MEETING MINUTES  
Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting  
November 17, 2021 - 8pm via Zoom  

Commissioners In attendance: Joanne Baecher-DiSalvo (Chair), Gene Calamari, Aaron Golembiewski, Mike Jacobs, Amy Listerman, Angela Reeve. A quorum is in order.  
Also in attendance: Aaron Podhurst (Superintendent), Anthony Costantini (Pool Director), Trustee Morgen Fleisig.  

1. Call to Order  

Joanne introduced and welcomed Amy Listerman, new Parks & Recreation Commissioner who will also serve as our liaison to the Conservation Commission.  

Joanne would like to publicly recognize and thank exiting Commissioners Patrick Mackenzie and Anjali Chen for their numerous contributions to the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Village.  

2. Public Comment - none  

3. Old Business  

- Skatepark - update  
  Mike Jacob conveyed that there is no new information to report since we last met. He indicated that HoH Skate has been planning a couple of local awareness / skating / fundraising efforts in town. Mike asked Trustee Fleisig if there’s anything we should be doing to “jump start” efforts in terms of getting a formal commitment from the schools to the Village to outline the commitment. Mike seems to think a letter was provided but he will check with Nicole Miziolek (HoH Skate) and follow up with Maureen Caraballo (Treasurer, Hastings UFSD). Aaron Podhurst indicated that Nicole has inquired about the Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) between Village and Schools.  

  Aaron will be working with Maureen to update the IMA (Morgen asked Aaron to have a conversation with him, the Village Manager, and the Mayor first and then go to Maureen).  

- Chemka Pool - update  
  The Village hired an aquatic engineer and they have started their work to assess the damage to the pool filter/pump room as a result of Tropical Storm Ida. The engineer tested the electrical systems, conducted pressure testing, inspected pipes, and the
mechanical systems. The aquatic engineering company will compile a report that will outline what will need to be fixed and/or replaced. Initial indications are suggesting that we will need to replace equipment. The Westchester County Department of Health will also need to oversee a complete overhaul of the pump room. The overall structure (walls) of the pump/filter room are in tact.

- **Facilities repairs from Tropical Storm Ida - update**

  Storm drains and pipes that run underneath the Chemka parking lot have been compromised. We are working with the Village engineer (Hahn) to review the damage to the parking lot and drainage system around that area so that the repairs can be done in a way to prevent future damage (for example, pipes / drainage swales installed upwards of the tennis courts area, etc).

  Morgen asked if there has been any coordination with the school district in terms of what damage happened in adjacent school owned property?

  The engineer will consider strategies such as new pipes, catch basins, pitching the parking lot property, etc to address future storms of this magnitude.

  **Chemka Pool** - all 3 pool shells have been cleaned of sediment and debris and all three pools will soon be winterized.

  **Hillside Tennis Courts** have been cleaned and are reopened. There was some damage and some areas of the surface that will need to be redone and repainted…. A company has come out to assess.

  **Quarry Park Trail** - completely rebuilt and restored… This was a very labor intensive undertaking. It's beautiful… go on down and take a look.

  **Reynolds Playground** - the Hastings school district has cleaned and restored their track and tennis courts as well as the access points to the park, and in their process of cleanup the school district pressure washed and cleaned the Reynolds Playground. We want to thank the Hastings school district for this effort.

  **James Harmon Community Center (JHCC)** - storm Ida left a bit of a sink hole adjacent the JHCC and we brought out a camera company to look at the damage. The damage coincides with some damage that the adjacent fire house suffered as well.

  **Sugar Pond Trail** - the areas that were washed away have been temporarily repaired. When the Hillside Woods project is done, this area of the trail will need to be re-graded.
4. New Business

- **Upcoming / New Programs**
  Happy to report that we’re getting back to some normalcy with some of our programs. (Commissioners reference the handouts that Aaron P distributed regarding programs)
  Veteran Day observances with the American Legion.
  JHCC hosted 2 vaccination clinics in the past two weeks in conjunction with Greenleaf.

  Current programs/schedules can be viewed on the Parks & Recreation department website: [https://www.hastingsgov.org/parks-and-recreation-department](https://www.hastingsgov.org/parks-and-recreation-department)

- **Superintendent’s Report**

  Grants update -
  Tree inventory grant from DEC - awarded “Save a Tree” for inventorying high priority hazardous trees in the areas of Pulver Woods, Uniontown Park, Zinsser Park and Rowley Bridge Trail Extension. The inventory has been completed and Aaron Podhurst and MaryBeth Murphy (Village Manager) are now in possession of a draft forestry management plan.

  Tree maintenance grant - we had some money that remained from this grant that allowed the Village to address some of the invasive Norway maple removal in the Hillside Woods demo plot area.

  MacEachron Park grant - the work has been awarded to a marine engineering consulting company and the company has been on site and completed boundary surveys, high/low tide surveys, and environmental surveys. The Village will receive their reports shortly. Stakeholder interviews are next. We generally targeted a 6 month period for the surveys. (The Village set that guideline. The timelines were not a condition set in the parameters of the grant).

  Hillside Woods - update
  Norway maples removed from the demo area (using grant money, see above). We’ll be enclosing the demo area… this may be accomplished by the end of the year. Haven Colgate has been at the demo area working with volunteers to remove invasive shrubs.

  Planted two trees at Uniontown (sweet gum, red maple) replacing a couple of trees in the parking lot.

  Tompkins/Broadway triangle… a black oak tree was planted. It was an “adopt a spot” of Katie Tolson.
Quarry Park - is a MUST see! Also, check out the repaired/reopened Quarry Park Trail.

Bocce Court - has been built/installed at Riverview Park. We still want to put some benches and mulch in the area. We’ll look for a spring official opening (this open to discussion).

Joanne will reach out to Michael Holstein to convey the good news that the bocce court is complete (Mr. Holstein is a Hastings resident and former school board member who first visited the P&R Commission in late 2017 to proposed the idea of building a bocce court in the Village).

Riverview Park - Mike shared that a resident of that neighborhood approached him to ask if anything could be done about toys being left scattered about the park. Mike even recently found some in the new bocce court. A discussion followed. Aaron P said past precedent is that the parks crew remove the toys. Joanne thinks the neighborhood is a strong coalition and we should check with the neighborhood to see how they feel and if they can address. Joanne will check in with some of the Friends of Riverview Park to see how other neighbors feel about people leaving toys at the park for anyone to use.

Vest Pocket Park - the repair of the retaining wall has been completed. Beautiful plantings were installed by Ryan & Ryan. Joanne asked if we might want to have some kind of mural painted on the white wall? Some folks felt that the plants will soon grow and fill in that space.

All the facilities/parks have been winterized (except the pool). This includes the ball fields (watering systems, bathrooms) and tennis courts.

Aaron G asked if we move spectator bleachers at Zinsser fields so that kids who sled down the hill from the aqueduct don’t get injured. Can we look at where kids are sledding and see if we can make it even safer? Gene Calamari is not sure what bleachers Aaron G’s referring to. Gene said let’s just have a look. Aaron P will take a look at the Zinsser bleachers to see if they are in the area of where kids sled.

P&R Accomplishment List updated for 2021 - Aaron P shared a draft of the list of the department’s accomplishments that he would like to review with the P&R Commission first before finalizing the list to present to the Village Manager. Aaron shared the following key topics:

SPECIAL EVENTS (which needed to be rethought and delivered in alternative formats due to a difficult year with COVID) include:

- MLK Jr Breakfast - virtual awards
- Eggstravaganza
- Arbor Day Celebration (Tree City USA for over 30 years)
- Bike Rodeo in conjunction w/ PBA in commuter parking lot
- Downtown Dining
- 9/11 observations
- Village Wide Tag Sale
- Revolutionary Hastings / Wagner Park Battle of Edgars Lane
- Faith and Blue (Police Dept outdoor movie at Zinsser)
- Halloween Trunk-or-Treat and Window Painting
- Terry Ryan Memorial Run
- Toys for Tots

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES - trying to reintroduce as many as we can
- Hillside Afterschool Program
- Exercise classes (Zoom, outside in the parks, worked with local establishments to offer exercise programs in the parks)
- Senior Advocate has been able to continue programs through a variety of ways (tennis courts as outdoor exercise “classrooms”, walks, transportation/trips)
- Are you OK listing… checking on the welfare of seniors

USE OF THE JHCC -
- JHCC vaccination pop up clinics (over 1000 doses when we first started, now working on kids clinics)
- ARC blood drives
- Voting center
- Youth Advocate program

PARKS & TRAILS:
- Sugar Pond Shed - demolished, removed, area seeded
- Draper Park - new fencing
- Bocce
- Quarry Park Trail
- Quarry Park almost ready to open
- Uniontown - extended netting, new trees in parking lot
- Vest Pocket Park - retaining wall repaired, new plantings, reopened

Any questions pertaining to the Superintendent’s Report?

Joanne asked if the pool company can do some of the necessary work/repairs over the winter? Aaron P cannot define “next steps” yet as the aquatic engineers have not supplied their final report yet. Keep in mind that the work will have to go out to bid and the project will be overseen by the aquatics engineer.

