

**Sunset Lake Commission  
January 16, 2019  
Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Notice of Requirements:** The notice requirements of C. 231, P.L. 1975, have been met by transmitting the notice of Regular Meeting to the Commissioner's official, posting the notice where required and filing a copy of the notice with the Commission Clerk.

**ROLL CALL:**

- Patrick Reihing, Chair
- Eileen Chapman, City Council Liaison
- Bill McClave, Superintendent of Public Works
- Jaimee Nadell, Secretary
- Mark Ax, Treasurer
- Christopher Avallone
- Chester Boles

**Absent:**

- Sue Henderson
- **Motion approved to move New Business to the beginning of our agenda in order to allow the public to provide their input to T & M Engineers.**
- **T & M Engineers & Public Input for Master Plan of Lake & Park, Introduction**
  - Christine Ballard, Jason Harzold & Greg Rishel (landscape architect) of T & M Associates were all present to field public input for creation of a Master Plan for Sunset Lake & Sunset Park.
  - T & M displayed a large scale overhead map of the Lake and Park (*Webb Street to Main Street between 5th and Sunset Avenues*)

- Greg Rishel began the discussion by asking whether the public would like the park to be used Actively or Passively (Majority voted for Passive Use)
- Patrick Reihing, Chair, said the Commission would like to understand the progression and phasing of projects. Jason Harzold responded that T & M wanted to identify the issues to be addressed first.
- **Public Identifying Issues/Problems with Lake & Park**
  - T & M asked what the public perceives to be the main issues/problems with the Lake & Park. All comments listed below came from public input.
  - Geese problem (*Brief discussion ensued about possible solutions including gates, an improve bulkhead and planted vegetation*)
    - It was mentioned that a vendor for the “geese police” has been effective but only visits intermittently. Wendi Glassman, of the Conservancy, asked that the City renew its contract with the vendor as it expired in November and the geese waste problem has gotten significantly worse since that time.
    - Tom Pavinski of the Environmental Shade Tree Commission said he oiled 67 geese eggs this year but mentioned that people still feed the geese.
  - The Lake is unhealthy and it is agreed that it must be dredged
    - Greg Rishel said the ideal depth is 3-4 feet. He also mentioned that a biodegradable dye could address the algae issue in the meantime.
    - Adding fountains was discussed but it was agreed it would not help with a lake this shallow.
    - A Midge problem was noted that was attributed to the lack of fish and proliferation of algae
  - Storm drains are flowing debris into the Lake and must be addressed
    - It was mentioned that in Australia catchers for storm drains are used that can be cleaned out monthly
    - It was recommended that the water drains be evaluated as some are damaged and are not filtering out pollutants properly
  - The Westerly end of the Lake collects storm water due to depressions. In the warm weather, it attracts mosquitos. The Lake was larger in older maps, was filled in and now appears to have sunk
    - Jason Harzold responded that a grading, seeding and mulching exercise might solve the ponding issue in the north western corner of the Park
    - He further explained that the depressed land cannot be filled by the dredging of the Lake because it contains too much decaying biological material and needs to be dried out and tested which can be expensive.
  - Sweetgum trees were noted as growing in the swampy area of the park.

- The Park lacks enough benches (picnic table were also mentioned) and walkways and it was recommended that the current asphalt walkway be removed as it is a tripping hazard.
  - It was requested that the “No Loitering” signed be removed
  - The bulkheads around the Lake and their various states of disrepair were discussed at length. It was agreed that they need to be repaired or reinforced because they create a dangerous and sharp decline
  - Deputy Mayor Amy Quinn discussed the inclusion of some lighting as well as reduction of the tree canopy on the Westerly portion of the Park so that people could gather there and enjoy it.
  - Overwhelmingly no one voted for designated sports fields. An area designated for sports generally was mentioned but there was a concern raised regarding the effect on the grass.
  - Several agreed that there are not enough receptacles and it was suggested that recycling and garbage cans be placed side by side throughout the Park.
  - Overwhelmingly no one voted to have kayaks or boats on the Lake.
  - It was mentioned that liquor bottles are found throughout the western end of the Park. The concern is that the area is likely dark and has a large tree canopy so by including lights and cutting back tree coverage, the issue will likely be addressed.
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- **Public Identifying “Wants” for the Lake & Park**
    - Restoration of the grand fountain at the eastern end of the Lake
    - Jogging path around the Park
    - Whatever changes are made to the Lake and Park, it should be a smooth transition aesthetically speaking between the eastern end and Atlantic Square Park/Bradley Park
    - Restoration of St. John’s Island and possibly a footbridge between the Island and the southwest corner of the Lake which would be ADA accessible (the current stair entrance is not)
      - Can look at historical photos in the library archives and consult with the Historical Society for restoration. Chester Boles of the Commission will send photos of his postcard collection of the Lake.
    - Restoration of the Veteran’s Memorial at the southeastern end of the Lake.
    - It was suggested that training and maintenance for the Department of Public Works be included as a recommendation in the Master Plan so that the work done doesn’t go into disrepair. An entirely separate Parks and Recreation Department was also suggested, but that is something that would have to be created by the City.

- Joe Grillo, member of the Board of Education and Sunset Lake Conservancy, suggested programming and recreation to get schoolchildren involved
  - Signage in the Park, possibly historical photos and information about the wildlife plant life in the Park
  - Rain gardens were suggested on the both the southeast and northeast corners of the Lake
  - Art was recommended, perhaps some sculptures, something multi-purpose
    - Greg Rishel responded that there are liability concerns if the “art” can be used so probably best to not allow that
  - Ernest Mignoli said that he felt that APTV should have been present to record the meeting and felt that Robert’s Rules of Order should have been followed.
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- **Suggestions by T & M for the Lake & Park**
    - Pedestrian connectivity is an issue so they would recommend a route around the park and more walkways within the park to allow access
    - Suggestion of a shaded structure/Pergola potentially in the Plaza of the Veteran’s Memorial was met with some resistance. Jason Harzold suggested that the original plans be obtained in order to preserve the integrity of the Memorial. Restoration of the fountain at the Memorial should also be included.
    - A bandshell on the western end of the Park for events was discussed. Wendi Glassman, of the Conservancy, said she was concerned that anything taller than a couple of feet would obstruct the 360 view of the Park’s corridors. She said that she did not feel that Main Street traffic currently created a noise problem within the Park, likely because the trees and bushes dampen the noise. She suggested that a roofed, but open-sided, gazebo be used as a stage both in the Park between Bond and Main and on St. John’s Island.
    - A living shoreline is possible but would require dredging and a deeper water table. Therefore, repair/replacement/creation of the bulkhead is necessary.
    - The geese problem will be combatted once a bulkhead and living shoreline are in place. It was suggested that perhaps the wooden bulkheads around St. John’s Island and some northern portions of the Lake be inspected to determine their condition as there was some disagreement.
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- **Prioritization of Issues and Next Steps**
    - At the conclusion of the meeting, T & M took a vote on which issue was most important to everyone. The top results were as follows: *Body of Water/Dredging, Walkways, St. John’s Island Restoration* and *Grading Between Bond & Main*

- T & M said that the second phase of the project would be review of their draft plan which they believe they will take six (6) weeks and would be ready for the Commission's March meeting.

**- Motion to Adjourn**