



P: (978) 829 1815  
F: (978) 345 9687

# CITY OF FITCHBURG

## Board of Park Commissioners

718 Main Street  
Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

James McGrath (*Chairman*)  
Mary Whitney (*Vice-Chair*)  
Dave Brooks  
Mary Giannetti  
Colby O'Brien

James Bunnell  
*Recreation Director*

**FITCHBURG CITY CLERK**

***Mar 10 2023 2:53 pm***

Board of Park Commissioners Meeting  
Date: Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Location: West Conference Room, Fitchburg City Hall, 718 Main Street

### **Call to Order:**

The Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the meeting was called to order by Commissioner McGrath at 5:32 pm.

Commissioner Members Present: Jim McGrath, Colby O'Brien, Mary Whitney, Mary Giannetti

Commissioner Absent: Dave Brooks

Also Present: Nick Erickson, James Bunnell, Laura DiCaronimo (Riverfront Ripples), Carolyn Sellars, and Jen Barlow.

**Public Comment:** *No Public Comment*

**Prior Meeting Minutes:** *A motion was made by Mary Whitney and seconded by Mary Giannetti to approve the minutes from the November 1st meeting. Approved 4-0*

*Introduction of new commissioner Colby O'Brien*

### **Department Reports:**

#### Friends of Coggshall Report:

*James McGrath Reported:*

- *Asked about painting the inside of the Stonehouse*
- *Coggshall Trustee Fund (James will look into it further to see if he can find out more information)*

*A motion was made by Mary Whitney and seconded by Mary Giannetti to accept the report. Approved 4-0*

#### Community Development Report:

*No report- Tabled*

*A motion was made by Mary Whitney and seconded by Mary Giannetti to accept the report. Approved 4-0*

#### Parks Maintenance Report:

*Nick Erickson reported:*

- *Update regarding parks department now in winter mode*
- *Added snow plow attachment to the parks mower for clearing the bridges*
- *Gary and James conducted interviews for the Parks Working Foreman Position*
- *Discussion held regarding the Flag that was raised at Riverfront Park*
  - *Nick explain DPW was asked to put the flag up and take the flag down. No sides taken from the DPW or Parks and Recreation Department*

- *James explain his role and described what happened on the morning of the flag coming down*
- *Mary Giannetti requested clarification as to who is responsible for the flag ole city or parks. James will check with the assessor's office*

*A motion was made by Mary Giannetti and seconded by Mary Whitney to accept the report. Approved 4-0*

Riverfront Parks and Trails Fund Report:

*A motion was made by Mary Giannetti and Jim McGrath seconded by to table the report. Approved 4-0*

Recreation Director's Report

*James Bunnell reported*

- *Informed the commission of a consultant from Nationwide Aquatics Consulting Inc. will be conducting an evaluation of the J. Robert Crowley Swimming Pool Complex. A report will be provided and distributed to the commission at the February Meeting*
- *James showed flyers for upcoming events*
- *Summarized the meeting between Fitchburg State University Honors Program and James. Connecting with Fitchburg State University for a variety of different programs, The Honors Program is going to adopt the Pool house.*
- *Summer Jobs update, and descriptions were sent to HR at the end of December. Updating Payscale. Jim McGrath brought up a possible program that Leominster does regarding hiring lifeguards for the pool for the state and then being reimbursed by the state. (James will look into it)*
- *The youth lease agreement was sent to the city legal counsel for review*
- *James talked about how he reached out to local Cannabis Shops that are opening about the requirement in their application to give back to the community, hoping to possibly get some funds/donations from them, through this requirement. Mary Giannetti requested that we make sure this is ok before accepting any donations.*
- *Working on rental rate proposal for Coggshall Stonehouse and Gazebo*
- *Photo Contest preview*
- *Civic Rec Update*
- *Outdoor Skating at Coolidge*
- *Adopt-A-Park update- only 2 so far, showed signage for the program*
- *Casino bus trip event preview*

*A motion was made by Mary Whitney and seconded by Mary Giannetti to table the report. Approved 4-0*

New Business:

- **Volunteer Groups/Organizations-**

*Planning Purpose/Vision- James discussed the value and showed appreciation for the contributions of the groups that give back to the community. Expressed the need to be on the same page with all of the groups/organizations and vice versa so that more can be accomplished, resources maximized, and a coordinated effort to improve the cities parks, instead of everyone doing their own thing and what each group wants, etc. work as a team and smarter to get more done for the community.*

- **Riverfront Ripples (Laura DiCaronimo)**
  - James requested that the Riverfront Ripples be moved up in the agenda item order Mary Whitney motioned Mary Giannetti 2<sup>nd</sup> approved 4-0
  - James summarized why the group is here and explained how the connection came to be. Laura explained where this idea came from the work that she, Carolyn, and Jen had been doing. What they would like to do at Riverfront and the potential the park has.
  - Talked about and discussed the survey they conducted and summarized/overview of the results. (James requested a copy of the results to share with the commission, Laura will be sending the information to James )
  - Mary Giannetti asked if they may branch off into supporting other parks
  - Mary Whitney discussed the partnership with the existing Riverfront Parks Group and Riverfront Ripples
  - Talked about the River Ran Wild event
- **National Fitness Campaign**
  - James provided an overview of the program and the reasoning behind applying for the grant. The information packet was provided to the commission for review.
  - Discussion was held regarding if this was something the department should pursue by Colby O'Brien. Jim McGrath spoke in support, explaining how Coggshall had something similar at the park in the past and people have asked about something like this, Nick also spoke in support and explained how he wants to see the Parks and Recreation Department move forward with things like this, Mary Giannetti also spoke in favor of the project. Mary Giannetti motioned to approve James moving forward with the grant application, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim McGrath approved 4-0
- **Important Dates**
  - Worcester Railers Game 2/5 at 3:30pm (moved to 2/11 7pm)
  - 4/8 Easter Egg Hunt and Pictures with the Easter Bunny 10 am-11:30 am at Parkhill
  - 6/14 DPW Day at Coolidge Park
- **Block Grant Update**
  - James provided a summary of what the department has applied for a Park Signage update in the amount of \$12,500 for updates and consistent guidelines and messages throughout the park system. \$25,000 for updates regarding safety and security at the swimming pool complex, \$65,000 for the National Fitness Campaign Court, and \$75,000 for planning and design of the Lowe Park Project that coincides with the Artists Loft/NuVue Project. (Mary Giannetti and Jim McGrath both requested that I look further into this as it was their understanding this was the responsibility of NuVue to be responsible for the cost as part of the project)

A motion was made by Mary Whitney to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mary Gionnetti Approved 4-0

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm