**FINAL**

**Salem Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Date and Time: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 6:51 P.M.**

**Meeting Location: Via Zoom**

**Members Present: Debbie Amaral, James Shea,**

 **Bob Callahan, Amy Everitt**

**Also Present: Patricia O’Brien**

**Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald**

**Meeting Called to Order**

Debbie Amaral called the meeting to order at 6:51 P.M. She welcomed everyone to Zoom and stated that the Board would approve the Minutes from the September 15, 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.

Amy Everitt makes a motion to approve the September Minutes. James Shea seconds. Roll call was then taken and the Minutes were unanimously approved.

First on the Agenda:

**Forest River Update**:

Amy Everitt discussed the artist selection for the Forest River pool. She stated the process was extensive and they looked at 20 proposals. She and Trish O’Brien were part of the selection panel along with members of the community. Each member of the panel scored the applicants individually and then got together as a group and discussed each proposal. Five applicants moved forward as finalists. Louis Chinn and Huameng Yu’s proposal received the most votes by the panel and the community. The theme for the splash pad will be “Rivers of Time” consisting of different volcanic layers over time and connecting paleo-geographic history to human history. It will be ADA accessible. The benches on the side of the splash pad will be modeled after glaciers, and throughout the pad there will be brass inlays of ancient marine fossils.

The building wall will contain a screened mural that honors the people who have and will continue to shape this land. It will feature a glass painting of the Salem Sound with a brass overlay to define the landmass and waterways. The screen will incorporate cutouts of cultural patterns representing the demographics that have shaped this area over time. Each cultural pattern will be overlaid onto a different river, all of which flow together into the harbor. Each stream will have distinct twists and turns and will all arrive at the same place – the ocean. There will be many educational opportunities with the design. The splash pad can be used for different kinds of events.

The cost of this project was built into the budget. All materials used for the project are low maintenance and easy to clean and resistant to graffiti. A logo was submitted but can be fine tuned if needed which will be just for this space.

Bob Callahan asked if there will be security cameras for this project and Jenna Ide said yes. Bob Callahan then asked if the camera would be tied into the police station. Jenna Ide again said yes.

Amy Everitt stated that it was clear that Chinn and Yu had done their homework about the area.

Bob Callahan makes a motion to approve the project designs. James Shea seconds. Roll call was taken, and it passes unanimously.

Next:

**Salem Willows Phase I Update, Jason Bobowski** -- Jenna Ide started with an update. She advised that the planting had been implemented. She advised that in December a reduced number of trees would be seen. She also advised that we could go with more parking or less parking and that Jason Bobowski would talk about that.

Jason Bobowski presented a slide slow. He stated that the project would include rehabilitation of existing tennis courts and updating the lighting on the tennis courts. The project is being done because of neglect and erosion.

He stated that the main idea was restoration of the hill by pulling parking off the hill and restoring new parking spaces on the hill. He said he has worked with soil experts and environmental experts to understand the underlying geology in the area. There will be two entrances on Fort Avenue to Restaurant Row. There will be one entrance which will be left turn only. There will be 119 approved spaces and 66 unapproved spaces along the hill and along the guard rail to include 6 handicap spaces. He said they are proposing that the parking lot be curbed.

There was a discussion about the walkways.

James Shea asked about maintenance and if the stones would blow away if there was wind. Mr. Bobowski advised that there was a 20-year warranty and the only maintenance would be refreshing the stones if needed. He said it could be plowed and was excellent for cold weather climates.

James Shea asked how long Mr. Bobowski had used this product and he stated it was the first time using it. He advised it was 100% recycled LDPE material.

Bob Callahan stated that the paving system seemed to be porous and questioned about the sand blowing off of Dead Horse Beach and wanted to know if it would sink in or sit on top Mr. Bobowski advised that he would have to look into it with the manufacturer. Mr. Callahan further stated that sand could blow up Restaurant Row and once there is a build-up, asked how this would this be affected. Mr. Bobowski stated that this was a simple system compared to porous concrete.

Mr. Bobowski said they added additional crossing near the Clam Shack with handicap parking spaces adjacent to this.

He stated site improvements would include picnic tables, benches, trash and recycling barrels, bike racks and a wheelchair glider swing viewing the water. He advised tht there would be cameras at 7 locations.

There was then a discussion about parking meters next. David Kucharsky with the Traffic Department said they might consider using the passport app or some other applications using simple texts.

James Shea asked if there would be enforcement by the Salem Police Department. He stated that employees from the restaurants take the parking spaces because they know they will not get ticketed. He asked if there was some way in the summer the police could ticket people who were not paying for the sparking spaces. He further advised that revenue from those spaces go back to the parks.

Mr. Kucharsky said he would look at the existing meters but needed something in the ordinance stating when people need to pay for parking and the designated times. James Shea further asked if Mr. Kucharsky’s staff could issue tickets. He said yes, but he would want it in the ordinance so his staff would know when they were in violation.

Bob Callahan said it was a very simple fix to put hours in for the meters and he stated between now and April it should go before the City Counsel to state what the fines would be and what the times would be.

Trish O’Brien stated that a group was needed to put together the pros and cons regarding passport apps, etc. Bob Callahan said a timeline needed to be set so this is done before next Spring. Debbie Amaral stated the Board had already sent a letter once and that we should do a little work to start thinking about this now so it could get done over the winter months.

Amy asked if Trish O’Brien could set something up. Trish stated that she and Dave Kucharsky would talk.

Bob Callahan said he would be part of the committee.

Amy Everitt asked if this was the time when the parking rates could be changed.

Next there was a discussion about modifying parking spaces to maximize green space. If that was done 13 parking spaces would be lost but a substantial amount of green space would be added.

Bob Callahan said it was his opinion that the plan to increase the green spaces was definitely the plan to go with. Amy Everitt said she agreed. James Shea also agreed.

Jenna Ide then advised that there was existing funding and they were only a little short. She said they plan to go out to bid in the Winter. She also advised there is a Signature Park Initiative which would add a significant amount of funding and they are hoping for a MOD grant.

Next there was a discussion about the tennis courts. Mr. Bobowski said there would still be a bank of 3 tennis courts and they were adding 4 benches on the other side. They were proposing drench grade and storage of storm water underneath the courts and the proposed tennis courts would be about 6” higher.

James Shea thanked Mr. Bobowski and said he made a great presentation. Amy Everitt stated it looked great and would make a big improvement for that area.

Molly Morrow, 338 Rollstone Street, Fitchburg, MA asked if there could be a rotary on the tight curve instead of it being left turn only. Mr. Bobowski said the left turn simplified the design since Restaurant Row is a Park Road. He further stated that the net loss of parking spaces was only 4.

Bob Callahan makes a motion to have the extra green space by eliminating the parking spaces. Amy Everitt seconds. Roll call is done, and it passes unanimously.

Next:

**Molly “Euni” Morrow and – New Morrow Solutions, d/b/a Witchwood Tours** – Ms. Morrow requested permission to take tours (nature tours) around the blue/yellow trails in Salem Woods to discuss healing plants, sustainability, nature, the ecosystem, etc. The Tours would be at 11:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. with 1 to 8 people. There would be no amplified sound.

James Shea asked about the cost of the tours. Ms. Morrow said $22.00 for adults and $17.00 for ages 5-15. Mr. Shea advised that if using the parks, a fee is paid, and Ms. Morrow said she would be willing to do that. Trish O’Brien advised that the Commission voted 2 years ago that any for profit organization would pay 5% of the registration or ticket sales which would go into the Revolving Account which supports Salem Woods.

There was a lengthy discussion about use of the golf course parking spaces by participants of the tours and the concern on weekends of using these spaces.

Bob Callahan made a motion to table this until the December 2020 meeting and said he would like to see a Business Plan. Amy Everitt said she would like more details regarding how this operation was going to happen.

Ms. Morrow said that there was a tour scheduled for November 28, 2020. Debbie Amaral asked the Commission if they would allow the tour to go forward and then have Ms. Morrow return in December with a presentation and details regarding a parking plan.

A motion is made by Bob Callahan to table this until the December 2020 meeting with the exception that the November 28th tour could go forward. Amy Everitt seconds roll call was taken, and it passes unanimously.

**Superintendent’s Report:**

Trish O’Brien advised the Commission that going forward the financials would be received monthly.

**Golf Course** -- Debbie Amaral advised that the golf course did extremely well. Bob Callahan said everything was in tremendous shape and bordered on miraculous. He said it was totally green all summer and sold out from 6:00 A.M. until sundown. He said the numbers surpassed most past years.

Debbie Amaral asked Trish O’Brien to pass on the Commission’s thanks and accolades.

**Witch House** – There were a lot of Covid challenges and restrictions. The public was not easy to deal with, but a lot of feedback was received from Elizabeth Petersen who said the Ambassadors really helped in October.

**Winter Island** – There were a lot of Covid challenges and restrictions.

**Pioneer Village** -- The numbers were extremely high because this was outside and drew a lot more people.

**New Business**:

Friends of the Common – The study was completed. The City’s staff is looking at this to determine priority on the City’s part. It was advised that they put together a stakeholder’s group. Amy Everitt said she would be in that group.

Park Police – Bob Callahan stated that years ago there were park police and then done away with because of budget cuts. He stated the need for park police may have returned and we may need to start a discussion about this; i.e. ways to pay for it, parking stickers, meter fees, etc. Trish O’Brien advised that the Mayor mentioned the possibility of starting to talk about a “gate keeper”. Bob Callahan stated that the Ambassadors worked very well, but that they needed to have supervision.

A motion to adjourn is made by James Shea seconded by Amy Everitt. Roll call was then taken, and unanimously passes.

The meeting ended at 8:50 P.M.

Next meeting – Tuesday December 15, 2020 via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk