**FINAL MINUTES**

**Salem Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Date and Time: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:44 P.M.**

**Meeting Location: Dining Room, 401 Bridge St.**

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

**James Shea, Bob Callahan**

**Also Present: Patricia O’Brien**

**Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald**

**Meeting Called to Order**

Amy Everitt calls the meeting to order at 6:44 P.M.

**Old Business**

Approval of Minutes of the meeting on October 15, 2019. Chris Burke moves to approve, seconded by James Shea, and unanimously passes.

First on the Agenda:

**Councilman Steve Dibble** – He stated he had attended many meetings for Palmer Cover during the planning stage and has seen a recent plan that had no athletic field at all – just basketball and grass area cut up. He stated that when you look at the Point neighborhood, almost all of it is paved and it needs to be used for any decent sport. He suggested putting up signs saying “Walk Around Trail”.

He suggested talking to baseball coaches, etc. to see what they wanted. He stated that the Phase I design shows that they are going to build with State funding and build a baseball field later. He said the community gardens move did not allow for a baseball/softball field and it must fit in Phase I. He said it was the only field in the City with lights.

Amy Everitt stated that she wanted everyone to know that the Board hears their concerns but as far as she is aware, we are still in the “collecting information” phase.

Trish O’Brien advised that nothing was going to change in Phase I and that they were focusing on an entryway, moving the community gardens and parking across from Saltonstall School.

Amy Everitt stated that the Board knew that a lot of people use that field and that there have been no decisions made and that we are waiting to hear back from the group with suggestions. She stated that absolutely nothing has been decided.

Mason Wells, Planner, City of Salem stated that the plans submitted to the State were conceptual plans. He advised that there have been a lot of meetings with stakeholders and that they were aware of these issues and that they will be taken into consideration as they moved on. He further advised that there will be an opportunity to review plans and have that conversation. He said the design work is expected by mid-summer and stated that the City could continue a conversation with the Board with whatever plans they had. He confirmed that Phase I does not touch on the baseball field.

Steve Dibble stated that the community gardens were in right field and would prohibit a baseball field there.

**Mike Ward, 11 Robin Hill Road, Danvers** – He stated he was a former varsity coach at Salem High School and that he had a lot of experience running teams, etc. He said most high schools have a baseball field on campus (which Salem High does not), so it leaves us with three options:

* Memorial Park – lot of issues;
* Gallows Hill – before construction could not have varsity games there. Great for practice and junior varsity;
* Palmer Cove – well taken care of when he used it in 2008 – lights worked, scoreboard worked, and it was once a very competitive field and reasonably accessible from the high school as far as walking.

Salem State – Mr. Ward advised that we would be practicing every day. Salem High would get maybe 3-4 games at SSU. SSU is nice to have, but not really a resource for the City. Mr. Ward stated that Pride Park in Lynn is a great field and stated that for Salem to lose a full-size baseball field would be a shame. He further went on to state that Salem has 3-5 teams that need to play in the afternoons with only 2 fields and that the City definitely needs another baseball field.

Trish O’Brien asked if there use to be a baseball field at the high school on the grounds. Mr. Ward advised no because of the power lines.

Debbie Amaral asked what was happening with Gallows Hill and Trish O’Brien stated it was renovated to deal with baseball. Remediation of the soil is still going on regarding clean-up. Trish also advised it would be a regulation field.

James Shea asked Mason if he was involved with the field at Gallows Hill. Mason advised tht his colleague, Tom Devine was, but thought he could answer questions.

James Shea asked if there would be any drainage and if it was too late to put drainage in. Debbie Amaral stated she thought there would be plants to help with drainage. Mason stated that the City was aware of it.

Debbie Amaral asked if it was the plan to close the high school field. Trish O’Brien advised they would have to use Palmer Cove and SSU this Spring.

Mr. Ward stated that when you have varsity and junior varsity coming to play, you need 2 field.

**Councilman Domingo, 18 Raymond Road, Salem**, stated that he sent a letter which stated his views. He said he supported that letter and believes they can both be played in the same park. He further advised that he had been told by members that we have been deciding to have softball played there. He said he could not support baseball, only softball and asked if it were possible for the plan to include softball. He said he had nothing against baseball, but if both cannot be done, he could only support softball.

James Shea suggested that maybe we could do what Mike Ward suggested.

Debbie Amaral said if that happens then the multi-use for other sports is eliminated. Trish O’Brien stated that the outfield was used for rugby and soccer. Debbie Amaral stated that there was time to look into this.

**Juan Pena, 12 Madeline Avenue, Salem** – He advised that between 100-150 people watch games and that it was a community event. He further stated he thought there was plenty of space to make a dual baseball/softball field. He said there were times when playing softball, basketball games were going on. He said if all teams—baseball, softball and basketball -- could share that beautiful park, it would be great.

Leoncio Vizaimo, 173 Water Street, Salem – He stated that they had 20+ meetings with Salem Harbor CDC and wanted to know what happened as a result of those meeting regarding Palmer Cove.

Mason advised that there were 3 public meetings, surveys were administered, several stakeholder meetings, and conceptual plans came out of those meetings so the City thought a phase approach would be better. He advised it was still conceptual and moving forward to finalize the plans for Phase I. He said they were keeping their ears open and value all input.

Leoncio Vizaimo said that from what he was hearing we were going to start again, and he believed they already met about this.

Debbie Amaral stated that the Board was looking at this and that there was time.

Trish O’Brien told Mason that he still had to come before the Board with plans to be approved. Mason stated that they did do a space analysis and a lot of thought was put into it and that information was being used now.

Chris Burke asked if Mason could come back before the Board one month before the Board votes to review plans.

Debbie Amaral stated that the survey results were in and a lot of meetings had happened. She said she knew there were people with concerns and the Board was trying to address this and nothing was final yet.

Chris Burke stated that he was now aware of a softball constituency and a baseball constituency and that before he voted he wanted to know what was being cut out.

Mason stated he didn’t think we looked at it. Amy Everitt said she was not convinced it was considered.

Mike Ward stated again that there are only two baseball fields and 5-6 softball fields. He said he could not support high school baseball with 1 field.

James Shea advised Mason tht he would like to bring up a point as follows. He stated that the Board has a history and as a Board we want to see plans before we need to vote. Mason stated that he would see that the Board was informed.

Next:

**Chrissy Kenney, HAWC** -- She requested permission to use the Salem Common on Sunday, May 3, 2020 for Walk for HAWC. She advised the walk would start and end on the Common. She advised there would be music and the only change from prior years would be having registration at 11:00 A.M. She advised last year they raised $90,000.00.

Bob Callahan asked if there would be any vendors. Chrissy Kenney advised that Kelley’s Roast Beef would be there and that they sometime invite corporate vendors to do give aways.

Bob Callahan stated tht the Board needed to know who will be there.

Trish O’Brien advised her to work with the Health Department for the food truck, and to work with the Board on where it should be placed and to provide the Board with a list of vendors.

Amy Everitt moves to approve the event, seconded by Bob Callahan, and passes unanimously.

Next:

**Doreen Wade, Salem United** – No show.

Next:

**Mary Ellen Halliwell, 81 Orchard Street Salem**. Ms. Halliwell comes before the Board to speak about Furlong Park. She expressed her concerns about street parking, children getting in and out of cars, the safety of families, and the lack of handicap parking spots. She said she understood from the Mayor that the goal was to maintain public spaces and recreational facilities. She said she was perplexed because the grant application says permanent park land and was for 31 parking spaces, a boat ramp and handicap parking.

Chris Burke stated that there was a legal dispute concerning the land and Amy Everitt said she understood it was with the City Solicitor. Trish O’Brien advised that there is a 25,000 square foot section of land in dispute and that the City has retained counsel to figure it out. She further stated that there never was a decision in the 80’s and that the City is trying to fight to get the land back.

Debbie Amaral stated that she thought we could all agree we wanted it as park land. Se said that in the coming months we will know, but right now the City was in executive session which means closed meetings. She advised that the dispute goes back to 1950 and that the other 5 acres is park land and that the City was trying to get the other land back.

**Ann Sperling, 29 Forest Street Salem** – She stated that in 1989 both civil suits were dismissed for lack of prosecution and then in 2007 a park grant was applied for. She said she had maps showing it was encroached upon land via assessor’s maps. She said Ferris was allowed to use it but didn’t own it and could not sell it.

Chris Burke said assume we own the land and can win without expending a lot of money, then we will have to clean up the land. He said he would never give up any park land but asked her reason for pursuing this. Ann Sperling said the land was valuable. She said the market value for the land was about $500,000.00 and that if the City wants to sell the land and develop it, the money should come to the City. If the strip of land is declared surplus, it must go to the House of Representatives and Senate

Mary Ellen Halliwell asked if we could make it a parking lot with a ramp at the end.

**Councilman Robert McCarthy** – He said he would comment on the process -- 2/3’s vote and sign off by the Mayor but some people don’t realize that for the amount of land we are talking about, that entity has to produce a piece of land equal in size.

**Tim Jenkins, 18 Broad Street, Salem, MA** – He stated he thought it was very likely in the application that they wanted to preserve the land. He said he wanted to point out that one of the conditions or reasons for the application was parking, He said his recommendation would be for the Board to take some kind of vote and to ask the City to try and pursue it to see if we could recover it. He said the 100 foot buffer being talked about remediating has to be preserved and should be a condition for any developer. He wanted to know why such a large project had to be built there.

Next:

**Ian Cannon, Salem Jazz & Soul Fest** -- This request is to use Salem Willows for their annual event on August 15 and 16, 2020. This is the 14th year. They are requesting to use the park from 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. on Saturday, and 6 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. on Sunday. Musical performances on both days will be from 11:00 A.M.to 7:00 P.M. They requested set-up in Friday, August 14th with the City to provide barricades around the beer pavilion and parts of the band shell. They are requesting up to 40 vendors and want to close Fort Avenue and not have meters enforced and pay the City. He stated that handicap spots can still be used. Mr. Cannon advised that last year they had great success in keeping cars out of the circle.

Bob Callahan asked if they were going to control the lot and if they were going to add designated handicap spots. Mr. Cannon said they would use the handicap spots already there. Trish O’Brien asked if someone would be present to enforce handicap spots. Mr. Cannon said they would enforce.

Bob Callahan said they might consider a handicap drop off area.

Bob Callahan asked Councilman McCarthy is any complaints were received last year. Councilman McCarthy said that the Salem Jazz & Soul Fest would be the model for any music event scheduled and said he did not receive one complaint. He went on to state that it is a very successful event and a lot of people attend the event.

Amy Everitt makes a motion to approve the event, Bob Callahan seconds, and it pass unanimously.

James Shea asked Mr. Cannon to give the Board a list of vendors. Mr. Cannon advised he could do that but did not know what vendors would be there yet.

Mr. Cannon advised the Board that he had been approached by a car dealership and asked what the timeline would be to come before the Board concerning that.

James Shea asked how much they would be paying the City of Salem to do that. Mr. Cannon said they would pay their non-profit organization.

Trish O’Brien advised they needed to get a blanket license from the City for both days for vendors. Mr. Cannon advised that vendors pay $125.00 for both days.

James Shea asked how much the car dealership would be paying to have two spaces because the City does incur costs.

Bob Callahan said since they were paying for all the spaces and if the dealership vehicles went into those spaces, that bringing in a corporate sponsor was something they had to do. He did advise that the dealership cars could not be parked on the grass. Mr. Cannon said his thought was to park them between the beer pavilion and the circle to be highly visible. Bob Callahan advised him to work it out with Trish O’Brien and Joe Candelaria.

Bob Callahan makes a motion to approve the event, seconded by Amy Everitt and it passes unanimously.

Debbie Amaral asks the Board if it should take a vote on Furlong park regarding the City pursuing to get the land back. Chris Burke advised that he did not feel informed enough to do this.

**Superintendent’s Report**

**High School Tennis Courts** -- Trish O’Brien advised that the high school tennis court fence was completed and that the striping would happen in the Spring.

James Shea asked why this is Park & Rec. issue. Trish O’Brien stated that basically they had worked with the high school to get it done.

Chris Burke asked if the public would have access. Trish advised they would outside of the high school schedule. He then asked if there was a plan in the future for lights. Trish advised that there is an electrical box there and the hope was to do it in the future, but right now there was no money to do it.

**Mansell Park** – In terms of remediation, the amount ranged from $500,000.00 to $1,000,000.00. The Mayor is trying to get the Department of Environmental Protection to kick in some money. Trish advised that we had to do the minimum no matter what.

**Bentley School** – Irrigation started and will be fully irrigated by the Spring. Will look at what it can be used for when we see the survey. There will be a swing at the school for a handicapped child or adult in a handicap chair and the City has reached out to their insurance company and it will be covered and fenced in and working out the details.

High use parks were evaluated; i.e. Winter Island, Salem Common, Collins Cove, etc. Specific improvements were made to Collins Cove which IHCD praised the City for. They have given several recommendations and we will be prioritizing and chipping away at these.

Councilman Bob McCarthy said this is something we all need to address when looking at plans for new playgrounds. It is not about making all the equipment acceptable but making the area acceptable. He stated when talking about ADA compliance, we need to provide proper walkways and paths. He further stated that we were doing a great job to make sure the parks can be used by everyone.

Trish O’Brien said we were taking steps to address this and that we were really getting there.

Debbie Amaral said she was concerned about it being locked up. Trish O’Brien advised that there would be some kind of key code or the ability to text a code for access.

The Board asked about financials and Trish O’Brien stated they were under-staffed and said she thought Laurie Giardella would come to the next meeting to discuss this.

**Golf Course** – James Shea asked how the project was going. Trish advised that she had a pre-construction meeting with Sciba who felt strongly that they could get in and do as much as possible in the winter to get a head start. She advised that the final date on the contract was June 1st.

Bob Callahan asked if there are penalties added if not done on time. Trish advised that they felt it would take 6 weeks start to finish.

James Shea asked what was paid and Trish advised $440,000.00.

Next meeting – Tuesday February 18, 2020.

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

The meeting ended at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk