

**Commission on Disability Meeting**  
Minutes for June 18th, 2019, 4:30PM  
Saxe Room  
Worcester Public Library, 3 Salem Sq.

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, Nancy Garr-Colzie, Fitzroy Hall, John Gleason, Dee Karuna, Joseph Prochilo, Lindsey Silva, Stephen Stolberg

**Members Absent:** Elizabeth Myska, Paul Keister

**Staff:** Jayna Turcek, Dawn E. Clark

**Guest:** Robert Antonelli, Worcester Parks Assistant Commissioner

**Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions**

Chairperson Bilotta called the meeting to order. Commissioners introduced themselves.

**Approval of May 21st, 2019 minutes**

Commissioner Garr-Colzie moved to approve the May 21<sup>st</sup>, minutes as corrected. Commissioner Bureau seconded. All approved.

**Parks Department Master Plans and Construction Updates \***

Mr. Robert Antonelli, Assistant Commissioner of Parks, provided the following information:

**Construction Updates**

**Mulcahy Field Building Improvements – Fall 2019**

Construction work has been awarded to renovate the interior and exterior of the building at Mulcahy Field making the building completely accessible: restroom, entrances etc. Project should begin in the next two weeks and be completed in the Fall.

**Betty Price Playground-Summer 2019**

This playground has been before the Commission a couple of times; located at the corner of Eastern Avenue and Laurel Street. The project is about 90% complete and will be open in the near future. There are a number of designs including a

playground with poured in place surface (rubber safety), accessible pathway and a lawn area.

### Blithewood Park Parking Lot

A number of years ago a new playground with poured in place surface was put in, this was well used and created the need for more parking. This year funds were used to renovate the parking lot with entrance on Blithewood Avenue. Work will include drainage and accessible parking. The accessible walkway will connect with the new parking being developed.

### Crompton Park Basketball Courts

This is out to bid and is a renovation of the Bob Cousey Court. There will be a second court and will be known as the Bob Cousey Courts. Overhead lighting will be extended to this second court. There will be walkway upgrades so they will be accessible to the building. There will be another entrance to make the park easier to navigate. Other courts were developed/renovate in recent years. Upgrading security cameras and lighting along the pathway. There will be other amenities including a Bob Cousey kiosk and cleaning up along the fence along Harding Street.

### East Park Picnic Tables and Benches

With funds from CSX and in consultation with the Shrewsbury Street Business Association, five tables and 11 benches will replace those that were old, in disrepair and/or were not accessibly compliant. Umbrellas will go up on July 1<sup>st</sup> with the opening of the splash pad for the season.

### Farber Field Soccer Renovations – Spring 2021

This is an existing rectangular field location off of Mooreland Street and Camelot Drive. Renovations include full field synthetic turf, bleacher seating area, new accessible parking lot with HP parking, accessible walkways and lighting as well as sports lighting. This will allow the use of this park from March to November/December.

### Green Hill Park – Renovations to World War I Memorial

There have been significant issues with the contractor of this project with the result of not being open on the centennial. The plan is to have the memorial open for Veteran's Day this year. There is an addition of two accessible parking spaces on the side of the parkway. The flagstone walkway is being replaced with accessible

walkway to the site. There will be steel posts with the names of 400 plus Worcester residents who lost their lives in WWI. Originally a tree was planted for each of these individuals and over time almost a third has deteriorated. Working with the Greenhill Association trees will be planted to replace those lost.

#### Hadwen Park Phase I – Summer 2019

Almost ready to open 95% completed, includes a basketball court, playground (poured in place surface) and vista/boardwalk and upgrades to the parking lot. This part of the park is fully accessible.

#### Hadwen Park Phase 2 – Summer 2019

Beginning soon will include the accessible boardwalk out to the vista moving toward opening up the vista to include the wetlands view. The Master Plan is to get to Knox Street with accessible route, not there yet.

#### Holmes Field

This field has been closed longer than anticipated due to challenges with the contractor not meeting specifications. Mr. Antonelli explained if the contractor was not held responsible for the required work agreed to, then the City would be responsible for the work. As a result the field has been closed. There is a portion of the accessible walkway going to the second tier that does not meet the specs. When the park staff did the final inspection the grade was over 5% to 6% and did not meet the contractual specs. Hopefully this site will be open soon. Holmes field include two tennis courts, and a playground. Anticipate will be opened in the next month.

#### Institute Park – Pathways and Trails – Fall 2020

New project going out to bid includes pathways, trails, sports field renovations, fencing renovations and a new firefighter memorial for those who have passed away in the line of duty. Walkway will start on Grove Street swing around behind the sports field and go into a boardwalk system which will exit out onto Park Ave. where WPI housing is. The walkway will be fully accessible and the sports will have a synthetic surface. Pathway will be lit from end to end. Plan is to keep the walkway year round.

There is no plan at this time to drain the pond for sediment. Commission member raised concern about whether the water was tested for harmful heavy metal contamination. There will not be access to the water.

A general question was asked if DPW tests soil give that Worcester was an industrial community. Mr. Antonelli explained it depended on the site and gave the example of testing they did at the Coes pond and playground site due to former industry on the site.

### South Worcester Playground – Phases 1 & 2 – Summer 2019

New parking lot and new playground and upgrade the second playground. New ramp going in to the front (Field side) of building. Doing a review of the inside of the building. These phases are being done concurrently.

### **Design Updates**

Farber Field-Renovations to Ex Support Building (No Slide)

South Worcester - Renovations to Ex Support Building (No Slide)

Coes Pond Parking Lot Expansion

Building a new 32 space parking lot to compliment the 26 parking lot. Right now there are 4 HP spaces (10% which is over requirement. Commission recommends one more HP space. The resources to build a parking garage are not there.

### Coes Pond Beach

The proposal is to add HP parking. Wetlands prevent going further for parking. Again the water quality issue was raised. Testing is done on a site by site decision. The state of Worcester Lakes is on-line. If there are other questions, the city's aquatic staff or DEP could respond. A couple of years ago the City Manager had DPW set aside funds and resources to make sure the parks were safe related to water safety.

Member of the public asked about Bell Pond Beach on Belmont Street. Testing is done to assure safety. Life Guards will be on duty from July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 25<sup>th</sup>, seven days a week from 12noon to 7:00pm. On REC Earth Day, parks dept. staff and volunteers cleaned up the edge of the pond. Parks is looking to expand the matting system to Bell Pond this year if the product comes in on time. The Beach chair will not be there because it does not fit into the building that would provide security. As facilities are upgraded the door width and storage space will be included. The trail goes to East Park. Signage is currently being put in place.

Commission member asked about snack bars where children use swimming resources. The restrooms at Crompton pool and 3 splash pads: Greenwood, East and Coes Pond have been renovated. Restrooms at Shore Park and Binenda Park are workable and need to be updated. There are no snack shacks in operation because of staffing, spoilage and cash handling issues. It is better to use food trucks.

### Coes Reservoir - Columbus Park Trail

Application has been made to the State of Massachusetts and the National Parks Service for a fully accessible trail and boardwalk beginning at Coes Pond ending around North Circuit Ave. and depending on funds a small parking lot at North Circuit Ave. Hopefully the City will hear about receipt of the grant next Fall and begin construction next Spring. There will be a wetland area where an education opportunity can take place, a fishing pier and some vista point to see the pond. This pond is not generally stocked, but may be if there is an excess of fish available. There may be sunfish, some bass and other fish common to Worcester's ponds. The state does the stocking.

### **Master Plan Updates**

#### Open Space and Recreation Master Plan

This plan is due in December and is being worked on now. The plan is to bring this Plan to the Commission in the Fall.

#### Mulcahy Field Master Plan

This is a revised master plan. The Little League that was at this field has folded and merges with another. Currently there is a basketball court, a tennis court and a pickle ball court. The new items include a playground instead of a square shape, a rectangular field and a new baseball field. Plans also include cleaning up the property line and address the drainage issues as well as work on the parking lot. This Master plan will go to the Parks Commission next Thursday and on to City Council hopefully in July. Then it will be on the website.

A commissioner suggested with the elderly population in Worcester and with space here it would be good to have two or three pickle ball courts. Parks Dept. worked with the school across the street and the neighborhood, mostly elders. These were the amenities they decided on with that process. There are currently two pickle ball courts on public land both at Holmes Field. As designs move forward there may be

other pickle ball courts installed. The Commissioner encouraged that the Parks Dept. consider adding pickle ball courts in the parks.

The plan is to have cameras installed in all sites tied into the crime dept. at the Worcester Police Department. Lighting is also installed in the parks. There is park security that do to sites based on need and Mr. Antonelli has had direct contact with the police whom he meets with on a weekly basis to discuss issues, concerns, events etc. So there are multiple ways park security is being addressed. Blue light poles for calls are possible as technology advances to cover a large area. This is on the Parks Dept. radar to confer with the police. The Park Dept. works with the City Manager's Quality of Life Team who would be contacted if someone was in the parks who might need this kind of assistance.

### **Planning for July 26 ADA anniversary social event**

The event is planned for Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> 5-7pm at City Hall plaza above the garage. Ideas at this time include art work, refreshments, speakers etc. Question: should we do an artist's call? We would like some Commissioners volunteer to speak. Commission members volunteered to assist with tasks and planning.

### **Planning for school committee candidates forum (August 29<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm)**

Chairman Bilotta asked Commissioners to think about questions they would like to ask the candidate in advance of the next meeting.

### **Notice of summer City Hall tours for persons with disabilities and allies**

The Summer Thursday City Hall Tours for People with Disabilities & Their Allies have been booked as follows:

We will begin in Esther Howland Chamber at 10AM and end about noon. Docents are from Preservation Worcester

June 27<sup>th</sup> – Arabic Elder Group from the Senior Center

July 11<sup>th</sup> - Seven Hills Worcester Day Habilitation Program and Pre-ets  
(Transitional Students)

July 25<sup>th</sup> - Visually Impaired People (Begin in Front of City Hall)  
(Docent not Preservation Worcester)

August 1<sup>st</sup> - Seven Hills Aspire Program

August 8<sup>th</sup> – Deaf (Begin in front of City Hall)

All tour participants are invited to enjoy the “Out to Lunch Program with Concert” in the Common after the Tour.

**Review of AAB notices and applications: No city properties**

**Public Request**

A member of the public inquired about the accessibility of Coney Island restroom on Southbridge Street, Worcester

**Variance**

- 16 Salisbury Street

**Notice of Hearing**

- 155 Ararat Street, Docket #V19 035
- 332 Main Street, Docket #V19 060

**Decision of the Board**

- 126 Water Street, Docket #V18 117
- 322 Main Street, Docket #V19 060

**Notice: Plan review for accessibility of the Red Sox stadium postponed until late summer/early fall**

**Member of the Public asked about Accessible Transportation**

Commission is working with a number of groups to ensure there are wheelchair accessible and affordable transportation options in the city. The Chairperson encouraged people to speak to their City Councilors so they will know the issues and add their support to this goal.

**Announcements:**

- WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting  
**June 26<sup>th</sup>**, 2019, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled) **Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>**, 4:00 – 5:30pm, YWCA, Members Lounge
- Film screening of Lives Worth Living, at The Worcester Pop Up, 20 Franklin St, **June 22<sup>nd</sup>**, 12noon
- Next Commission on Disability meeting: **July 16<sup>th</sup>**, 4:30pm

- ADA Anniversary Social **July 24<sup>th</sup>**, 5-7pm Worcester City Hall.  
Contact [disabilities@worcesterma.gov](mailto:disabilities@worcesterma.gov)
- Next Commission on Disability meeting: July 16<sup>th</sup> 4:30 – 6:30pm, Levi Lincoln Chamber

**Adjournment:**

Adjourned – 6:18pm

\*Material can be viewed at the Office of Human Rights & Disabilities during normal business hours.