



## **PARKS COMMISSION AGENDA**

**Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 5:30 PM**

1. Approval of Minutes:
  - a) January 11, 2022
2. Old Business
  - a) Urban Tree Program Grant Application Update
3. New Business
  - a) [Backyard Buffer Tree Giveaway](#)
  - b) Clean-Up Day
  - c) Spring Celebration
  - d) Spring Just Walk
4. Berlin Youth Program Update
5. Other

Upcoming Meeting/Event Schedule:

Saturday, April 9, 2022 – Backyard Buffer Tree Giveaway

Saturday, April 16, 2022 – Spring Celebration

Saturday, April 23, 2022 – Clean-Up Day (Take Pride in Berlin Week Sat., April 16-Sat., April 23)

Tuesday, May 3, 2022

Saturday, May 7, 2022 – Spring Color (?) Walk

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

Tuesday, August 2, 2022 – National Night Out

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Friday OR Saturday, November 4 OR 5, 2022 – Fall Walk

MINUTES – PARKS COMMISSION  
January 11, 2022

The meeting of the Parks Commission for Tuesday, January 11, 2022 (rescheduled from January 4, 2022) was called to order at 5:30 PM. This meeting was held via Zoom and live streamed to Facebook.

Parks Commission members present were Mike Wiley, Patricia Dufendach, Sarah Hooper, and Bruce Hyder as well as Deputy Town Administrator Mary Bohlen. Also present was Public Works Superintendent Jimmy Charles. Laura Stearns had notified Ms. Bohlen that she would not be present.

Mr. Wiley moved to approve the minutes of September 7, 2021; Ms. Dufendach seconded, and approval was unanimous. Ms. Hooper moved to approve the minutes of September 28, 2021; Mr. Hyder seconded, and approval was unanimous. Mr. Wiley moved to approve the minutes of November 2, 2021; Ms. Dufendach seconded, and approval was unanimous.

Ms. Bohlen brought the Commission's attention to the survey results from the November 5, 2021 Glow Walk as provided by the Worcester Health Department. The event was very well received; the primary suggested improvement was to start later in the evening. Ms. Bohlen noted that a spring walk was currently planned and would be discussed at a later date.

Mr. Tony Weeg of We Heart Berlin appeared before the Commission to discuss several items. The first was to make Love Day in Henry Park an annual event and asked what the next steps would be. Ms. Bohlen noted that requesting the support of the Parks Commission was the appropriate starting point. Mr. Weeg noted the success of the event held earlier in 2021 and indicated that the same level of Town support would be requested, which included clean-up before and after, police presence and other basic Town services as applicable to most events. Ms. Bohlen asked if Mr. Weeg had spoken to Councilmember Shaneka Nichols who had tried to plan an Arts Festival in Henry Park. Mr. Weeg indicated that he envisioned a Flower Street Festival that encompassed multiple functions and cultural attractions. Ms. Bohlen indicated that if the Parks Commission moved to support the event, the next step would be for him to work with Ms. Wells in Economic Development and Councilmember Nichols to plan the event and go before the Mayor and Council for formal approval. Ms. Hooper moved to support the concept; Ms. Dufendach seconded, and approval was unanimous. Ms. Bohlen asked Mr. Charles if he had any questions or concerns and he indicated that he did not anticipate any particular concerns.

Mr. Weeg asked about the next steps for the Table Tennis project at Burbage Park – Ms. Bohlen noted that the agenda had already been set when Mr. Weeg requested to include this project. Mr. Weeg provided a conceptual drawing of the current design for the Table Tennis project and reviewed some of the changes that had been made since the original design was proposed. Mr. Charles noted a concern with the distance from the parking to the tables and noted that that area was an active driveway for Public Works and the Power Plant. Brief discussion followed. Discussion followed regarding the surfacing under the tables and Mr. Weeg indicated that he was favoring brick. Ms. Bohlen expressed concerns with long-term maintenance. Mr. Weeg asked what the next steps were. Ms. Bohlen noted that the Town was new to these types of "turnkey" projects being donated and was still working out the logistics. She indicated that she would discuss with the Town Administrator and follow up from there.

Mr. Weeg then initiated a discussion regarding a skate park. He indicated that We Heart Berlin had raised sufficient funds to engage with a company for design work. He asked what the steps would be to move forward. Ms. Bohlen noted that there were a couple of ways to approach the project: a) We Heart Berlin could act as a developer and engage a firm to do the preliminary work, with the understanding that, ultimately, the Mayor and Council could choose not to move forward with whatever those recommendations might be; or b) the Town could develop an RFP to begin the process. The Town's plan, as put forth when the Parks Commission presented the Annual Development Plan, was to engage a firm to do a feasibility study which would include not only examining suitable

locations, both within the corporate limits of the Town and in the immediate area, but also considering the surrounding neighborhoods' wants/needs/opinions in moving forward. Mr. Weeg indicated that he had already had a feasibility study done regarding the open field at Henry Park. Ms. Bohlen reiterated that the Mayor and Council would the study to consider multiple locations as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Weeg indicated that he had already done this work for the Henry Park location. Mr. Hyder indicated that he wished to see Heron Park considered. Ms. Dufendach noted that other projects, including a Tindley project and community center were under consideration for Flower Street. Ms. Bohlen reminded all that the Town had not committed to any specific location for a Community Center.

Mr. Weeg indicated that he felt it was time to figure out where to put a skate park. Ms. Bohlen reminded all that the Town needed to develop an RFP to hire a company to come in and take a broad and objective look at the Town as a whole to consider not just whether a location was available, but it is an appropriate location. Mr. Weeg indicated that We Heart Berlin would be willing to pay for such a study and would like to see it move forward. Ms. Bohlen again indicated that accepting this type of donation was something the Town was still working out.

The Parks Commission thanked Mr. Weeg for coming to the meeting.

Ms. Bolen noted that Clean-Up day was scheduled for April 23, 2022, however, considering the ongoing Covid pandemic, it was still unsure if the event would be held.

Ms. Bohlen asked for a motion to participate in the Backyard Buffer Tree Giveaway once again. Ms. Dufendach moved to approve; Mr. Hyder seconded, and approval was unanimous.

Ms. Bohlen brought the Commission's attention to a map for the Urban Trees Grant Program and noted that the program was placing an emphasis on areas with low-income and joblessness. She noted that she would be attending a webinar in February to get more information about the grant program. Ms. Dufendach asked if the Town was part of the Tree City or Bee City programs; Ms. Bohlen indicated that Berlin was a Bee City, but she was not sure about Tree City.

The Worcester Youth Program quarterly report was reviewed.

Mr. Charles noted that Public Works and the Electric Department had started opening up the canopy at Decatur Park by trimming lower tree limbs. This project was likely on hold for the time being due to weather.

Ms. Dufendach asked about the status of the repairs on the pathway. Ms. Bohlen noted that that contract award was on the agenda for the Mayor and Council meeting on January 24, 2022, however, it was unknown when it might start as weather was also a consideration for paving.

Ms. Bohlen noted that she and Mr. Charles would be discussing budgeting considerations for FY23 as the Town was starting its budget process.

Ms. Dufendach moved to adjourn; Mr. Hyder seconded, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary T. Bohlen  
Deputy Town Administrator  
Liaison to the Parks Commission