



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes  
March 14, 2022  
6:00 p.m.

**Via Remote Participation via Zoom**

Commissioners Present: Jane DeBarbieri, Scott LaBombard, Kenneth Magarian, Douglas Morash, Vincent Olinski, Michael Tirrell and Sara Unger

City Council Liaison: Nicholas Morganelli

Staff: Scott Hathaway, Deputy Supt.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. via remote participation with Michael Tirrell, Chairperson presiding asking commissioners for a voice roll call by calling out a "Yes".

Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

Michael Tirrell asked for a moment of silence in memory of Bob "Chico" Veronesi who recently passed away on February 21, 2022. He said Bob was a guy who put it in perspective and he served on the commission for many years. The amount of knowledge and commitment and experience that he had was obviously going to be impossible to replace. There were other long-time commissioners that served with Bob for many years and he was lucky to have only served with him a few years, he was always willing to lend a helping hand, always had some wise words from previous experiences that he had. (A moment of silence took place).

Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions regarding the February 7, 2022 meeting minutes and if anyone wanted to set motion. He called out each commissioner for a roll call vote. Motion made by Vincent Olinski to accept the minutes of February 7, 2022 motion seconded by Jane DeBarbieri, Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.  
All in favor. Motion passed.

Public Participation via zoom: Paula Hebert-Pike, Jeff Burke, Nikki St. Peter logged in for Jason Adams.

City Council Communication if any:

1. Michael Tirrell welcomed Nicholas Morganelli and asked him to go over bocce courts, and lighting rods per agenda items.
2. Nicholas Morganelli thanked the chairman and he expressed his condolences for Bob Veronesi who passed away. He went over the bocce courts over near the great river bridge and stated he was not sure if they are under this department's jurisdiction yet a resident contacted him and would like to play bocce and informed him the type of material installed is wrong and last year there were weeds, tall grass and moss growing and he just wanted to bring this to the attention of the board. And the

second item across from that is the fire pits that have been vandalized for more than a year now and nothing has been done to repair them and there were also small pieces of glass on the ground as well.

1. Michael Tirrell responded that it is city property but not sure if it is officially under the parks and recreation dept. and asked Scott Hathaway if he could answer him.
2. Scott Hathaway said they have been trying to keep up with all of the vandalism and those items were installed by Mark Cressotti in the Engineering dept. budget. Those areas are not officially under the park and recreation dept. until the rail trail is completed. He said at the bocce courts the timbers are now rotting away and will have to be replaced as well. The fire pits were fixed and then vandalized and they can't keep up with all the vandalism that is happening all the time in that area. He said Fran Cain, Acting Director is aware of the problem. He explained the fire pits were installed by Engineering Dept. as well and he put in half sand and half clay and that material is not correct.
3. Michael Tirrell explained that last month they had a meeting on all the areas and a subcommittee is trying to get feedback from folks that use our facilities, he will add the fire pits and bocce courts to his list and bring it up in a meeting in a few weeks and explained we are trying to prioritize our items.
4. Nicholas Morganelli brought up the lighting strike at Papermill ballfields that destroyed the electrical box and asked if the dept. has plans to install lighting rods that would direct the strike to the ground. He went over the details of how lighting rods work. He said that all of the areas should have them to protect our assets and he went over Bullen's field is another area. He also said that he voiced his concern to Mayor McCabe about budget time and the need to hire more people to do the maintenance in the parks because the staff have decreased drastically over the years. His concern was we have all these beautiful parks but we don't have the man power to repair or maintain the areas. He just wanted to bring this to the commission's attention that he mentioned all this to the Mayor.

