

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting**

**Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 8 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.

Parks & Recreation Department: Aaron Podhurst (Superintendent), Anthony Costantini (Chemka Pool Director).

#### **1.Call to Order**

#### **2. Public Comment**

-Jeff Alterman, Villard Ave, Hastings. Inquired about the norway maples in Hillside Woods, as well as the deer contraception project. He is also hoping that the pool will open in 2021.

#### **3. Old Business**

##### **-October commission meeting minutes approved**

##### **- Hillside Woods - update**

Patrick McKenzie reported that local volunteers have been having "privet pulls" every weekend. A demo plot is planned to involve plantings and fencing, but we are still awaiting the County grant funds to be disbursed to the Village.

Haven Colgate, Village Conservation Commission, applied for a \$5K grant that could be used for plantings. This is a matching grant (but we can use in kind volunteer hours to match against this sum if we are awarded the grant. We have plenty of volunteer hours logged in for the Hillside Woods project).

Patrick and Haven spoke by phone with George Profous (Senior Forester at NYS Department of Environmental Conservation) an urban forester who supports all of Westchester County. In his advisory role, Mr. Profous can point out possible grants that exist. He provided a list of trees to consider for the Hillside Woods restoration project in consideration of climate change.

The Village Manager participated in a walk-thru of the demo plot and the removal of norway maples was discussed (all at once or stretching the task out over the course of time).

##### **-Skate park - update**

John Dailey and Mike Jacobs presented a skate park update at the October 20th Board of Trustees meeting. Mike shared that the Mayor asked him to continue to serve as the liaison and suggested he work with the interest group to identify alternate sources of funding.

Mike invites the P&R Commission's & Superintendent's input as to how we move forward as an institutional organization. Aaron and Mike will discuss possible grant funding sources to

consider. Joanne explained that as a Commission, we put forth our “P&R Commission’s List of Priorities” This is a key part of the process when asking for consideration for Village funding.

#### **-Quarry Park - update**

Aaron reported that the park is really starting to take form. Parts of the cap have been approved and certified. This is still a tedious process as all angles and pitches of the ground have to match the DEC approved plans. We had hoped that the plantings would be completed by this fall, but this has not been completed. Some rose bushes have been planted. Anjali thought it odd that rose bushes would be planted since they are not deer resistant. Anjali is planning to meet with Christina Lomolino (Chair of Quarry Study Committee) so asked Aaron to let her know if there are any issues/info that he’d like her to convey to Chris when they meet.

#### **-Sugar Pond Shed**

Joanne asked that we all keep in mind the deteriorating condition of Sugar Pond Shed. It is an “eyesore” and it can no longer be used for storage in its current condition. She reminded the Commission that we had a group of residents visit our past meetings (Cassandra Sweet) proposing improvements (an outdoor pavilion to replace the current concrete block structure).

*Agenda Note: Include Sugar Pond Shed on December’s agenda for further discussion.*

## **4. NEW BUSINESS**

### **New/Upcoming Programs -**

#### Youth Programs:

Outdoor Track and Field - (grades K-6th) - Sundays in November - Reynolds Field

#### Senior Programs:

(reference November Senior Calendar for specifics).

Aaron reported that no indoor programming is being offered in the James Harmon Community Center (JHCC). There are senior programs being offered virtually and outdoors (ref calendar)

“Senior Rewinds” - Mondays via HoH Channel 75

“Current Events” - Tuesdays via ZOOM.

Outdoor Senior Fitness program meets Thursdays at 11am at Hillside Tennis Courts.

Shopping via Senior Bus - Tuesdays and Fridays

Outdoor Walks - Tuesdays (South County Trail, Scenic Hudson Park, Old Croton Aqueduct)

#### Community Programs:

Chain of Hope - co-sponsored by Hastings YAP and WAY Coalition - Oct 24 (9am-2pm) - JHCC

#### **-Superintendent Report -**

Aaron reported that the community outdoor nature walks series in Hillside Woods was a success (the bird walks were particularly popular). Successful youth programming included

“Fall into Fun” (which was an outdoor modification of the Hillside Afterschool Program and was held outdoors at the Chemka pool parking lot/ Hillside Park tennis courts) as well as the Outdoor Track and Field programs (that was held at Reynolds track). The department’s Halloween programming was met with enthusiasm (window painting, trunk or treat, Village fall cleanup, etc).

Aaron and staff have been in full discussions of what can be offered in terms of community programs for the December holidays, keeping in mind we are prohibited from indoor gatherings.

Reynold’s Playground - safety surfacing has been replenished. All of the Village playgrounds have been seeing high usage.

