

May 22nd, 2019
Clinton Parks & Recreation Meeting Minutes
4:30pm
Clinton Parks & Recreation Building
560 High St.

Called to order: 4:33pm

Attendance: Ed Verrier, Matt Kobus, Yoanna Osborne, John Baird, Jodi Breidel

Ed motioned to enter Exec. Session @ 4:34, Matt 2nd, all in favor

1st Interview - Rosa Kairit 4:35 – 5:20pm

1) Why do you want the position? (General Opening Question) - On the cusp of big change, can do more for the community. Can properly manage both budgets (operating & revolving), be frugal & creative without having to deal with surprises. Member of MPRA 1.5 yrs., National organization will be this July.

2) Describe the most difficult situation (Jodi) – Navigating the two jobs at once. Strive to make sure things are correct. Sharing ideas previously, others were sensitive to change but it resulted in a better work environment. Majority of consumers are repeat users, so found new experiences to offer new field trips.

Marketing background - social media aspect; needs to be easy for parents! Mostly women in her age group register, so seemingly easy and less hindrances. Putting out all information at once: branding, logo, visible, repeatable, event badges, iconic colors.

Graphics background & presentation of info – 90% time in front of computer, 10% putting plans into action. Systems & software – better ways to handle what we are doing overall.

3) Three Top Needs you would tackle? (Jodi)

- a. Job Responsibilities to Specific Roles – Redefine and divide more evenly. Provide buffer between the public and Director. Community Partnerships were one-sided. Both roles are responsible for results. Currently creating a Training Manual for Seasonal Help – instead of repeating verbal training & investing extra valuable time.
- b. Not enough Adult or Sensory Programming
- c. Attend to Current Programming - too many line items – funds are pigeon-holed to specific programs we don't use which create financial restrictions; financial simplification needed.

- 4) Describe a recreation idea you created and brought to fruition plus your greatest challenge in doing so – (Matt)

The candidate stated that she had not created any programs herself although she had worked on some with the previous Director and she mentioned the following:

- Intro to Basic Computer Skills for Adults – Fall Course
- Farm to Table Fresh Cooking Class - Sensory Offering
- Self Defense Class for Women – Paladin Gym
- Let's Get Cooking! – pick one appliance

- 5) Proudest Achievements (Ed) – Being Interim Director (Spring is the busiest season for P&R); building culture for CIT's to return for repeatable involvement (more stakeholders). Teaching Untrained Seasonal Staff (Recreation Coordinator & Marketing Intern).

- 6) What specific improvements can you tell us about? (John) –
- a. Splash Pad Renovation - outdated equipment replaced with more interactive ones, rather artsy only.
 - b. Carlisle Park – artistically serene park (i.e., yoga, tai chi), visionary plan for that space, art studios and outdoor structures

- 7) Grant Writing Experience (Yoanna)?
- a. Walmart – applied
 - b. Chess Tables – Philbin Memorial Park
 - c. Baseball for Tomorrow – assisted
 - d. Open Space Recreation Plan – 2 grants (pending)?
 - e. Splash Pad - upcoming

- 8) Program Participation – Public Feedback ? (Jodi)

Trained to use certain companies (i.e., \$72/toddler for micro soccer), underutilizing local, inexpensive community members.

Top 3 Programs?? Ask public via survey what programs they want; seeking collaborations within community (i.e., non-duplicative efforts), such as combining resources with other groups (Deb Goodsell – Sr. Ctr., Laura Taylor – Early Childhood Resource Ctr., Marie Mueller – Bigelow Library).

- 1.) Great example: Red Sox Bus Trip became a luxury bus trip without cost of one.
- 2.) Discover Clinton – “Sidewalk Festival” – CP&R was invited to participate, had pulled back for a time and now things are back up and running and relationships are reconnected.

