

Town of Strasburg

Recreation, Parks, & Trails Committee

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE PUBLIC

LIMITED IN PERSON ATTENDANCE WILL BE ALLOWED FOR THE JUNE 17th, 2021 MEETING. PLEASE UTILIZE OUR LIVESTREAM BY ACCESSING THE LINK BELOW

<https://www.strasburgva.com/bc/page/meetings>

To make public comment please submit to:

comment@strasburgva.com

by 4:00 p.m., Thursday, June 17th, 2021

Strasburg Town Hall
174 East King Street

Thursday, June 17th, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Recreation, Parks, & Trails Committee Members:

Ken Cherrix, Chair
Dane Hooser
Christie Monahan
Doreen Ricard

Staff Contacts:

Jay McKinley, Interim Town Manager
Olivia Hilton, Interim Director of Community Development



Agenda

Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Action Item:

- **Approval of Minutes: April 26th, 2021, meeting**

Discussion Items:

1.) Master Park Plan

Description: Discussion on re-prioritizing certain features in the Master Park Plan

Support Materials: n/a

Old or unfinished business

New business

Adjournment

If you require any type of reasonable accommodation as a result of physical, sensory, or mental disability in order to participate in this meeting, please contact Amy Keller, Town Clerk at 540-465-9197 or amy@strasburgva.com. Three days notice is required.

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL RECREATION, PARKS, & TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 26th, 2021 AT 7 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.

PRESENT: Council Member Cherrix (Chair) and Council Committee Members Hooser, Monahan, and Ricard. Others present: Mayor Boies and Council Member Reynolds

STAFF PRESENT: Director of Public Works McKinley, Interim Director of Community Development Hilton, Clerk of Council Keller, and Park and Pool Manager Leigh.

Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items:

Action Item:

- **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the March 18th, 2021 meeting were approved as presented.

Discussion Items:

1.) ADA Accessible Features for the Town Park and Rotary Grant

Description: Parents will be coming to discuss accessible features and a representative from the Rotary Club will be discussing a grant opportunity to help make these features possible.

Mayor Boies said the Rotary Club was interested in doing a project at the park and they wanted to do something hands on. **Interim DCD Hilton** said they seemed interested in doing a sensory music area.

Chairperson Cherrix said he thinks a good area for this is to the left of the path to the baseball field and he likes the idea of adding more equipment that would be ADA accessible.

The grant is a matching grant, and they might be able to add onto this each year. They are looking at a grant for several thousand dollars. The application is due in June and the swings will be installed in June, so **Chairperson Cherrix** thinks it would be a good time to do an expansion. He views it as a multi-year project.

Council Member Monahan said **Ms. Follette** had an emergency and could not attend. She wants to meet with **Chairperson Cherrix** first before coming to a meeting. They are currently working on the Rotary Shelter to make it more ADA accessible. She wants to make sure it is agreeable with the Council before moving forward.

Chairperson Cherrix said he had talked with **Park and Pool Manager Leigh** about changing things around to make it more accessible.

Director of Public Works McKinley discussed taking out the pea gravel and making it all engineered mulch. **Chairperson Cherrix** said he researched certain materials which could make the area more accessible (he gave out copies of types of materials). Some of the materials are being used in coastal localities. More discussion followed on how the material was attached to the ground, etc., and where it would be located. Mowing would be a consideration with this; if the holes are too large then weeds could grow up this. This would be a solution as opposed to permanent paving. **Chairperson Cherrix** would like to get this in when the swings are put in. **Council Member Monahan** thinks this should be taken to the Rotary to see if this would help with the accessibility from the Rotary Shelter to the playground.

Director of Public Works McKinley said it would be hard to absorb the \$4,000 cost of this into this budget year. **Chairperson Cherrix** said since we do not know when the swings will be going in, it might be July before the install. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said they will have to take out the swing sets about two weeks before the install date to get it all cleaned up and ready for other items.

Chairperson Cherrix asked about the tire swing and if we were going to keep it. **Park and Pool Manager Leigh** explained how it could be kept, but it would be an extra cost for the mulch. The use zone will have to be looked at. Safe options will be looked at.

2.) Hours of the Town Park

Chairperson Cherrix said we have had this discussion and the last time he noticed there was no signage about the hours of the park. We have discussed not enforcing the hours.

Chief Sager said he consulted with his staff when thinking this through and the problems it creates for them. One is property damage that can be done after hours. It is a safety issue, too, when people are in the park after dark due to the lighting. The River Walk is also a point of concern, especially after dark. A discussion followed on lighting and it was thought a compromise could be to install lighting around the dog park, basketball courts, and tennis courts; some committee members felt the hours could be extended if this happened.

Chief Sager continued by saying the department sees a significant problem with the elimination of the hours. The gates are not locked currently and have not been for about 10 years. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said they often would lock people inside the park; the main gate is not locked/closed either.

Chairperson Cherrix asked if there were many problems there now. **Chief Sager** said they usually use a softer approach and unless there is a criminal activity, they just ask the people to leave and let them know what the hours are. They do get calls for service for criminal activity.

Chairperson Cherrix said the Master Park Plan does call for additional lighting, but it would be in 10 to 15 years out. He is fine with leaving this as it is, but he thinks it would be good to allow people to come in who want to night fish or something like that.

Council Member Ricard thinks we should go with what **Chief Sager** is saying.

Council Member Hooser said he is hearing the concerns, but he does not think that leaving this closed will prevent vandalism. He used to break into the pool, and he would not have done this if there had been people playing basketball nearby. They are already patrolling this. We have curfews and this can be enforced but adults should be able to go when they want to. **Council Member Hooser** said the River Walk would have problems and he thinks we should work toward getting better lighting. **Chief Sager** said they are trying to think of all the citizens. **Council Member Hooser** thinks a good compromise is to just close the River Walk. There is nothing to do for young adults. He thinks we need to give choices.

Chairperson Cherrix said he does not mind having the River Walk closed but the rest of the park is so wide open that he does not think it will stop people from going. **Council Member Monahan** said it will not stop people from going, but it does allow the police to tell people to leave the park.

Chairperson Cherrix said he thinks we should leave it as is or put an hour limit on it such as 10 or 11 p.m.

Council Member Ricard asked how **Council Member Hooser** could see to do anything at the park when there are no lights. He responded that on a bright night, there was plenty of light.

Interim DCD Hilton said the addition of lights is slated for 2031. She said **Chief Sager** has mentioned his concerns several times and she feels we should abide by his suggestions.

Director of Public Works McKinley said he, too, has concerns with this without the proper lighting. **Chairperson Cherrix** suggested having the lights on a timer and pay for the lighting.

Chief Sager said it is their priority to promote a good healthy lifestyle, so they want to be good partners. He thinks the compromise of putting lights up and extending the hours for certain areas could be a goal. **Council Member Hooser** thinks we need to move the lighting up in the schedule. **Chairperson Cherrix**

said he thought there were different years for different areas and **Interim DCD Hilton** said the lights for the tennis courts and basketball courts were 2031-35. **Chairperson Cherrix** would like for this timeline to be bumped up, too.

Interim DCD Hilton said as we bump things forward, we need to see what can be pushed back.

Council Member Hooser thinks it is a shame we are not going to do a compromise. He would like to see the hours extended to 10 p.m. **Chief Sager** said he would rather wait for the safety of the lights. He will work with **Director of Public Works McKinley** and **Interim DCD Hilton** for grant opportunities.

Park and Pool Manager Leigh also discussed the people who swim at night when the pool is closed and the dangers of this and also the lifeguards leaving after dark. Safety is a big concern.

Council Member Monahan likes the idea of keeping this on a list to see if the lighting can be moved forward.

Chief Sager said most of the town properties are under surveillance and maybe we should add this to the pool area. The cameras have helped tremendously. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said the cameras are not that expensive but the more cameras we add, the more bandwidth we use.

Park and Pool Manager Leigh said she has not had vandalism, but it scares her that people do go into the pool and swim and any way to deter this is great. **Council Member Hooser** said he would not have broken into the pool if there had been people around. People will self-regulate. **Chief Sager** said if his department could have a key to the pool house, they could actually go into the area and see who might be hiding.

Chairperson Cherrix said he thinks we will rely on the police to dictate this.

Old or Unfinished Business:

- **Signage**

An example of the sign being proposed for the River Walk was shown. Committee members thought grilling and open fires should not be just be along the River Walk, but the entire area. They felt the sign should be on the lower gate and it should state no grills or open flames past this point.

Council Member Monahan would like to see the signage put in more than one place.

Interim DCD Hilton asked if portable grills were banned throughout the park and they were not. She asked what the issue is if someone grills in the parking lot. **Chairperson Cherrix** said they will discard hot embers in the parking lot. There is a tree line and open fields which could catch on fire. **Interim DCD Hilton** asked why we would not just be ban these in the entire park. She thinks any parking lot in the park could be a problem. **Chairperson Cherrix** said he understands what **Interim DCD Hilton** is saying. **Council Member Hooser** said we need to provide ash receptacles. **Interim DCD Hilton** said we need to know how to guide staff. The consensus was to make the sign just say no grilling past this point, and two signs saying No Grilling Allowed near the River Walk. **Interim DCD Hilton** said she would suggest only putting the sign on the lower gate and the boat landing and with the community officer, it might take care of itself. She does not want to over-saturate with signs.

- **Night Owl Sculpture**

Interim DCD Hilton said the committee had expressed wanting to see the size and shape of the sculpture and how it would work in the Square. Staufferstadt wanted to keep this in the downtown area so they are going to get the artist to come and look at the Square and also the possibility of incorporating the Town Run. Staufferstadt will come and report back. **Chairperson Cherrix** said so the artist will come out and see where it fits best in the space. Consensus was to make sure it is not in the middle of the area.

New business:

- **Town Park Bathrooms**

Chairperson Cherrix said he met with staff at the park to tour the bathrooms. A mural was recently placed on the front of the building.

Director of Public Works McKinley said two stall doors were replaced and they are in pretty good shape now. The doors are on timers.

Chairperson Cherrix said the building needs some serious updating. This was put on the Master Park Plan. He could not figure out why the doors were put on the side of the building where no one can see. The estimate to tear it down and rebuild was about \$150,000 - \$200,000. There are currently two bathrooms but we also need storage. We would not have to completely remodel.

Director of Public Works McKinley said the Master Park Plan recommends tearing down the entire thing and starting over. Pictures were shown of pre-fab structures.

Chairperson Cherrix said this was pushed out in the MPP. **Interim DCD Hilton** said it is slated for 2026. **Chairperson Cherrix** thinks it is a hefty amount of money to put into this.

Director of Public Works McKinley said there had been a rehab seven or eight years ago and they are nicer than they were. A discussion was had on suggestions made by the previous contractor of how the bathrooms could be redesigned. No matter what, the building is still just a block building and not very nice. **Chairperson Cherrix** said his idea was to just have one bathroom which would help with cleaning, and the door would be on the side where it could be seen.

Director of Public Works McKinley said the reality is that there is no money to do any of this. It is not in this year's budget and not in next year's budget.

Chairperson Cherrix said this could be added to the discussion of the Master Park Plan.

Council Member Hooser said the bathrooms are very nice at the Woodstock Park.

Park and Pool Manager Leigh said more lighting would be good in that area, too.

Town Pool

Chairperson Cherrix asked about the pool schedule. **Park and Pool Manager Leigh** said we are on schedule for opening on May 28 and the Kiwanis would like to have a pool party on May 27.

Chairperson Cherrix asked if keeping the water in the pool was a help and **Park and Pool Manager Leigh** said it was a huge help. Pressure washing the pool is a big job and the pool is sensitive to this washing. It took a lot of time to get it to the point it was to last summer. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said it takes a lot of manpower to get it ready. **Park and Pool Manager Leigh** said the pool only needs to be balanced and vacuumed and it would be ready to go.

Chairperson Cherrix asked if this had been a cost-savings or not. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said the numbers have not been crunched yet. He is not sure how much was used as far as chemicals, pump time, etc. He said as long as we have staff that can be dedicated to this, it would be advantageous as it saves the pool.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.