Aaron P reported that there was approximately $45k remaining in the pool's fund and those funds are being used to cover the cost of the aquatic engineer. We can expect that we will need to discuss funding of pool repairs.
- Update/edit list of priorities for capital improvements for upcoming budget 2022/2023

Several items were discussed:

- **Rowley’s Bridge Trails** (will look to use grants)

- **Skatepark** - we will need to clarify where we’re at with this project.

- **Dog park**

- **All-Terrain Vehicle** (electric)

- **Construction plans** for bidding out work at MacEachron Park (restoration of rip/rap). Morgen suggests he and Aaron should talk to Doug about the phases of the overall project (Aaron P will you clarify this for next time?)

- **Services being covered by volunteers?** - Morgen would love to get an ask from the Parks & Rec and the Conservation Commission for types of things/services that are currently being met/completed by volunteers (for example… Groundworks Hudson has a great team, and perhaps we could work out something with them, and perhaps we could pay them for some of the work that our volunteers have been covering. An “ask” for money to address open spaces (greening where we can).

- **Trail Maintenance** IN GENERAL - Hillside Woods, Uniontown, etc…. Aaron P’s paid parks crew does not tackle routine trail maintenance (other than weed wacking/clearing).

- **Department’s Ford Focus vehicle** (Aaron P suggests… doesn’t really get used too much considering it’s age)... but note the Village is moving toward “green”... Joanne feels like we need to be using that vehicle until we can’t use it anymore.

- **Uniontown - basketball courts**… Gene suggests we consider Uniontown. Aaron / Joanne agree that the basketball courts would need work (filling in cracks, resurface and paint)... $35k was the cost estimates Aaron got last year (Mike questioned that $35k). Gene noted that the surface is uneven.

- **Pickleball** - Aaron has been told by pickleball interest group said that the lines on the Reynolds courts aren't actually pickleball. Pickleball is a growing sport. Aaron suggests that we turn back to the interest groups and ask them to show us there is an interest for this. We were reminded that we once discussed the basketball court at Uniontown might also be used for temporary pickleball net and striped for pickleball. It was asked if the 9A parcel should be considered for a site for pickleball.

-Dog park discussion - possible site
- Behind Hillside Tennis courts - if we can get the irrigation issue addressed. Morgen asked if Amy could confirm with the Conservation Commission that they would not be opposed to this possible site.

- “Pan Handle” of Quarry Park ? (suggests Mike Jacobs) - in the flat area of the developed park? Joanne suggests we should be talking to the Quarry Park Friends. Aaron P offered a side note about that location – because there is a ground cap there, we may be limited to where we can put in fencing (we cannot dig down and compromise the cap).

- 9A Parcel - Easier access now that the Ravensdale Bridge renovations are complete. That parcel is safely accessible now. We have a responsibility to think about that Village parkland and see how we’re going to use it. Morgen seems to recall the developer sending the Board of Trustees a proposal for mixed use – a small playground and small adjacent dog park. Joanne just wants to put 9A parcel back on our “radar.” Gene again brought up the possibility of selling the land back to the Lofts.

-Discussion regarding position of groundskeeper / forestry manager as requested for operating budget to manage, maintain and oversee specific needs/priorities throughout the Village parkland including Hillside Woods restoration.

Our parkland needs to be taken care of with someone with that expertise. Aaron P noted that the need to maintain trails (throughout the entire Village) would be a good example of what this position could cover. Aaron P has been talking to colleagues in Greenburgh to see how they use their staff of this nature… tree permits, tree grants, individuals who have arborist or forestry training, a grounds person, an arborist. Aaron P suggests we would just need to identify the role(s) of such a position and further define the “ask.” A full time head count is very hard to get approved by the Board of Trustees. The “ask” would be for a full time headcount, but could also be per-diem ($60-$75 per hour) to work on and oversee projects as needed. The Conservation Commission could benefit and have input to this position as well. Morgen asked if this person would have any kind of enforcement authority? (for example, leash laws in the woods, violations, etc?) Morgen suggests that we start with the desired “asks.”

Aaron shared that Irvington had a part time position that recently was upgraded to a full time position to support this type of effort.

Mike J suggests perhaps we need to bring in an outside consultant (rather than a full time position with salary, benefits, etc). Morgen suggests Aaron P prepares both plans (1- an ask for a F/T H/C and also 2- an ask for consultant funds to staff this need).

5. Adjournment
Calendar Notes:
- Next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting: Thursday, December 9th @ 8pm via ZOOM
- Village Tree Lighting: Friday December 10th at 6:00pm at VFW Plaza

Minutes prepared by A. Reeve
Minutes adopted December 9, 2021