- 3.) In charge of office management at time of security improvements; took the initiative to create measures that didn't exist. (Ex.: locked access, dummy codes, increased rental deposits, staff badges & CORI checks). (She has tremendous natural instinct for order, work flow and organization).
- 9) Please explain how you have been saving the department money – specifically creating a new revenue stream among Spanish-speaking residents who are increasingly renting our facilities as indicated on your resume. (Yoanna)
Culturally, Hispanic families socialize longer than usual and invite larger crowds to their gatherings. Word of mouth advertising spreads quickly that our facility is available for a reasonable price and we get more bookings from these certain events that keep bringing repeat business from those who want to deal with Rosa because she can interface with them due to the language barrier. (Other examples: creating Amazon account, checking existing inventory instead of just ordering new supplies, changed how we market and price events, etc.)
- 10) Does your incomplete college degree leave you deficient in any way? (Yoanna)
Three years of college plus equivalent work experience (3yrs. P&R; 7 yrs. management experience). Professional way she writes and speaks with peers; has created an employee culture as a supervisor (previously & currently). Subordinates do better overall once they know they are trained, invested in dept. goals; motivation to keep supervisor pleased and earn her trust.

Immediate Deliberation:

Some commissioners felt she built a collaborative environment, definitely has strong organizational skill sets and significant municipal relationships established as well as strong ties in the community with other organizations.

Some commissioners felt she didn't provide a strong answer about her programming history or confidence in a visionary sense. Also, a weak answer about the most difficult situation being navigating two jobs at once. Some felt that this doesn't mean it is easy to execute these tasks under these conditions and believe that the department office is constantly busy and full of interruptions whether on the phone, flurries of emails, walk-ins or meetings plus add in all of the online tasks that must be done with accuracy.

Some commissioners also felt that the person who does this job has to be able to function in this frenetic environment. It is the nature of the job and the constant demands of the public that have come to expect from the department because we offer so much programming currently.

2nd Interview – John Green 5:30 – 6:15pm

- 1) Why do you want the position? (General Opening Question) – 15 year resident in Clinton; actively involved in sports organizations; has worked in two different industries – recreation & construction; would like to finish his career in town he lives in and give back to his own community.

Sports & Recreation background – mainly tennis; traveled, ran clubs and tennis camps; managed every aspect of the job. Left after 22 years in tennis field due to injury. Construction background – Current company focuses on court surfaces; previous company dealt with modular construction spaces; out of work from July to Dec. 2018, industry related layoff.

- 2) Describe your schedule that you had at work today – (Ed) Arrive at office by 6:15am. Meet with four supervisors by 6:30am and go over work for the day. Prepare two proposals for upcoming projects into mid-morning. Met with vendors to do two walkthroughs. Left early enough to return from the city for interview this evening.

- 3) What tempted you to come in our direction as a department given the rather significant reduction in compensation? – (Yoanna) The intrinsic value for him is in being located right here in town. He currently commutes to Watertown daily but also wants to provide his experience locally and dedicate his expertise to efforts that directly affect the people he shares life with here. He also cares about how the department is perceived and wishes to search out issues/problems that need to be solved.

- 4) Commentary: Many reasons people change jobs and opportunity for department growth (i.e., Participation, Self-support, Activities, Recreation Managers, Sports Programs).

We need a voice, a “face” to build trust and rapport with community members and residents. Clinton Area Little League is a different thing though. Contractors reached out and made large donations to upgrade that field for a singular purpose.

- 5) Can you identify what barriers there are to getting things done? (not sure about wording on this question) – (Matt)?? With town politics, things can take longer to accomplish than in the private sector. Ramp up speed is crucial. Ask questions like, “How can we fund something?” Look for revenue to fund from within a program first. Then see what fundraisers are available. New Facilities

- Dept. – see it more as an opportunity than a barrier; we are partners; working with school departments even though historically, parks & rec have been at odds.
- 6) Rockbestos – Suprenant Commercial Property is laying dormant. Do you see any potential for recreation use at this location? – (Ed) First it is critical to determine if there is a recreation specific use for the property or if other development expectations are already earmarked there. It would be ideal to relocate the skateboard park there, for instance, but in the event that it isn't available, we should still explore if there are other buildings available for afterschool programs that can be used as tax write-offs for certain businesses or property owners.
- 7) What would be your top 3 priorities? - (Jodi)
- a. Marketing to the Community – inform, don't know about programs (how do we publicize)? Rework what we have...
 - b. Programming – Youth / Adult Offerings – Health & Wellness, Social Interaction / Competitive Play / Senior Play / (Borrow from tennis ideas)
 - c. July 1st – have a Clear Plan – Communication with Superintendent of Schools; build relationships among key stakeholders in community
- 8) Please share a recreation plan you developed from start to finish – (Matt)
- a. Winter Clinics in Little League – saw players develop wide array of skills
 - b. Scholarship Bus Trip – for graduating seniors; traveled to Foxboro Stadium & Fenway Park
 - c. Jimmy Fund – Natl. Tennis Pros Entertainment; two 24hr. tennis funds
 - d. Cardio Tennis Programs – fitness program
- 9) Can you explain why you listed “Marketing” as your last selection on our value exercise sheet? - (John) It's certainly not unimportant, but in terms of executing the job, the other skills play a more profound role earlier on; if they are performed properly as a base, then that factor will naturally function better built on a strong foundation of the other values being solidly in place.
- 10) Would you be able to act with full impartiality toward the CALL board and agenda while representing the mission of the CP&R wholeheartedly? If so, what would that look like in word and deed? – (Yoanna) To start with, John said that he intended to present his resignation to CALL if he were to get the position and that he had already informed the CALL board of this decision when he applied. John said he wanted to remove any conflict of interest on his part in handling matters with the Little League if he is potentially chosen as the new director upfront. John also provided an example of how he was approached all the time by contractors about kick-backs and that it wouldn't be tolerated and word got out very quickly that he did not do business in that manner. He even went as far to

say that he wouldn't select those vendors moving forward even if they were cheaper. John set clear expectations with his vendors that the practice would not be tolerated, and any attempts would jeopardize future business dealings.

- 11) Clearly you are over qualified for this position, and we are somewhat concerned that you might not stay in this position. What are your overall career goals? – (Jodi) John mentioned that he will be turning 50 this year. He is not climbing the corporate ladder at this point and wants to be with his kids more. He would like to end his career here and serve a purpose at the same time. There is no plan to leave the area once he settles into this last phase. This is not a salary driven choice for him.

Immediate Deliberation:

Impressed with his wealth of skills over a long career. Clearly he has the ability to communicate a vision and lots of experience in front of boards and committees but lacks municipal background specifically. His construction experience may prove useful in future projects even though our department is moving away from that responsibility in particular and focusing more on a policy driven role now that Facilities Department is absorbing our Parks Staff.

His primary recreation sport experience centers on tennis, golf, soccer and baseball.

Would need ramp up time to build relationships with community partners that Rosa already has in place.

Administrative: 6:30pm (brief break and dinner brought in)

Jodi motioned to accept minutes with edit (John Baird needed to be added to attendance) from 4/8/19 in Exec. Session, Matt 2nd, all in favor.

Deliberation: 6:45pm

General Discussion:

Here are the results for the two candidates as they answered the Strengths Exercise according to how they prioritized the values for themselves (some extra comments recorded).

John Green

1. Staff Management
2. Community Engagement

Rosa Kairit

1. Time Management - evokes efficiency
2. Fiscal Responsibility - rely less on town funds

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 3. Time Management | 3. Staff Management - efficient for dept. |
| 4. Grant Writing | 4. Grant Writing |
| 5. Recreation | 5. Recreation |
| 6. Fiscal Responsibility | 6. Parks |
| 7. Parks | 7. Community Engagement |
| 8. Marketing | 8. Marketing |

Each of the recommendation letters for each candidate were read as well as the results from contacting references for each one (see separate files attached).

In general, both individuals had glowing, consistent recommendations from everyone we contacted and those that wrote in on their behalf.

There is no question that both Rosa and John are capable of performing the tasks at hand: staff management, budgeting, grant writing, marketing and program development. The major difference of opinion is concerning which person is equipped to take the department to the next level now that we are at a crossroads with the parks staff effectively being removed from our jurisdiction and the recreation portion of the department being reconfigured.

There is a strong case to go with John because of his vast experience in two different industries but also since he has had a variety of programming exposure and execution under his belt. However, he currently is in the construction field, not recreation, and he hasn't had to function in the kind of office environment that we currently operate under. It is a very busy place with lots of interruptions where the public come and go freely. A traditional office setting it is not, and then there is the introduction of Summer Playground and many event-driven functions that the department runs versus a project management setting that John might be more used to in his recent career path. Some commissioners didn't sense he would be a good fit with the current workload as it is very heavily computer-centric with lots of hours spent maintaining electronic records, budget information, contract materials, social media and email management amidst the learning curve to nurture community relationships, etc.

Other commissioners were not confident that Rosa demonstrated a strong handle on programming development. Emily provided a strong endorsement in her letter, but Rosa said she hadn't developed any new programs of her own. There was a case made also that her being in the Interim Director position was only because we placed her there and that she didn't have previous experience elsewhere in a role like that. Some commissioners felt she clearly had managerial experience that qualified as a transferrable skill set which she pulls from currently and has used in the past 6 weeks to run this department once Emily left everything in Rosa's hands. Some also felt she has been discovering a lot of loose ends administratively speaking which she has been unraveling and fixing internally as she moves along to re-establish the foundation of the department's proper footing.

Another theory was that retaining both candidates would be ideal, like having the "Dream Team" as such. With John's ability to represent the department at the helm and

carve new territory while Rosa does her electronic wizardry as such, maintaining all of the current community relationships as John gets acclimated, we can hardly go wrong. It would be an ideal world for CP&R. Some commissioners feared that in awarding John the director position with all of its perks and responsibility, we would be assuming that Rosa would be willing to remain and work under him after being trained to run the department which is now suited to focus on her specialty: recreation. It was pointed out that Rosa said during her screening interview that although she enjoyed her position as Recreation Manager, there were restrictions in executing it effectively from a planning standpoint and that having the authority and oversight as Director would allow her to strategize from the beginning and give her a huge advantage to be in the “driver’s seat” from the outset. There was also discussion that John is clearly bringing all of his experience to the table but is on the downward swing of his career admittedly. Rosa, on the other hand, has the same skill sets within her, it appears, only she is more in the prime of her working career with a promising future before her.

There was also mention that one candidate did not meet the minimum qualifications for the position as set forth in the director’s job description created by the Town of Clinton, and one candidate did have the bachelor's degree, and the degree is in recreation management.

Another discussion centered on how this might be an emotional decision for some of us given how much we have invested in the department already over the years of our personal time and volunteer effort. So it is important not to lose sight of the facts when making this critical and pivotal choice. However, the other side of this dynamic is that those of us who have been around the department a significant amount of time have witnessed first-hand the variations which are now influencing us to make a more informed decision as to what the department truly needs.

One commissioner observed Rosa’s organizational skill in recent times and appreciated the buffer she would provide between the community and the department overall.

Another said she’s done a terrific job handling both positions simultaneously and deserves to have the Director position from his standpoint.

A couple commissioners agreed that John’s background brings more than just years of experience to the table but rather a potential for the department to expand beyond what it is now and by combining his leadership with Rosa’s skills, there is a bright future before us!

Another agreed that both individuals are very capable but was very uncomfortable with potentially losing Rosa and her wealth of knowledge/passion/fervor/ goodwill/ ambassadorial skills, etc., because there is no guarantee that she will stay under another director now that she has been doing the job. She doesn’t desire to disrupt the current intangibles that Rosa has already brought to the department.

A simple vote was taken:

Rosa Kairit – 3 in favor (Ed, John, Yoanna) John Green – 2 in favor (Matt, Jodi)

Jodi motioned to exit Executive Session @ **8:05pm**, John 2nd; all in favor.

Meeting adjourned @ **8:08pm**, John motioned, Yoanna 2nd, all in favor.

**Although the meeting had already adjourned, a few commissioners discussed who needed to be contacted on the Personnel Board so that the Vice Chair could reach out to that person and determine next step in putting together a formal offer letter to go out to the candidate that was chosen. John Kittredge and Mary Nelly's names were mentioned. Mary Neely's contact information was provided to the Vice Chair. The formal Letter of Hire comes from the Board, which then is sent to the Personnel Board, etc. However, before either candidate was notified formally via email of the vote, we realized the next morning that we had conducted the meeting in error and needed to address our procedural mistake before acting on our vote.