



RECEIVED-CITY CLERK
CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MA

2021 JAN 14 PM 1:13

CITY OF PITTSFIELD

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CITY HALL, 70 ALLEN STREET, RM 205, PITTSFIELD, MA 01201

Pittsfield Parks Commission January 19, 2021

NOTICE:

The Board of Park Commissioners will hold a virtual meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30A, Section 18, and state and federal orders and guidance imposing strict limits on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Parks Commission will be conducted exclusively via remote participation. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch the meeting may do so on PCTV and Facebook Live. Public comment may be made prior to the meeting by calling 413-499-9344 or by emailing jmcgrath@cityofpittsfield.org. Live public access via telephone will also be provided through the dial-in information listed below. In the event that we are unable to do so, we will post an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record on the City's website as soon as possible after the meeting.

Dial: 301 715 8592 Enter the Meeting ID: 970 6064 1928 and press # Press # again

AGENDA

1. **Review of the November 17, 2020, and January 5, 2021 meeting minutes.**
2. **Old Business:**
 - a. Springside Park Pump-Track Proposal: Bike Skills Park Update on Public Input.
3. **Reports**
 - a. Recreation.
 - b. Parks and Long Range Management.
4. **Adjourn**

Please note: All petitioners must be present at the meeting. If you cannot attend, please send a representative



CITY OF PITTSFIELD

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CITY HALL, 70 ALLEN STREET, RM 205, PITTSFIELD, MA 01201

Pittsfield Parks Commission Meeting November 17, 2020 (via Zoom)

Members Present:

Anthony DeMartino, Chairperson Michele Matthews
Simon Muil Joe Durwin
Cliff Nilan

Others Present:

Jim McGrath Becky Manship
Daniel Tucker Deanna Ruffer
Abigail Childs Emily Conner
Alison McGee Sarah Vadaj
Kim Bordon Christine Healey

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Review of the September 15, 2020 meeting minutes.

Cliff Nilan made the motion to accept the minutes as presented.
Michele Matthews seconded the motion.
The minutes were approved as written.

3. Park Event Requests

- a. Bread and Roses Food Drive, Abigail Childs, The Common, December 12, 2020, 12:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Abigail Childs was present. The event will set up and tear down in one hour and will stay within the proposed time frame. The event hopes to hand out at least 100 bags of food, with 150 being the ultimate goal. The remaining food, if not all is handed out, will be given to local food pantries.

Abigail Childs assured the Parks Commission that the event will follow COVID-19 guidelines as required by local and State requirements. This includes social distancing, masks and limits on the number of people allowed at the event at one time.

Anthony DeMartino asked Becky Manship if there have been any recent changes to the Health Departments requirements for events.

Becky Manship replied that the requirements remain the same as before except the total amount of people allowed at an event at one time has been reduced to 50.

Cliff Nilan motioned to approve the event request.

Simon Muil seconded the motion.

The event request was unanimously approved.

b. L.L. Bean Fall Mobile Tour, Emily Conner, The Common, November 30 and December 1, 2020, 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Emily Conner was present. The event date is currently unknown, but it is expected to be sometime in mid-December as their marketing group makes its way to the area. This event will incorporate wellness and health while also selling L.L. Bean products.

Anthony DeMartino asked Emily Conner to explain in more detail how the event will be set up.

Emily Conner replied that the event will be set up so that people can remain socially distanced, which will include plastic guards, and spacing between racks and ground walking guides.

Simon Muil mentioned the requirement for a commercial enterprise to pay a fee for the use in a City Park and also shared his concern that a commercial enterprise would be in direct competition with local businesses.

Anthony DeMartino commented that the location for the event may be better suited at one of the City parking lots where the pavement would allow for better access and parking for the event. If this option is pursued by the event organizers, the City would have to be contacted.

Simon Muil agreed with Anthony DeMartino's comments, and also expressed concerns about commercial retailers City Parks.