Chain of Hope event (that was held on Oct 24 at the JHCC and was co-sponsored by the Hastings Youth Advocate Program and the WAY Coalition) was well attended. Feel free to stop by to see the encouraging messages “linked” together on the chain displayed outside the JHCC.

“Adopt a Spot” - a Village/public partnership. There are predetermined sites, and minimum requirements of adopted spots. There is an application on the Village website. Reference: <https://www.hastingsgov.org/beautification-committee/pages/adopt-spot-program>

Hastings Pollinator Pathways Project - check it out....  
<https://www.hastingspollinatorpathway.org/home>

Joanne asked Angela to circulate the latest rendition of our Commission’s “Parks, Playgrounds, Recreational Facilities - 2019-2020” documented (last updated 10/28/19 prior to David Down’s departure). Joanne asked that everyone take a look at the list, and make time to visit our assigned park/playground/facility to just check in and see how that location is looking. We will update the list to reassign David locations at our next meeting. Angela encouraged Commissioners to take photos that we can share and perhaps grow a stock of photos that could be used to enhance the P&R section of the Village website.

#### **Public Comment -**

-Val Harmon, High Street, Hastings. Is there a holiday display planned for the JHCC? Perhaps there is a way (thru a reservation system or other) that the traditional holiday display still be made available to the public (in a walk-thru format, by reservation)?

Aaron explained that currently the big room of the JHCC is being used for socially distanced public meetings, but this may be possible. He will discuss with the Recreation staff.

#### **-Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) - proposal from Bartlett Tree Experts -**

Aaron had circulated the proposal to Commissioners prior to this evening’s meeting. As outlined in the proposal, there is no cure/treatment for Beech Leaf Disease, and this disease will take its toll over time. The proposal from Bartlett Tree Experts seeks to conduct a research

study over a number of years (Spring 2021 - Fall 2024). There is no cost to the Village. The study involves injecting the beech trees with a pesticide in hopes of saving the tree. Joanne questioned the toxicity if in the event the tree were to catch fire. Patrick explained that the chemical and concentration that Bartlett is proposing is the same used for ash trees -- in the world of pesticides, there are rankings, and the one Bartlett is proposing is the least worrisome. There would be 20 trees in the treatment group and 10 trees in the control group. It is a two year treatment to a handful of beech trees. If we do nothing, than we are sure to lose all our beech trees (soon, perhaps within six years). The six Commissioners present voiced support for Aaron to proceed in working with Bartlett Tree Experts to conduct the research study.

**-Additional thoughts / discussions / next steps:**

- Joanne indicated that it is time to update our Parks & Rec's Priority List. Our last in-depth discussion was back in 2019. She indicated that in viewing the Oct 20 Board of Trustee meeting, the Mayor wants that listing updated and the Board would like know better the scope of the location and funding of a proposed skate park. Joanne was pleased that Mike pointed out during the Oct 20 Board of Trustee meeting that a proposed skate park hits a new demographics here in the Village.

- Joanne will start this process of our List of Priorities discussion by scanning and sending all Commissioners and Aaron the most recent listing (where projects are ranked High, Medium, or Low priority).

- Aaron indicated that the most recent update of the P&R Priorities Listing was included in the Department's "Anticipated Capital Future Needs" document.

-Mike commented that the loudest, most recent voices do tend to move things up the list of priorities. He suggested that we objectify the criteria to aid in our discussions. Joanne tasked each of the Commissioners with giving this some thought and consideration before the December meeting.

Commissioners -- For your action before December meeting:

- Visit your assigned park, playground, facility to check on condition (Angela will circulate our document "Village of HoH Parks, Playgrounds, Facilities 2019-2020, last updated 10/28/2019). Consider your ability to pick up one of the locations assigned to David.
- P&R Priorities List - Criteria - come prepared to December's meeting with input to list out the criteria used in establishing and updating this list. (Joanne and Aaron will check in to ensure that the most recent list is distributed to the Commission before the December meeting).

**5.Meeting adjourned.**

**Next meeting:** December 10, at 6pm (note earlier time) via ZOOM

*December Agenda Notes:*

*-Add Sugar Pond Shed to the December meeting*

*-Add "Village of HoH Parks, Playgrounds, Recreational Facilities - 2019-2020" - update document listing what sites each Commissioner will commit to visiting on a regular basis*

*-Add P&R Commission Priorities - Identifying Criteria*

November Meeting Minutes adopted December 16, 2020 (the revised Dec Meeting date)  
Prepared and submitted by A. Reeve