity to houses (noise in addition to the other sports); 2- Farragut Avenue traffic, and kids crossing; 3- After hours skate park would draw teens to hang out at the front of the park; 4- non-residents using, insurance/liability concerns. Mr. Sexton recommends Hillside (behind tennis courts). {Note Mr. Sexton was able to make a public comment during the meeting and supports Zinsser as a multi-use site}

_Sep 10, Sarita Eisenstark. Opposes a skate park at Burke. With recreational development, the trees (and beauty) have been lost. She opposes pavement for the effect on the environment. With the current pandemic, it is hard to imagine a skate park as a priority -- the schools and the Village do not need additional burdens.

-Chemka Pool -

Joanne shared an email she received from Val Harmon, High Street, Hastings offered as a public comment to this evening's meeting. Mrs. Harmon wants to publicly commend the Chemka Pool staff for an outstanding job this summer. Having the pool open benefitted residents of all ages. Swim lessons were safely added back in by August. Everyone did a great job cleaning, sanitizing, wearing masks. She is very proud of how well the young staff did, especially considering the difficulties presented by COVID.

Joanne echoed and underscored Ms. Harmon's sentiment, thanking the entire Chemka Pool staff and the Recreation department.

Anjali Chen shared that she read multiple positive comments on the 10706 Facebook page pertaining to how well the Chemka Pool ran this summer.

Mary Lambert, Village Trustee, expressed appreciation and thanks on behalf of the Village Board of Trustees, for the Chemka Pool staff and Recreation department.

Public Comment pertaining to Chemka Pool:

_Jeff Alterman, Hastings. Shared ideas for next year, perhaps single lanes along the wall would be a better lap lane configuration, and suggested that there not be a two hour time limit for lap lanes unless it gets really busy.

Anthony Costantini, pool manager, Chemka Pool. Advised the Commission that there is currently a swim team rental using the facility on evenings and weekdays.

-Hillside Woods - update

Patrick McKenzie gave an update on fencing and data collection. There has been some activity with volunteer engagement, and referring to minutes from the Conservation Commission he noted that 600 hours of volunteer time has been logged in thus far, tree inventory underway, 50 volunteers have been trained, they are surveying the burberry, there is still privet to be removed, and the Vine Squad will be starting back up in November.

Anjali Chen reported that there are some nature walks thru Hillside Woods planned as a means of public engagement and education. The walk series (which will include bird walks, meditation walks, plant walks, etc) will be offered as a fund raiser, enrollment administered through the Recreation department as a community program. We want to keep efforts going year round as a means of engaging the public.

Joanne asked about previous discussions of a "Friends of Hillside Woods"... she suggested that there might be more donors if we have a non-profit "Friends" organization. Anjali will follow up.

4. New Business

- Upcoming/New Programs -

(Commissioners can reference the Superintendent's digital "hand-outs")

- *Little Kickers and Parent & Me (Soccer) - Sep 27-Nov 3 @ Draper Park.
- *Sports Hopper and Parent & Me - (various sports) - Sep 27 - Nov 3 @ Draper Park.
- *Tennis - Sep 16 - Oct 24 @ Hillside Park.
- *Outdoor Yoga - Sep 16 - Oct 17 @ Draper Park.
- *Walkers & Talkers - Sep 17 - Oct 29 @ Reynolds Track.
- *Tai Chi (seniors and older adults) - Fridays starting Sep 18 @ Riverview Park.
- * Senior Outreach has published its September activity calendar

-Climate Smart Communities

Anjali Chen shared that she has been a part of the Village's task force for Climate Smart Communities but indicated she is stepping down. She has asked Patrick McKenzie or Mike Jacobs to consider joining this task force as a representative from Parks & Recreation. Patrick noted that the task force has not met yet this fall, but will be meeting toward the end of the month. He shared that the focus for P&R would be land and watershed.

- Superintendent's Report (Aaron Podhurst) -

Chemka Pool - we were able to safely and successfully offer the Chemka Pool to residents this summer. There was an Early Morning Swim, Senior Swim, and 3 Open Swim sessions each day. We offered swim lessons in August, and Water Zumba and Water Aerobics.

Recreation - in conjunction with local businesses, we were able to offer Yoga in the Park, Dancing in the Park, Outdoor Zumba, positive window messaging, summer youth programming, multisports program, tennis, a blood drive at the Rec center. In conjunction with the Village Downtown advocate, we were also able to offer Dining Out, Movie Nights, and Shop Local events.

Fall community events - there will be limitations on large gatherings and events due to COVID.

After-School program - too soon to tell what can be safely offered and where

Joanne asked when the *basketball courts* may be re-opened. Aaron pointed out that the ones at Reynolds were school owned, so they will make that call for those nets. As far as the Village owned basketball nets (at Uniontown), there is still the issue of social distancing and monitoring to be able to safely reopen the Village basketball nets. At this time, with the info available from local and state health, Aaron does not support re-opening the Village owned basketball court.

Joanne asked about the *playgrounds* -- are they cleaned and sanitized regularly? Aaron indicated they are not, and that the responsibility falls on parents/caregivers to ensure that children are practicing good hand hygiene, social distancing, etc. Joanne asked if the department could increase efforts to tend to the Village playgrounds.

-Vest Pocket Park - update

Currently, this park is closed due to safety concerns of the retaining wall. (Commissioners can reference Aaron's email attachments summarize the issue and provides some visual mark-ups of what can be done). The Village engineer will weigh in on what type of surfacing might be able to be used. The proposal discussed here involves a wall being put up in front of the existing wall. Perhaps a "phase 2" to beautify the park would be in order.

- Spray Pool -

The work/repairs were completed early this summer, and it passed inspection and gained the operation permit from Westchester County Department of Health.

Closing thoughts and comments from the Commissioners --

Anjali Chen questioned if residents in the Zinsser area are aware of that park being considered as a possible site.

Joanne Baecher-DiSalvo reminded Commissioners to be prepared to come to October's meeting to vote on a proposed site for a skate park. She pointed out that we are making a recommendation. Commissioners should consider carefully, is this a priority? Where does this fit in with our other P&R priorities?

Mike Jacobs asked all Commissioners to go back to review the skate park criteria (full details were outlined in his January P&R Commission presentation). He underscored that we need to be thinking long term for the success of a skate park. Mike also asked Commissioners to remember that these youth have been attending our monthly Commission meetings on a regular basis for two years now. They have been a consistent face and voice through this process, having many times gone back to further research and gather information to address our questions and concerns. Our job as a board is to put forth a recommendation.

Gene Calamari asked what are the dimensions of the rectangular site at Zinsser Park, to which Mike suggested approximately 100' x 50', noting 5,000'sq was always presented as ideal, but a smaller size could work.

Joanne also asked Commissioners to review the email she forwarded pertaining to the Pollinator Pathway project rolling out in the Village. There will be an opportunity to "adopt a spot" here in the Village in an effort to support this program. NOTE TO ADD this topic to October's meeting agenda.

Next Meeting: October 8, 2020 (Thursday) - back to 8:00pm

Meeting minutes adopted October 8, 2020
Submitted by A. Reeve