

**Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
James Harmon Community Center- 44 Main Street
Thursday, December 19, 2019 8 PM**

Minutes

In Attendance:

Joanne Baecher-DiSalvo (Chair), Gene Calamari, Anjali Chen, John Dailey, David Downs, Mike Jacobs, Angela Reeve, and Aaron Podhurst (Superintendent).

A quorum is in order.

1. Call to Order

2. Public Comment - none

3. Old Business
 - November distributed. Send changes to Angela by Sun 12/22.

4. New Business
 - Upcoming / New Programs
 - * For Pre-Schoolers:
 - Creative Kids - ages 18mos - 4yrs - Mon or Thurs 1/27/20 - 5/4/20 @ JHCC
 - * For School Aged Children:
 - After School Program - registration underway for Winter 2020 session.
 - Fencing - grades 2nd - 6th, Tues Jan 7 - Mar 10, 2020 @ JHCC.
 - Chess - grades 5th - 8th, Wed Jan 8 - Mar 4, 2020 @ JHCC.
 - Drop & Shop Movie Night - ages 6+yrs - Thur Dec 19 @ JHCC.
 - * For Seniors:
 - the December Senior Calendar is available on the Rec website or at the Office
 - Lunch & Learn (The Older & Wiser Driver) - Tues Jan 7 @ JHCC.

After reviewing the program fliers, some Commission members noted that the

cost of some programs varied significantly and the topic of overall affordability of rec programming was discussed. Aaron explained that any program where we contract an outside vendor to deliver the program is going to cost more than programs delivered by Rec staff. Where Commission members agreed that any programs offered should be able to cover costs, some general sentiments expressed were that after school programming thru the local Rec department should be varied, of interest to youth, and affordable. A general Rec program may not be the avenue to meet the specific requests for technical/specialized instruction in an after school program. The Commission agreed that we want to be mindful of the cost of our after school enrichment programs, especially where families may have several children hoping to participate.

- Superintendent's Report:

- **Spray Pool** - prep work is almost complete. The electrician still needs to come in to bond some items/areas. Mike asked is there a warranty on the work being done. Aaron indicated that the contractor is working with the design/remedy prepared by the Village engineer and reviewed and approved by Westchester County Department of Health.
- **Ball Fields** (Uniontown & Zinsser 2) - both fields have been prepped -- there is new clay, the pitcher's mounds have been rebuilt, we are awaiting sod (weather permitting) to lay this winter. If we have to sod in the spring (last resort) there will be a higher cost. Gene noted that the issue pertaining to the proposed 50/70 field configuration for Uniontown has been resolved. Gene reported that this field configuration proposal will be discussed at some future time for the Zinsser 1 field. Aaron reported that the Village allocated \$25K for the field work and up to \$20K more is being given by Hastings Little League. Gene asked about the condition of the trees at the ball fields. Aaron reported that the Village recently put in for a

grant for the identification of trees (inventory and health) at various parks (Uniontown, Zinsser, Pulver Woods, Rowley Bridge Trail Extension), and that pending the approval of that grant the parks department will look into scheduling work at the various parks. Joanne suggested Aaron send an official letter to the Village Tree Commission, especially identifying any trees that are in proximity to playgrounds, trails, or ball fields for example. John suggested differentiating between the four park areas to specify a “high priority” for the parks that get the greatest usage (ie. Uniontown, Zinsser). The Commission strongly agreed that Uniontown Park needs to be evaluated now, we do not want to wait to see if the Village will be awarded the tree grant. Gene referenced two issues in particular for Uniontown (an oak located in the playground at Uniontown has a limb that overhangs the outfield, and noted there are some locust trees near the batting cages that should be looked at). Next steps, Gene and Aaron will check to see if the Village has an existing contract with a local vendor.

- **Quarry Park** - work has ceased for the winter months and the contractors took steps to prevent erosion of the work in progress.
- **Hillside Woods** - Parks department is working with the Vine Squad and the County Arborist to get the first phase of the restoration project underway (ie. removal of the invasive vines).

- Hillside Woods - project staffing

Joanne opened a discussion of project staffing for the Hillside Woods restoration project underscoring that this is a massive undertaking of significant importance to the Village and questioned Aaron on how he sees the project being managed. David stressed that Aaron as the Superintendent of Parks really has to serve as the “general contractor,”

marking the areas to be worked on, setting project timelines, etc. Aaron gave a recap of what resources are being used at this point... He shared that Taro letaka (Westchester County arborist) and Sara Cavanaugh (curator of Lenoir Preserve) give our Village Parks department approximately two days per month of their time and expertise. Aaron is currently with Tara to develop a "punch list" for moving the project forward. David suggested that Aaron will also need to manage Taro's and Sara's time contribution to ensure that their talent/time is used most efficiently. In terms of project management, we will use the County's talent/help now to the fullest. The Village Parks crew has received training from Taro and are currently working in Hillside Woods twice a week. This effort is being supported by the local Vine Squad and resident volunteers. The thick vines will come next.