#### Business or Items for Discussion:

5. Michael Tirrell explained that Sonia Pease will attend the April meeting regarding the bench request as soon as Scott Hathaway, himself and Sonia can meet and decide on the bench location at Women's Temperance Park.
6. Michael Tirrell brought up Jason Adams renewal permit request for Girls Lacrosse at Boardman field March 10 - June 12 times M-F 5:30 p.m. -7:30 p.m. and Sat. and Sun. 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and asked him to go over it.
7. Nikki St. Peter, VP of Girls Lacrosse said she is here on behalf of Jason Adams. She explained this is a renewal permit like all the other years and went over dates and times.
8. Scott Hathaway informed her that they want to keep people off the fields if they are wet and muddy to let the grass grow.
9. Sara Unger responded with a reminder to have no vehicles parked on the Boardman fields she knows there were issues in the past, and a reminder to park behind the school near the tennis courts and walk over.

Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions for Nikki St. Peter, Girls Lacrosse and if anyone wanted to set motion. He called out each commissioner for a roll call vote. Motion made by Sara Unger to accept the permit as presented motion seconded by Jane DeBarbieri, Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger

yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

All in favor. Motion passed.

10. Michael Tirrell welcomed Paula Hebert-Pike to discuss renewal permits for Municipal playground Tues-Friday mornings April 12, April 29, May 10, May 27, and June 7 time 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and asked her to go over them.
11. Paula Hebert-Pike explained these are the same playgroups we have had in the past and we want to extend the dates at the Municipal Playground. She went over the winter schedule a few were canceled due to the inclement weather. She said currently we have an average of twelve children each time and parents have been really receptive to the program.

Michael Tirrell said that is great to hear and asked if anyone had any questions for Paula Hebert- Pike and if anyone wanted to set motion. He called out each commissioner for a roll call vote. Motion made by Scott LaBombard to accept the permit as presented. Motion seconded by Douglas Morash, Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

All in favor. Motion passed.

12. Michael Tirrell brought up Matt Collins three renewal permits for Municipal tennis, Sadie Knox Playground softball, and Boardman field for lacrosse March 21- July 1 M-Fri. 3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. and noticed he was not logged in asked if anyone had any questions and due to a renewal he had no problem approving them.

Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions regarding the three permits for Matt Collins and if anyone wanted to set motion. He called out each commissioner for a roll call vote. Motion made Kenneth Magarian to accept the permits as presented motion seconded by Sara Unger, Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

All in favor. Motion passed.

13. Michael Tirrell welcomed Jeff Burke on his Skate park efforts to rebuild and create a new skate park. He explained that last week Peter Miller, Community Development Director, Jim Blascak, Jeff Burke, and himself, held a zoom meeting on how we can move the project forward in 2022. The big issue is to see who owns the land this dept. or the School and it was confirmed it is under the park and recreation dept. This is what we need to know before we can apply for certain grants.
14. Jeff Burke responded yes that is correct we can get the design and eventually get the construction going for a new skate park. So now we are trying to figure out the exact footprint of that area so we can build a new one. He said another item Peter Miller brought up was the public in support for a new skate park so people campaigned through the Mayor's office last week and we had a lot of people respond to the email to the Mayor that they are in favor of a new skate park. We are sure he will continue to receive additional emails in support of building a new skate park. So for now we are looking at what the next steps are he mentioned he sent Peter Miller the three prominent vendor lists of skate park scales and designs that had a really good reputation and have great portfolios. Peter Miller will look on how we can move forward on behalf of Westfield and come up with a plan for a new skate park built in a couple of years.
15. Kenneth Magarian asked if we are looking into the same location and are you looking to utilize anything that is there now.

