

**Town of Cape Elizabeth
Fort Williams Advisory Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 26, 2007**

Revision: Approved 5/17/07.

Present: Chuck Wilson (Chair), Tina Harnden, Maureen McCarthy, Dan Chase (Secretary).

Absent: Ellen Nadeau (Vice-chair), Greg Altnauer, Jennifer Duddy.

Staff: Bob Malley

Guests: Joel Russ, Carol Fritz, Betty Crane, Jesse Timberlake, and Joe Edgar, all from the Fort Williams Charitable Foundation.

Called to Order: 7:25 PM in the Public Works Building Lunch Room by Chuck Wilson.

Park Update

Bob passed out copies of the final report of the Rest Facility Planning Study, done in 1995.

Bob reported that:

- The Town has rented a device that emits ultrasonic sound waves and installed it in the pond, in an attempt to control algae growth. The device will not control duckweed, but may provide some improvement in the overall amount of vegetation growth in the pond. It is likely that the pond will ultimately require dredging to really control vegetation growth. Because of the flushing effect of overflows from recent storms, the pond looks very good right now.
- The park fared quite well through the recent snow storm and Northeaster. One large pine tree was lost. Otherwise, tree damage was limited to some lost limbs.
- Cape Elizabeth saw a 13 ft. astronomically high tide, topped with a 2 ft. storm surge, during the Northeaster. Wave action displaced rocks and driftwood from the beach up the slope toward the parking lot. A contractor was hired to move the rocks and driftwood back to the beach. The work is complete, and looks good.
- Some pavement and sod damage was sustained near Portland Headlight during the Northeaster. This will be repaired before the full opening of the lighthouse for the season.
- There was some damage to the old section of the Cliff Walk from wash-outs during the storm. These will be repaired.
- Repair work for the stone fireplace and grills in the picnic shelter is complete.
- The Coast Guard change of command ceremony is upcoming.

Approval of minutes of March 15th Meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted in the draft of 3/22/07.

Budget update, fiscal 2008

Chuck and Bob reviewed the Finance Committee meeting in which the proposed park budget was presented to the Town Council. The Council was supportive of the proposal to move maintenance items from the capital budget to the operating budget. There will be a public hearing on the entire budget in a couple of weeks. There were some comments about the possibility of permanent toilets when the budget for Port-a-potties was discussed. Bob noted that the budget for

Port-a-potties is \$24,000, with Portland Headlight funds paying 50%. The Council is anxious to have the list of priorities and estimated costs submitted. However, overall, the Council did not have many questions about the proposed budget.

Review and discussion with FWCF regarding FWAC's draft priority list

Chuck explained the priority list – maintenance items, versus long term priorities and short term priorities. As noted above, the Commission has proposed removing the maintenance items from the park's capital budget, and putting them on the Town's operating budget, starting in the next fiscal year. Long term priorities are those which present many options, will require a great deal of study, and are seen as taking more than five years to implement. Short term priorities are those which are relatively straight forward, and are seen as taking on the order of two years or less to implement.

Chuck also stated the Commission's wish that this meeting would start to develop a consensus between the Commission and the Foundation as to specific projects and priorities to work toward jointly.

Joel said the Foundation needs to work with the Commission to develop a theme and vision for the park to present when fund raising. The Foundation does not foresee second guessing the Commission as to priorities for the park, however some priorities may not be attractive as fund raising targets. Chuck emphasized that it will be very valuable for the Commission to know which priorities are not good fund raising targets, so the Town Council can be approached for funding from tax dollars or bonding.

Carol said that she is particularly interested in the historical restoration of park features.

The project to rehabilitate the bleachers was introduced. A general discussion was held. It was noted that although money for an engineers study of the bleachers is included in the fiscal 2008 budget, the Town Council has asked for the full list of priorities and estimated costs before it will proceed with any major projects. The Foundation noted that calling the project “The Amphitheater”, or something similar, would be a better draw for funding.

The project to preserve and present histories of the batteries was introduced. It was noted that it exists only as a vision at this time, except for the plan to secure Battery Garesche against entry. This project will require a great deal of historical study. It was mentioned that grant money may be available for this project. A question was asked about the status of Battery Keyes. Bob said the concrete is in relatively good shape, and the wood roof was replaced fairly recently.

The project to do something proactive at the Goddard ruin was introduced. It was noted that, based on the OEST engineering report of the ultimate cost, the Commission had voted to spend no more money to stabilize the ruin. It was asked if there are thoughts to tear it down. There is no sentiment on the Commission or the Foundation to do so at this time. There is also no sentiment to spend additional tax dollars to preserve the ruin. Even if private funds are to be raised, the Commission would rather see them go to other priorities in the park, if given a choice.

The project to further study the possibility of permanent restrooms was introduced. Bob noted that from an operational standpoint, permanent restrooms would require full time supervision. A general discussion was held. The idea of incorporating restrooms in a visitor's center was raised. The Foundation noted that restrooms would not be an attractive fund raising target, however a visitor's center would be attractive. The concern was raised that creating a visitor's center could change the focus of the park from local residents to visitors.

The project to improve the main entrance was introduced. There was no further discussion.

The first short term project to provide lighting for the flagpole was introduced. The Foundation does not see this as a good fund raising target.

The second short term priority to replace the interpretive installation on top of the knoll was introduced. The Foundation does see this as a good fund raising target, and expressed the hope that the new installation could set the standard for new installations and signage in the park. The Foundation will raise this priority at their next Board meeting to see if they can come up with an approach for funding.

It was noted that the Commission raised the idea of installing additional donation boxes as a short term priority at the last meeting, and asked if the Foundation has any reaction. Dan will contact Joel to discuss the possibility of some kind of joint action.

Chuck wrapped up the meeting with the summary that we had addressed all the priority projects with the Foundation and found general agreement, however not all priorities are good candidates for fund raising.

Other Business

Due to the lateness of the hour, no other business was taken up.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is currently scheduled for May 17th , at the usual place and time.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Chase, Secretary