David suggested that Aaron start researching contractors now for the next task to address -- we are in need of contractors to come in and tackle the removal of the larger invasives (undoubtedly requiring the use of heavy machinery). David stressed that the project is already one year behind where we had hoped we would be at the onset. Anjali pointed out that all work done to date is good and important and stressed that there is indeed a lot of learning going on.

Management of the Hillside Woods Restoration project will continue to be a key priority for Aaron, and the Commission wanted to ensure that we request budget funding for moving the project forward.

Two issues noted pertaining to Hillside Woods... 1- the beech trees (considered to be an important anchor species of mature forests) are under attack by beech leaf disease and 2- the County arborist is keen to

identify and remove any Tree of Heaven which is a host to the destructive Japanese lanternfly. *{Tree of Heaven (ailanthus altissima) is described as a rapidly growing deciduous tree considered an invasive species}*.

Anjali noted that email updates from Haven Colgate of the Village Conservation Commission and local Vine Squad have been incredibly informative.

- Budget Discussions - FY2020-2021

Aaron reported that the Village Manager has met with the various Village department heads to begin the budget preparation process. In terms of the departments operating budget, Aaron expressed concern with two areas in particular:

- 1- The department does not have an annual budget allocation for the maintenance and upkeep of the Village playgrounds (professional company to come in and perform routine inspections, routine maintenance work, surfacing replenishments, repairs, etc); and
- 2- The department does not have an annual budget allocation for field maintenance and upkeep.

The Commission recognized this as an issue, and all agreed that it would be reasonable to expect that an annual allocation for park, fields, facilities maintenance and upkeep would be prudent. Aaron will prepare estimates and look to include this with the draft budget.

Aaron reported that the budget templates that the Village Manager will have each department use has not been distributed yet. David stressed the importance of Aaron learning the exact timelines / deadlines the Village Manager has set. David reminded the Commission that reviewing, evaluating, and approving the department operating/capital budgets before it is submitted to the Village

Manager is one of our two Commission mandates (the other being developing and preparing the departments long range mission).

It is essential that the Commission review the line item detail draft budget by the January meeting in order to have an opportunity to review and evaluate.

Next steps: Aaron will consult with the Village Manager to confirm submission timelines and process, and will get the line item detail/info needs to prepare both operating and capital initial draft budgets for review at the January P&R Commission meeting.

- Climate Smart Communities program (Anjali Chen)
{from ClimateSmart.NY.Gov -- State Support for Local Climate Action. Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The program offers free technical assistance, grants, and rebates for electric vehicles. Registered communities have made a commitment to act by passing the CSC pledge. Certified communities are the foremost leaders in the state; they have gone beyond the CSC pledge by completing and documenting a suite of actions that mitigate and adapt to climate change at the local level. }

Anjali shared that she has been working alongside many members of the Hastings community (the Mayor, Village Manager, BoTs, Conservation Commission, etc) on the Village's Climate Smart Task Force preparing for the Village to apply to New York State for "Silver" status. Some of the task force's next steps in preparing the application s to 1 - look at flood plain restoration (the Village had submitted a plan for flooding/erosion of MacEachron park and was

awarded a grant that covers the analysis); 2- look at national flood insurance program (this is supposed to be done with other communities along the shoreline. Anjali advised to check with Buddy Minozzi to see what (if any) flood insurance the Village has); and 3- compile a natural resource inventory (rivers, trees, watersheds). Some resources to help with this piece could include the Village trails map, and the work completed by Land Beyond Sea (for the Hillside Woods study).

Anjali shared that the Climate Smart Task force meets regularly and it is their hope to submit the application for silver status to NY state by the end of next year. Anjali is looking to recruit more residents to help with this effort and extended the invite to the members of the Parks & Rec Commission.

- Other -

Mike shared that members of the Village Board asked him to do a review of what sites in the Village have been considered for a proposed skate park. In tonight's Commission discussion, members recapped various sites that have been discussed in past meetings, and four possible sites were identified where Mike will ask HoH Skate to take a look at these locations to see if any would be viable. Possible sites include Reynolds (the triangular section of land between "scary street" and Hillside Ave that is technically the wooded entrance to Reynolds field); Hillside Park behind the tennis courts; Zinsser parking lot (north end, but it would be important to know how many parking spots would be affected if any); and the Burke Estate (owned by Hastings UFSD)

Some examples of local skate parks Commission members may want to visit include EJ Murray's Memorial Skating Rink, and the one in Nyack.

Next Steps: The topic of skate park has already been scheduled for the January

16th P&R Commission meeting. Mike will be prepared to present info on site possibilities at that time.

5. Meeting Adjourned.

* NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - January 16, 2020

Meeting minutes prepared by A. Reeve

December minutes approved Jan 16, 2020.