Jim McGrath asked Emily Conner to describe a recent event that was held in Adams to the Parks Commission.

Sarah Vadaj explained the setup at the recent L.L. Bean event in Adams.

Anthony DeMartino also suggested that maybe the Colonial's parking lot would be an alternative location.

Cliff Nilan said that he agrees a parking lot would be a better choice for this event.

Becky Manship said that she would be happy to continue to work with the event organizers to find an ideal location.

Michele Matthews said that she also agrees that the Parks might not be the best location for this event.

Becky Manship said that she will reach out to the Commissioner of Public Services about possible locations for the event and will then contact the event organizers.

Emily Conner agreed to continue working with Becky and the City to find an appropriate location.

Cliff Nilan motioned to table this event request.

Simon Muil seconded the motion.
The event request was unanimously tabled.

2. New Business

a. Springside Park Pump-Track Proposal

Alison McGee presented the proposal for a Pump-Track at Springside Park.

Alison McGee commented after her presentation that the Pump-Track would be an “opportunity for the people, and an opportunity for the City.”

Simon Muil asked Alison McGee about the proposed location and the baseball field area.

Alison McGee stated that the baseball field can be left alone if needed or redeveloped as part of the Pump-Track.

Simon Muil asked if the Friends of Springside Park approved of this proposal.

Alison McGee replied that they were concerned with the aesthetics in the initial presentation but they welcomed the proposal after it was designed by a professional Pump-Track designer.

Cliff Nilan commented that this project would need some more time to be thought, and he also suggested that visiting all of the potential sites should be part of this process. Cliff Nilan also said that he thinks that this should be further discussed at a future Parks Commission meeting.

Anthony DeMartino asked Alison about the other sites that were also considered for this project, and why Springside Park was considered the ideal location. Also, there is a concern that a bike feature in Springside Park already exists, and this proposal does not remedy that.

Alison McGee said that this location was picked because it is near the center of the park, would have plenty of parking, would be more visible, and would be in a location closer to at-risk youth in the neighborhood near Reid Middle School.

Jim McGrath commented that this proposal was a first impression for the Parks Commission, and should be discussed more to ensure that all stakeholders are in agreement before any decisions are made; their own feasibility study should be conducted also.

Michele Matthews said that she liked the idea of a Pump-Track, but also agreed that more discussion would be needed to address the many factors involved such as financing, location and maintenance.

Simon Muil also agreed that more discussion is needed to ensure that the location is ideal and that the Pump-Track would serve its intended purpose.

Anthony DeMartino commented that there are no red flags to the idea of a Pump-Track. More discussion is needed, and the Parks Commission should take into consideration the time-line that the project would need to follow in order to apply for grants and funding.

Simon Muil made the motion to approve the concept pending further review.

Cliff Nilan seconded the motion.
The motion was unanimously approved.

The Parks Commission agreed to visit the sites for the proposed Pump-Track with Alison McGee along with City Staff and the designer prior to the further discussion.

b. Discussion re: Springside Park Unsheltered.

Jim McGrath updated the Parks Commission on the ongoing situation concerning the unsheltered at Springside Park. There still are a number of encampments at the park; between 10-12 people. The safety of these people is a concern as the weather is changing rapidly. ServiceNet continues to visit these sites on a daily basis. St Joe's shelter currently has available space to shelter those staying at Springside Park where they can get two meals each day.

Jim McGrath noted that neighbors to Springside Park have called the City with concerns of fires and tree-felling taking place as a result of these encampments.

Kim Bordon commented that though people have the right to decide if they want to stay at a shelter or not, they still need to follow the same rules as everyone else. This includes where they stay, and the fact that they may not always get to choose where they stay as a result of restrictions. There are safer options available, and Kim also noted that staff have been visiting with the unsheltered to explore these options, and have set up meetings for them at the Christian Center as well.

Christine Healey commented that there was a plan to move the unsheltered from Springside Park to the St. Joe's shelter or to another shelter by the middle of November. There have been new encampments set up in recent weeks in more public areas of the Park.

Jim McGrath said people are continuing to select Springside to camp and their safety is the main concern with the winter weather beginning to arrive.

Anthony DeMartino acknowledged that the issue is often seasonal, but this year some people have decided to stay at Springside Park and to not take advantage of the many services available to them, including the shelters. This concerns the Parks Commission and the City for the safety of the unsheltered and the people who visit the park.

Anthony DeMartino suggested that the Parks Commission discuss if the no encampment rules should be enforced by the Commission and how that would be implemented.

Michele Matthews asked how enforcing this rule would work.

Anthony DeMartino replied that a date would be picked as the last day people could remain encamped at the park. During this time in between services would still be provided to the unsheltered. After the date, encampments would no longer be allowed. At that time ServiceNet would be an integral part of the process of moving the unsheltered out of the Park.

Deanna Ruffer commented that the City has met with service providers and ServiceNet, and have discussed the safety concerns and property destruction taking place at Springside Park. The Parks Commission is the appropriate entity to announce "it is time to move on". Also, the enforcement of the Parks rules would then be allowed by the police if they were called for a disturbance in the park.

Deanna Ruffer commented that a legal statement has been prepared in the event the Parks Commission decides to enforce the no encampment rules of the parks.

Christine Healey commented that service providers also share the City's concerns about the safety of the unsheltered, and allowing the situation to continue would be more dangerous to the individuals.

Kim Bordon agreed with Christine Healy, and told the Parks Commission that ServiceNet has really stepped up and has gone above and beyond their responsibilities.

Cliff Nilan made the motion to enforce the no encampment rules of the parks.

Simon Muil seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Anthony DeMartino read the legal statement to the Parks Commission that was prepared by the City of Pittsfield stating the enforcement of all City Park rules, including no encampment.

Simon Muil made the motion to accept the legal statement.

Michele Matthews seconded the motion.

The legal statement was unanimously approved.

4. Correspondence

a. Letter regarding the Park of Honor. Drew Herzig

Jim McGrath explained the recent controversy concerning a 'Blue Lives Matter' flag and a 'Red Lives Matter' flag that have been flown at the Park of Honor.

Simon Muil read the letter that was submitted to the Parks Commission by Drew Herzig.

Anthony DeMartino commented that these two flags have been flown in the past at this display, and that recently they have been removed and replaced with normal flags by an unknown person(s). The two flags were found behind bushes on a different property.

Simon Muil commented that he feels that the Veterans flag display at the Park of Honor should not be political. Removing the flags would prevent politicization of the display.

Cliff Nilan agreed that removing the two flags should be the solution.

Michele Matthews also agreed to remove the two controversial flags.

Anthony DeMartino recommended a motion to have the two flags removed from the display.

The Parks Commission decided to inform the Kiwanis Club regarding the removal of the two controversial flags at the Park of Honor.

5. Reports

a. Recreation. Becky Manship presented the report.

Becky Manship mentioned that a special named, 'Haunted Streets,' took the place of the Halloween Parade this year. This was a collection of moments spanning 25 years of Halloween Parades filmed by PCTV.

There were also various virtual contests for Halloween that included House decorating, costume, and pumpkin decorating.

There will not be a traditional tree lighting ceremony this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. There will be a tree in Park Square and a virtual tree lighting ceremony in coordination with PCTV. Trees are currently being reviewed and one will be picked soon.

There will be a North Pole Calling Program, on Wednesday and Thursday, December 16 and 17, from 5:00 to 7:30 each night.

The Stanton Foundation has given the City the ok to go out to bid for the Dog Park Project. This will be advertised on November 25th, a pre-bid walk through will be held on December 1st, and the bid opening will occur on December 10th.

Michele Matthews made the motion to accept the report.

Simon Muil seconded the motion.

The report was unanimously accepted.

b. Parks and Long Range Management. Jim McGrath presented the report.

Jim McGrath mentioned two additional projects that have moved ahead with bidding; the Skate Park Phase Two, and the Deming Park Baseball Field Irrigation Project.

Jim McGrath also mentioned the Beach Sand Project at Burbank Park on Onota Lake. There will be a construction meeting on November 18, 2020. The project will be completed by December 25, 2020.

The Westside Riverway Park is complete, and the ribbon cutting will be next spring or summer.

The Springside House project is in the process of bidding for a new roof, and consulting with the Massachusetts Historical Commission about picking new historically accurate storm windows.

Michele Matthews made the motion to accept the report.

Cliff Nilan seconded the motion.

The report was unanimously accepted.

6. Adjourn

Cliff Nilan made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Michele Matthews seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Tucker



CITY OF PITTSFIELD

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CITY HALL, 70 ALLEN STREET, RM 205, PITTSFIELD, MA 01201

Pittsfield Parks Commission Meeting January 5, 2021 (via Zoom)

Members Present:

Anthony DeMartino, Chairperson	Michele Matthews
Simon Muil	Paula Albro
Cliff Nilan	

Others Present:

Jim McGrath	Becky Manship
Daniel Tucker	
Alison McGee	William Conroy

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Cliff Nilan introduced and welcomed Paula Albro as the new Parks Commissioner. Cliff Nilan gave some background about Paula Albro, and mentioned that she is a former Parks Commissioner who served 19 years. She also was the first woman chair for the Commission in the history of the City of Pittsfield.

Anthony DeMartino also welcomed Paula Albro to the Parks Commission.

1. Springside Park Pump-Track Proposal: New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA).

Alison McGee was present. The proposed location for the pump-track in Springside Park is a good location for the pump-track as well as for the community itself, because the Park is centrally located both in Pittsfield and within Berkshire County. The landscape is suitable, as well as its proximity to both Morningside and Reid Middle School. The Springside Park location would provide activities for those in the neighborhood including at-risk youth. This location would also allow for easy access for residents near by without vehicles, as they could ride their bikes to the pump-track.

Alison McGee stated that NEMBA is seeking funding on their own for this project, including grants. A large organization is a prospect, and is more likely to fund the project if the project offers a location that promotes inclusion and diversity. Alison McGee feels that having the pump-track at Springside Park would fit this role.

Alison McGee stated that the NEMBA seeks to get approval for the location of the pump-track at Springside Park so that her organization can start applying for funding for the project. This would allow for a more detailed concept plan to be completed. A survey will also be available to residents in the community for public input.

Berkshire Mountain Bike Training Series, and NEMBA will also draft a, 'Memorandum of Understanding' with the City of Pittsfield to ensure that all parties are on the same page concerning the project.

Alison McGee thanked the Parks Commission for organizing a special meeting to discuss the Pump-Track project proposal at Springside Park.

Cliff Nilan commented that he is concerned with the finance and the maintenance factors of the project, as well as the bidding process. Any public hearing concerning this project should be run by the Park Commission. The bidding process is very important as this will include private companies working on a project in a public park.

Jim McGrath explained how the two phases, design and the public bidding, would be implemented through the City. The design phase would not require a procurement phase, as the designs could be donated to the city by William Conroy's company Powderhorn.

The bidding phase would have to be publically bid. The firm selected to complete the construction of the Pump-Track would have to be knowledgeable in the highly specialized field of building Pump-Tracks.

Jim McGrath also commented that the experience of the bidding company would most likely be taken into consideration when the City makes a final decision. Also, if Powderhorn designs the plans for the Pump-Track, they could also submit a bid to construct the project. The award of the construction contract is given to the lowest responsive bidder. Funds would need to be in place before the bidding would begin, along with an estimate of probable cost.

Jim McGrath spoke about the maintenance portion of this project, and how Alison and her organization NEMBA would agree to take on all of the required maintenance; this will be facilitated through a, 'Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).' The City Attorney has reviewed the MOU, and is reaching out to the Attorney who facilitated the Keene New Hampshire Pump-Track for further review. The MOU submitted by NEMBA will encompass the design component and also the maintenance component.

Simon Muil asked if the process would be similar to the one used to construct the Skate Park, and Clapp Park.

Jim McGrath replied and compared the Clapp Park project to the proposed Pump-Track, discussed the similarities between the two. The major difference being that all of the funding for this project would be provided by NEMBA.

Anthony DeMartino asked about the MOU, and what would happen if NEMBA ceased to exist or changed its leadership in the future while still under obligations according to the MOU.

Jim McGrath commented that the Pump-Track would be City owned. The MOU should be weighed in on by the Parks Commission as to what provisions are included in it. Such provisions included in the MOU could address the scenarios such as what happens if NEMBA does not fulfill their commitments or ceases to exist.

Allison McGee commented that NEMBA is a well-established organization with many chapters throughout the region. If there is ever a change in leadership in the Berkshire Chapter of NEMBA, the new leader would have enough information and support to continue maintaining the Pump-Track. Also the Berkshire Chapter of NEMBA would have support from two other organizations.

Simon Muil asked if this Pump-Track would fit with the Springside Park's master plan.

Jim McGrath commented that the Springside Park Conservancy has endorsed the project. They are meeting Saturday January 10, 2021. Also, it is important to reach out to other organizations, abutters and groups to ensure that there is feedback for this project.

Cliff Nilan suggested having a public hearing concerning the project.

Jim McGrath suggested having the January 19, 2021 Parks Commission meeting include this as an agenda item for public comment.

Paula Albro asked if Alison had a plan for acquiring bikes for Morningside and neighboring kids.

Alison McGee commented that there is no formal plan currently. She mentioned how ‘Little Bellas,’ is providing bikes to girls that need them through a program that she currently runs. A more focused effort to provide bikes should be implemented.

Anthony DeMartino commented on the MOU, the public meeting, the location of the Pump-Track in Springside Park and the proposed asphalt structure of the track.

Alison McGee addressed the reasoning behind using asphalt as the material for the Pump-Track.

William Conroy explained his reasoning behind preferring asphalt as opposed to dirt as a material for the Pump-Track.

William Conroy and the Parks Commission further discussed the design features of the proposal.

Michele Matthews commented that she likes the Springside Park location over the other locations proposed for the Pump-Track. The asphalt seems better as it provides for more safety, and is better for maintenance.

Anthony DeMartino asked about preventing unwanted vehicles on the track, and what types of security would be implemented to prevent this.

William Conroy commented that the design would incorporate natural deterrents for unwanted vehicles, as well as other needed landscaping. Fencing could be used if needed as a last resort.

Anthony DeMartino said that he is concerned that dirt bikes, and four-wheelers could damage the Pump-Track.

Alison McGee said that cameras may be used as suggested by the Springside Park Conservancy.

Anthony DeMartino asked that some type of perimeter security be included in the designs of the Pump-Track to prevent it from being damaged.

Anthony DeMartino asked if any Commissioners had any concerns with the location of the Pump-Track.

Simon Muil said that he agrees with the location, for visibility, and its purpose.

Michele Matthews also agreed to the proposed location.

Anthony DeMartino commented on the locations proximity to the Parks Department’s storage area.

Jim McGrath commented that the Parks Superintendent will be involved in the planning process as to how to address the location of the storage area and compost piles.

Jim McGrath asked William Conroy how large the Pump-Track would be.

William Conroy estimated that the project would be about 1.5 acres. The design will allow for flexibility.

Simon Muil made the motion to approve the concept and the location subject to public input and details.
Paula Albro seconded the motion.
The Motion was unanimously approved.

6. Adjourn

Simon Muil made the motion to adjourn the meeting.
Michele Matthews seconded the motion.
The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Tucker