16. Jeff Burke said that is a good question and the easiest way is to get the skate park built is to utilize an existing location because then we don't have to go through all of the red tape of finding a new location and going through all the zoning and environmental steps, requirement needed to get the skate park built. He explained one it is a great location and two it is next to the Boys and Girls Club and School if anyone wanted to offer after-school programming of skateboard camps because it is in a perfect location.
17. Kenneth Magarian asked if we are able to utilize any of the existing material.
18. Jeff Burke responded that would be at the end to do eventually it is up to the designer on how they best utilize the footprint. We want to see if the space is effective to recycle the existing concrete and they crack it up and reuse it in the construction and use as much concrete as possible. There are a lot of the designs that are currently there and obsolete and would probably have to be demolished. There is a flat area at the top of the skate park and closest to the parking lot that is used for the skate park parking. So a lot of people reached out to us on how we can incorporate this into the new skate park. Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions.
19. Nicholas Morganelli said thank you Mr. Chairman and asked about the price range to build the skate park based on the design companies and actually build it from start to finish.
20. Jeff Burke went over his Quincy, MA experience of the skate park and they paid \$ 10,000 for the design and all of the construction \$ 79,000 and they didn't get any grant funding, they paid it out of the city funding in the existing budget. He said in Westfield we would try to go out for the Tony Hawk Foundation that is a foundation that supports the public skate parks market in fracture also the park grant we are probably looking at around a half of million dollars and for a \$ 10,000 square foot lot of land with about \$55 a square foot based on his experience in Quincy for 10,000 square foot skate park was \$ 479,000 for construction.
21. Michael Tirrell said correct me if I'm wrong we are in the 6 to 6,500 square foot range in Westfield. He said that Jim Blascak was going to look into the footprint that is actually owned by the dept. and bring it back to the April meeting because it is based on the square footage
22. Jeff Burke said the designer is not only going to design the skate park but they are going to manage the entire project and they are going to have the qualifications to build that into the design and estimate that would require the skate park construction. They would help figure out the budget as well because that is the first thing they do with the city. Figure out the budget and then design within the budget and it could be a great opportunity for local businesses to have a name attached to it or donate material of concrete or other donations and this is something to look into.
23. Nicholas Morganelli informed commissioners that at some point when it comes to the city council for money to be allocated he gets to vote on it so he wanted to get a heads up as a side note and he loves the educational aspect of the skate park being close to the school and Boys and Girls Club. He brought up a park in Ohio and went over what they had.
24. Jeff Burke thanked him for the information and said there are so many opportunities for the education that can roll into this project. He went over Easthampton and that Senator John Velis donated \$ 10,000 to the skate park and they opened it up an account for businesses to donate tax deductible for their taxes at the end of the year. So that is something Westfield could look into.
25. Michael Tirrell thanked Jeff Burke and they talked about bringing in a designer and we are looking into the exact footprint or if there is additional parkland at the current location. Once this is all determined we can look at what the design is going to look like from what Jeff Burke explained about the

designers. Then we can decide what the City can do and make it work. He explained we will do a follow up and bring it back to a meeting. He is asking for a vote of hiring a designer once the funds are obtained and be able to continue this process. We will have Jeff Burke come back on any further changes before we actually put the shovels in the ground.

26. Scott Hathaway said he just wants to make sure that this is maintenance friendly as possible if we get the new addition and we need more help maintaining because currently he only has four staff in his dept. and right now he is dealing with the Holcomb Park and he had asked Mark Cressotti if there is going to be maintenance involved and was assured there would be none and there is going to be a lot of maintenance and then you have the Rail Trail and he just wanted to voice his concerns.
27. Michael Tirrell asked about the skate park maintenance and Jeff Burke responded that we won't have grass around the existing footprint, maybe a trash can end recycling barrels. He does not see a lot of maintenance just every few years you might need to seal a few cracks if they come up as general concrete maintenance and he does not see that we need a construction company to come in and fix cracks. Just checking that it doesn't get any big gaps in the concrete and become dangerous outside of that it will be a normal maintenance emptying trash and recycle bins.
28. Douglas Morash had a question if any of the funding could come from the Community Preservation Act funds or is the money have to be separate.
29. Jeff Burke responded that it is a good question and that in the City of Easthampton they were awarded \$ 40,000 from the CPA Committee for the design, construction and document fees.
30. Douglas Morash asked Michael Tirrell if Jeff Burke and whoever is helping him would go in front of the CPA members separately and then come back to the commission or how this request would work.
31. He explained the two tracks kind of run together and then we figure out money potentially comes from the CPA funds verses the city budget.
32. Michael Tirrell explained he would be part of the process working with Jeff Burke gathering the funding procuring and go in front of the CPA group to see if we can secure funding or whatever portion of the project that has gone before we are able to move forward. He asked if anyone else had any questions for Jeff Burke.
33. Jane DeBarbieri asked where the skate park is located in Easthampton and Jeff Burke explained the area is not a lot of open space it is next to city hall and in back is a parking lot behind the police station. He said its kind of a funky footprint they worked with a designer and they are really excited about it being downtown of Easthampton with a nice view of Mt. Tom and two ponds right there. Jane DeBarbieri said to let us know when that is completed she would like to visit.

Michael Tirrell called out each commissioner for a roll call vote called for a motion to move forward with this Skate Park process and working through the design phase as it was presented by Jeff Burke and when funds are available. Motion made by Kenneth Magarian to move forward with the Skate park as presented by Jeff Burke, motion seconded by Jane De Barbieri. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes.

All in favor. Motion passed.

34. Jeff Burke asked about the next step and Michael Tirrell said that he will check with Peter Miller and start off with the designer list and figure out the rest in terms of funding.

35. Kenneth Magarian asked Jeff Burke the size of the skate park in Easthampton and he responded between 8,000 to 10,000 square feet. Michael Tirrell thanked Jeff Burke for attending and will keep him updated.
36. Michael Tirrell is looking for someone to sign schedule of bills as a backup designated board member per authorization form, we have Vincent Olinski as the designated board member and asked him to elaborate on the responsibility and duties.
37. Vincent Olinski said he would be happy to continue as the designated board member and explained duties, you go to the office and review schedules and if you have any questions you get the answer right there. You just sign off on them. It is convenient for him because he lives a quarter mile up from the office and Bob lived off of Western Ave. it was easy for both of us to alternate and he has no problem continuing and it is always good to have a backup person. He said ninety-nine percent of the time he can sign the schedules.
38. Michael Tirrell asked if anyone wanted to serve as the backup designated board member and no one responded. He mentioned that he drives by the office every day if needed he can stop in to sign schedules.

Michael Tirrell called out each commissioner for a roll call as himself since no one responded to serve as back up board member to sign schedule of bills. Motion made by Sara Unger to nominate and approve Michael Tirrell as back up designated board member to sign schedule of bills as presented motion seconded by Douglas Morash.. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olinski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes. All in favor. Motion passed.

39. Michael Tirrell and Scott LaBombard discussed renaming a field at Whitney Playground and he said that Scott LaBombard and himself talked about this for a while now and kicked around what to do in honor of Bob Veronesi and went over the details of his forty plus years he served on the commission, umpiring the softball games at Whitney field and what they came up with is naming the first field on the right entering Whitney Playground after Bob and calling it "Chico Field" in honor of him. They reviewed the charter process for naming fields and since the commission is under control of that field it would be sent to City Council from the commission or given body for consideration and the city council subcommittee members will bring it forward to City Council.
40. Scott LaBombard said he knows a lot of the guys that played softball and a few teams texted him and they were concerned and sympathetic and the men and women softball and baseball teams think it is a great honor for all that Bob Veronesi did to name a field after him.
41. Michael Tirrell responded that Bob touched a lot of people lives over the years and the work he did as a commissioner and it is a great gesture to be able to give him this honor and obviously at some point we would have a dedication at Whitey Playground and invite his wife and family and have a plaque or stone. He asked Nicholas Morganelli as our liaison to bring it forward as he talked to Bridgette Matthew -Kane as well and she is in support.
42. Nicholas Morganelli said he could not remember the details of voting a field name but it will be brought forth to a subcommittee and then to city council. He will bring it up at the next meeting as the liaison.
43. Sara Unger responded that we are just naming a field not the park itself correct.

44. Michael Tirrell said yes just a naming a field at Whitney field one calling it 'Chico Field'

Michael Tirrell called out each commissioner for a roll call vote of naming field one at Whitney playground after Robert Veronesi and calling it "Chico Field" Motion made by Douglas Morash naming field one at Whitney playground the first field to the right naming it "Chico Field" as presented motion seconded by Scott LaBombard. Roll call vote as follows: Sara Unger yes, Jane DeBarbieri yes, Vincent Olin-ski yes, Michael Tirrell yes, Douglas Morash yes, Kenneth Magarian yes and Scott LaBombard yes. All in favor. Motion passed.

45. Kenneth Magarian mentioned that if Karen Veronesi his wife does not have a problem naming the field after him then we should check first and find out the best and appropriate way as far as he is concerned. Michael Tirrell responded that most people don't know his real name they know Bob Veronesi as "Chico" Commissioner agreed and Vincent Olinski will contact his wife.

Schedule of Bills-Vincent Olinski (emailed) Michael Tirrell asked if anyone had any questions for Vincent on the schedules. Vincent Olinski responded there were only a few.

#### Reports-(Emailed)

1. Scott Hathaway went over his report. He stated a shed being built at old Irrigation hut at Bullens field and the bollards at Park Square the whole backside was ripped out by a vehicle. He approached former Mayor Sullivan about taking them down because people trip on the chain to cut across the grass and don't use the sidewalk. To him the chain signifies 'Stay out of the park' chains are not inviting you in and he would like to remove them. He went over the chain details. He said instead of replacing them all the time we just remove the chains. The bollards that keep getting damaged by vehicles the guy that use to fix them or replace them is now out of business. He has spoken to Fran Cain about removing them and it was his idea to begin with because we are constantly fixing them, replacing them and installing new ones and it has become a maintenance issue. He said he watched people walk around that area and climbing over and he wanted to bring that concern to the commission.
2. Michael Tirrell said he would visit that area because he has a hard time picturing the bollards and chains but if they are constantly getting destroyed he is certainly open to the idea of removing them if it will look better aseptically.
3. Douglas Morash asked if they were put in to divide the traffic where people are standing back there or behind the fountain and stage and asked is it a safety reason that the commission needs to consider.
4. Scott Hathaway responded we have sidewalks and curbs throughout the city and people seem to be able to stay out of the roads. He said the commission can check it out and again those were installed by the Engineering dept. and that he has spoken to the Mayor McCabe about the problems and he added it to his agenda.
5. Vincent Olinski went over the Park Square chains and bollard design it was part of a decorative design that represented Westfield's history of back in the turn of the century people brought their horses and tied them to the hitching posts so that kind of where it came from. He said the commission questioned way back if it was a safety issue and obviously those bollards are not going to stop anyone from hitting anybody and it was a decorative type of thing so he told Scott he is going down the right avenue there. He said he does not believe it is a safety issue and we can talk about the aseptically look of it would it look better without them. He suggested we take them down for a while and people will think you can put them back up. His thoughts from over the years is why it was done that way.

6. Douglas Morash asked about the security camera if they got the truck driver who made the damage. Scott Hathaway said he believes so the camera faces in that direction.
7. Michael Tirrell read Jim Blascak's report that was emailed. Westfield united basketball is winding down a few divisions have finished playoffs and the rest finish tomorrow. The men's league had their first round of play offs yesterday and will finish in a few weeks. Brochures have been delivered and we are now taking signup for spring and summer. Summer positions are now posted day camp and leaders closes May 6.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 11 back at city hall at original times of 6:30 p.m.

Documents used:

Schedule of bills-Emailed

Permits - Emailed

Staff Reports-Emailed

Reviewed by Douglas Morash, Secretary of Commission

Typed organized by zoom video: Peggy Goralczyk, Head Clerk