**FINAL MINUTES**

**Salem Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Date and Time: Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 6:54 P.M.**

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

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

**Absent James Shea, Bob Callahan**

**Also Present: Patricia O’Brien, Mayor Kimberley Driscoll**

**Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald**

**Meeting Called to Order**

Debbie Amaral calls the meeting to order at 6:54 P.M.

**Old Business**

Approval of Minutes of the meeting on September 17, 2019. Chris Burke moves to approve, seconded by Amy Everitt, and unanimously passes.

First on the Agenda:

**Salem United – Black Picnic** -- Cancelled by Doreen Wade

Next:

**Christy Evan, 1 Harris Street** – Ms. Harris came before the Board to express her concerns regarding parking issues at the corner of Mason Street and Freemont during October. She stated that the area has become an open parking lot along the tree lined streets and along Mason Street.

Debbie Amaral asked is she was talking about Mack Park and Ms. Evan said yes. She stated there were over 50 cars parked this past weekend.

Chris Burke stated that it might be a good idea to ask the police to tag people who drive over the grass to park.

Trish O‘Brien said that she has been in touch with Chief Butler already and they will place temporary signage stating cars will be ticketed or towed.

Chris Burke advised Ms. Evan that if she wanted parking to be a fundraiser next year, she might want to think about coming back before the Board.

Next:

**Palmer Cove Update** -- Mason Wells, City of Salem Planning Department and Naomi Cottrell, Crowley-Cottrell Landscape Architecture appeared before the Board with updates on the status, next steps, and some funding secured through a park grant. The park was identified in 2013 for renovation and redesign. With that background the city secured funding to do some initial studies.

Naomi Cottrell then updated the Board. She stated that they started the process by looking at existing conditions and by outreach meetings. She said there is a community garden group and a lot of green space and there is an abandoned tennis court. She stated that one of the biggest concerns is flood stages. She discussed flood zones and climate change and storm surges which is why they are moving the gardens to the other side. They are thinking about allowing water to go into the park otherwise if stopped it would go into the neighborhoods.

They have met with the Point Neighborhood Association and South Salem Neighborhood Association and had a public survey which received 460 responses. Among other questions, the survey asked what would bring people to the park. The No. 1 answer was water activities.

Another survey question asked what options people would like to see in the park and some of the answers were:

* Quiet relaxation
* Gardening
* Cook-outs
* Basketball
* Fairs
* Bike paths, etc.

There was a consensus that people wanted the following:

* To promote improved waterfront connections
* Strengthen existing programs
* Add opportunities for passive recreation

Ms. Cottrell presented a diagram for what they would propose for the park. She stated that would like to see:

* A tree lined path while still allowing access to the auto service shop
* Added parking on Salem Street/Saltonstall side
* Typical park amenities   
    
    
  She went on to state that the biggest challenge was active recreational space and said they were looking into men’s slow pitch softball field, tee ball, etc.

Chris Burke asked about lighting and Ms. Cottrell advised that the corrosive environment was a concern and no money had been allocated for new lights. In the first phase, one light may be removed.

Chris Burke then asked if green space will continue in the park and Ms. Cottrell advised yes.

Mason Wells then stated that Phase 1 would be how to focus on connection to the waterfront and increase activities throughout the park, benches, etc. He advised that a $400,00000 grant had been awarded and matched by the State. He further advised that construction can start no earlier than next summer.

Debbie Amaral asked about softball fields and maybe using existing softball field for something else. Trish O’Brien advised that there were two adult leagues that were pretty active on the existing softball field.

Next:

**Mack Park** –

Kerry Murphy, Matt Buchannen, Patrick Schultz and Andy Varella spoke. They want to use unused space at Mack Park to grow food for the community and advised that there was a food access issue in Salem and 55% of respondents reported fruits and vegetables were hard to find near their homes.

There was a discussion about the best areas to farm. Amy Everitt asked how long to actively get production and Andy Varella said 3 years to be viable. Amy Everitt then asked how many people could be fed and Andy Varella advised that it comes down to what is actively grown and stated that the best location for sun and water is at the lower area

Chris Burke asked what the organization was that was going to hold this together and Mayor Driscoll advised that Urban Architects is something cities have embraced. Mayor Driscoll further stated that she thought there was an opportunity to do more in Salem and now ready for this next level where there is underutilized green space and if they could be retooled then the City would like to green light this as a pilot. She said we could contract with these folks to manage it but the City was looking for a collaboration and to make sure how it benefits the community. She said there needs to be a MOU in place and didn’t want to lose time.

Amy Everitt moves to approve the use of appropriate green space, seconded by Chris burke and passes unanimously.

**Superintendent’s Report and Financials** – No updates.

Next meeting – Tuesday November 19, 2019.

A motion to adjourn is made by Amy Everitt, seconded by Chris Burke, and unanimously passes.

The meeting ended at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk