**FINAL**

**Salem Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Date and Time: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 6:49 P.M.**

**Meeting Location: Via Zoom**

**Members Present: Chris Burke, Debbie Amaral, Amy Everitt**

**James Shea, Bob Callahan**

**Also Present: Patricia O’Brien**

**Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald**

**Meeting Called to Order**

Debbie Amaral calls the meeting to order at 6:49 P.M. She welcomes everyone to Zoom and stated tht the Board would approve the Minutes from the February 2020 meeting and then the public would have a chance to speak for a maximum of three minutes. The Park & Rec Commission would ask questions first and the public would need to raise their hand and be recognized to speak. Debbie advised that when the Commission votes, there must be a roll call.

**Old Business**

Amy Everitt makes a motion to approve the February Minutes. Bob Callahan seconds. Roll call is then done and the Minutes are unanimously approved.

First on the Agenda:

**Bertram Field Design** – Power Point presentation by J. Michael Sullivan, Beacon Architects. The project was put out to bid towards the end of last September and bids came in much higher than anticipated largely because of the number of buildings and site work. It was decided to redesign it. Left Field Management is the project Manager (budget and dictation of the schedule). Project goals have not changed. The updated design is less expensive and consolidated into one building. He stated that site parking was essentially the same and that about 7 parking spaces were lost. He then presented a formal plan in detail.

He advised that construction would start in mid to end of June and hopefully be completed by the end of January.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any questions from the Board.

James Shea said looking at the roof was there any possibility to get a few skylights. J. Michael said there is a possibility, but that he was going to be honest. He stated he wanted it to come in within the budget and would this would increase costs. He advised that the issue is that on the inside most of the spaces have high impact ceilings.

Amy Everitt inquired about the space named First Aid Room and wanted to know where the entrance was and if it was a fully functioning athletic training space.

J. Michael stated yes. The door was coming off the front of the building towards the field. He said that Mary Manning asked to make a space between the trainers and the locker room.

Amy Everitt asked if there was vehicle access; i.e. could you get an ambulance in to that space. J. Michael said no you can’t and advised that they were improving access from Bertucci Lane. He said ambulances will be able to park and access the field on the new plan. He also advised that the fire hydrant would be relocated.

Amy Everitt asked if there would be water sources as well and J. Michael said yes. He said there would be a sink and a faucet to fill Gatorade buckets and an ice machine.

Amy Everitt asked if there was any kind of rehab in this space and J. Michael said no hot tubs or whirlpools. Amy Everitt asked if just game day stuff and J. Michael said yes.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any other questions.

Bob Callahan suggested that at the first aid station there should be an eye wash station at the sink because sand in the eyes is very common in football and an eye wash station is very important.

Amy Everitt stated that they make them to attach right on the sink and very inexpensive. J. Michael said they would look into that.

Chris Burke asked about ambulance access on the other side of the field and if they could drive over. J. Michael said yes.

Chris Burke asked how Beacon Architects anticipates this pandemic period we are in to affect construction costs. J. Michael said that was the million-dollar question and said the workload from an architectural point of view has dropped off. He said that last September when they were bidding the project it was the hottest market but thought it was going to get more competitive after this pandemic and that it was his thought that the bid would be more competitive and consequently less expensive and bidding would be done on corona protocol.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any other comments from the Commission and any hands being raised.

**Steve Kapantais**, 23A Wisteria Street, Salem, MA – Asked about the variance needed for the restrooms and if there were any other variances needed and about accessible parking spaces. J. Michael said they were complying with the number of handicap spaces and have not exceed the number. Mr. Kapantais asked if there was any consideration given to expand that. J. Michael said no consideration to go above and beyond the regulations.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any other questions.

J. Michael said that there would also be charging stations.

**Councilman Domingo Dominquez** – Asked if WIFI has been taken into consideration and if there was any other technology feature that would be added. J. Michael said it has been reviewed with the IT Department and that there are ports in the referee area, coaches’ area and press box and as far as any other kind of technology there is nothing else. He said it was important to realize that they were on a budget constraint. He said let’s get the building built and if more technology is needed, find other budgets for that.

**Jenna Ide, Project Manager, City of Salem** – Said they were hoping that the project comes in under budget and that if so, they could then investigate more technology and maintenance. She also said that consideration for additional access parking was looked into but that it was hard to fit in but there may be some other options they could do but that it was not something easily developed.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any other questions.

James Shea makes a motion to approve the design, seconded by Amy Everitt and roll call is then done and the Motion unanimously approved.

Next;

**Palmer Cover Phase I Design** – Naomi Cottrell, Crowley Cottrell, LLC – She advised they heard from the Park Grant Funding Organization and that Palmer Cover would receive a $400,000.00 grant. She said documents needed to be ready for bidding in June. She said currently the park is predominantly a field with a high school size baseball field and a defunct tennis court. She said there were concerns with the sea level rise because the park was on the water.

She advised that there were several meetings and lots of public engagements and that she had met with the high school baseball stakeholders, softball league members and that she heard from over 500 people through a public survey and meetings.

She said the biggest ask was access to the water -- -i.e. benches, trees, paths.

Neighbors were asked what type of experience they would like to see, and the following suggestions were received:

* Quiet and relaxing atmosphere
* Bike paths
* Strolling paths
* Gardening
* Fairs
* Boat launch/rentals
* Events
* Cookouts
* Exercise classes
* Basketball

She then spoke about Phase I funding as follows:

* Added pathways
* Benches
* Picnic tables
* Connective paths from Pioneer Terrance
* Improved parking on Salem Street
* Moving community Gardens

Debbie Amaral then made it clear that there would be no discussion about the softball field – just talking about Phase I and asked Trish O’Brien if that was correct. Trish O’Brien said yes.

Debbie Amaral then asked for any questions.

James Shea said that no one has spoken about the ramifications of removing the baseball field and said that one of the biggest concerns is that if we only have one field would Salem High be able to use the field.

Trish O’Brien advised that the Mayor met with the President of Salem State to make sure that the high school was granted use of the SSU field and said there has been guarantees that they will recommit to that.

James Shea stated that there was a Memorandum of Understanding that Salem High School would use the SSU field and wondered if anyone had a copy. He said if anyone had a copy of the MOU, SSU could be held to it. He also said he was a little concerned that they were going to lose the tennis court and street hockey court and asked if there was any way we could keep them and make the Community Gardens a little smaller.

Naomi Cottrell said there hasn’t been any use and the area was completely overgrown and she heard that there was very little use of it.

James Shea advised that for years it was used as a court on Saturdays and Sundays for hockey.

Naomi Cottrell said when they reached out to folks they said it used to be, but not currently used. James Shea then asked if we have an active hockey court.

Trish O’Brien said Collins Cove is being used for street hockey with the newly designed sport court surface. James shea asked if the kids were using it. Trish O’Brien said it was active and a lot of street hockey is being played there.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any other questions.

Amy Everitt said the Board has heard from the neighborhood softball groups and asked if they could use the field for softball. Naomi said the field could be used for softball, but not technically a full field. She said that if they were going forward with a plan for softball field happening, the City would have to talk about lighting. She said there was a significant cost difference between the two plans, i.e. lights.

Bob Callahan asked if the Community gardens is accessible from the street side or the open field side. Naomi Cottrell said the street side in Phase I and Phase II talked about a path which would be drivable.

Bob Callahan asked if there was a drivable path, would it take out from the garden space or the field space. Naomi Cottrell said field space. Bob Callahan then asked if the Community Gardens was fenced off and Ms. Cottrell said in Phase I there would be a perimeter fence both on the street side and turf side.

Bob Callahan asked how tall the fence would be and was told 4-6’ because of concerns about not making it feel like a huge barrier.

Debbie Amaral asked if the dimensions of that field equal regulations. Ms. Cottrell said high school soccer, lacrosse, field hockey. Debbie Amaral then stated the Board wanted to make sure it is regulation.

Chris Burke questioned if one adult baseball filed was adequate for the City. Trish O’Brien advised that the high school coaches did not view any concerns and that Salem Academy and Salem High School were both at the meeting.

Naomi Cottrell advised that there were folks from Little League and that they were really looking at all kinds of opportunities. She stated that they went through all the pros and cons and Gallows Hill was the best location for the future of baseball in Salem.

There was then some discussion about public access and another corridor regarding the Community Gardens. Trish O’Brien asked if on the left side of the Community Gardens there was a way to fit in a path. Naomi Cottrell said no because there was no outlet.

Debbie Amaral asked Naomi Cottrell to speak to the access and parking for the baseball field. Naomi advised that currently parking is along Leavitt. In the Master Plan they are looking at taking out spaces to make a more inviting access from Congress Street.

James Shea spoke about losing the baseball field, tennis courts, and hockey in Phase 1 and advised that the basketball court should be doubled as it is probably the most used basketball court in the City. Naomi Cottrell stated that doubling the basketball court would eliminate softball or baseball use. Chris Burke said he would put basketball court before farming. Amy Everitt said she agreed that we have to do as much as we can for the kids and basketball, and that if money doesn’t come in for Phase II, we need to stick to the plan knowing that if we get second phase funding the basketball court will come in.

James Shea suggested cutting back on the Community Gardens to make a regulation field. Naomi Cottrell said that Green Space is looking for more space and that they give produce away to the neighborhood and provide jobs to the kids. James Shea then asked how much of the Community Gardens would have to be eliminated to accomplish a regulation field. Naomi Cottrell advised that the Community Gardens group was very vocal about the space. James Shea stated the Board was trig to get this to work so the kids could still play and that a compromise was needed so that the community Gardens give up some space.

James Shea then asked if Gallows Hill was going to be finished before Phase I at Palmer Cove started. Trish O’Brien said they were still on schedule and should be done by this fall.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any other questions from the Board and Amy Everitt asked when the MOU from Salem State University might happen. Trish O’Brien said she assumed after the Covid-19 issues or at least once things settled down a bit and advised that she felt good about getting an MOU.

Naomi Cottrell then stated that timing for the Park Grant was a little tight and that documents needed to be completed by June and that they needed to push forward for Phase I approval.

Chris Burke asked for the status on the landscaping plan and if the Leavitt entrance trees would be addressed in Phase I. Naomi stated that they haven’t picked the trees yet but that they needed trees that worked on the waterfront and native species. She also stated that the Levitt entrance trees had not been addressed.

Debbie Amaral asked to go to the public to speak.

**Lucy Corchado, 1 Chase Street, Salem** spoke first. She advised that she had participated in a number of meetings and that having a baseball field would not make the neighborhood happy. She also raised her concern about lights because most of the softball games where played during the week at night. Naomi Cottrell stated that unfortunately providing lights would not be part of Phase I and that if there was to be lighting, it would be in Phase II. Lucy Corchado then asked if there would be lighting on the active paths and near waterfront activities. Naomi Cottrell said that in Phase I there would be pedestrian lighting.

**Councilman Domingo Dominguez, 18 Raymond Road, Salem** – He stated he had the same concerns as Lucy Corchado about lighting. He said it was a dense community and they wanted no vandalism and that it was very important to have lights. He then asked if there was any application for maintenance in the first Phase. Trish O’Brien advised that the $400,000.00 awarded to the City as a Park Grant did not include maintenance as part of the Grant.

**Councilman Robert McCarthy, 148 Bayview Avenue, Salem** – Stated he agreed that a second basketball court should be included in Phase I and advised that with respect to the tennis court and street hockey, the Y determined that. He then asked how many of the community gardeners lived in the Point neighborhood. Naomi Cottrell said she did not have that data and advised that the biggest use is that it keeps the park safe because people are coming and going to the Community Gardens.

**Mickey Northcutt, 18 Peabody Street, Salem** – He stated he thought Naomi Cottrell has done a really good job synthesizing and pulling out the main salient points. He said people who live in the Point neighborhood say they don’t use the park at all and the question to them is more about what they would like to do there. He then went on to say that he did recall looking at the Community Gardens and only one person in the neighborhood gardens there. He said people want paths and passive recreation and said he was of the camp to move on from baseball.

**Councilman Robert McCarthy** stated that anyone gardening at the Community Gardens the way Phase I is now planned, would be in the path of any baseball games.

Chris Burke said he agreed with Councilman McCarthy that the Community Gardens have been expanded quite a bit and that the most intrusive section of the Community Gardens intrudes on the baseball field and suggested taking a little more of the Community Gardens space.

Bob Callahan stated that if a corner of the Community Gardens was taken off it would be acceptable. Amy Everitt agreed.

Debbie Amaral asked if there were any further comments before the Board voted.

Chris Burke makes a motion to approve Phase I with the understanding that there would be a new configuration concerning the Community Gardens. Amy Everitt seconds. Roll call is then done, and it passes unanimously.

**Superintendent’s Report**:

Golf Course – Paving happening this week and things are moving along very well. Joe Candelaria has been helping out a lot and working hard. There will be a big change seen when the pandemic is over. Application in and looking for ½ CPA funds and ½ Capital Improvement funds regarding Phase II of the project which involves holes that cross the water and involve the Conservation Commission.

James Shea asked if there was someone for the concession stand this year. Trish O’Brien advised that Scott McDonald was taking the lead on this and that the restaurant in Danvers would still be running it.

Debbie Amaral asked if there was any old or new business.

Chris Burke said he and Trish O’Brien needed to talk about the upcoming Preservation Commission. Trish advised the deadline had been extended to May 29th.

Next meeting – Tuesday May 19, 2020 via Zoom.

A motion to adjourn is made by Bob Callahan seconded by Amy Everitt. Roll call is then done, and unanimously passes.

The meeting ended at 9:01 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk