

Town of Cape Elizabeth
Fort Williams Advisory Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 17th, 2011

Present:

Bill Brownell, Frank Butterworth, Dan Chase, Erin Grady, Maureen McCarthy, and Bill Nickerson (Chair).

Absent:

Lise Pratt.

Also present:

Alice Rand (FWCF), Mary Hodgkin (FWCF), Peter Cotter (resident), Tucker Jordan (resident), Caitlin Jordan (Town Council), Imogene Altnauer (resident).

Staff:

Bob Malley.

Call to order:

Bill called the meeting to order at 6:38.

Approval of minutes of the 1/20/2011 regular meeting:

Bill Brownell motioned approval, Erin seconded and all voted to accept.

Public Comment:

Alice Rand, as a resident, opposes the use of push carts in the Park. She feels that they are contrary to the intended purpose of the Fort.

Discussion & recommendation on a pilot food concession program, per Town Manager:

Bob Malley reported that he, Bill N. and Mike McGovern had met regarding the number of proposals that are being received for food programs as a revenue source within the Fort.

Mike suggested that 2 Commission members meet with Bob and him to review the various proposals that are received, prioritize them, and report back to the Commission for review against our established guidelines and for approval.

Mike suggested that at this point in time we wait for proposals to be received rather than send out an RFP to solicit proposals.

Bill Brownell and Erin Grady volunteered to be a part of that review committee.

Discussion & recommendation on a bus fee proposal by the Town Manager:

Bob reported that Mike McGovern will give the Commission a memo to help familiarize us with the tour bus traffic issues.

Almost 800 bus and trolley visits occurred in the Fort this past season, with 34 visits on 1 particular day.

The Council is asking for our recommendations as to the issue of fees in the 2012 Season and any impact on associated issues such as gift shop sales.

Bob said he will also get us statistics on bus traffic as well as the Council feedback on this subject.

Group use request – Jordan Wedding Ceremony request:

Tucker Jordan said that since his initial request to us at the 1/20/2011 workshop meeting they decided that the Shelter would not be an appropriate location for their wedding ceremony and reception for aesthetic reasons.

Bill Nickerson recapped our discussions as a committee and stated that at least at the present time we would only consider the shelter as an appropriate location for this size event, which incorporates the use of a large tent as a part of the set up.

Tucker thanked us for our consideration but restated that the Shelter location was not their choice.

Imogene Altnauer- event coordinator:

Imogene introduced herself to the Commission and advised us that she had been an event coordinator since 1989 and had recently produced a large outdoor food event in Europe, among her other event activities.

She further advised us:

- She is in the process of siting a USA food festival venue.
- Felt the Fort was a prime location for a high end out door event.
- Had done some local fund raising event. (Middle School Fund raiser, \$21,000.)
- Indicated that she might be able to help boost current local events such as Family Fun Day and the Engine One Art Show.
- Felt that a winter fest, snow sculpture contest, road race, farmers and crafters market during cruise ship season, could all be a success.
- Would like to see us market Fort Williams as a venue destination.
- The Town website relative to event usage needed to be rewritten to be more attractive to potential users.
- Would like to offer her services to us to accomplish some of these suggestions.

Bill Nickerson said that 1st and foremost the Fort needs to be a park where all can visit, relax, and recreate.

It was also noted:

- We feel the 1976 Vision of the Fort is a guide to follow.
- We have to balance this vision with revenue generation ideas.
- Consideration must be given to resident abutters.
- We should review our website relative to the suggestions made.
- Imogene should initially approach the Engine One Art Show and Family Fun Day to see what assistance she may be able to offer them, and report back to us with her proposal to market the Fort as a venue destination.

Bob said he would provide her with contacts for both groups.

Review FY 2012 Budget draft:

Bob reviewed what was to date an unapproved operating budget.

He touched on those areas that had been changed (increased or decreased) which included trees, maintenance on buildings, fencing and gate maintenance (issues with people pushing gates)

This budget incorporates the increased operating expenses of \$70,000.

Bob next reviewed the Capital Budget.

His comments included:

- This now shows revenue and expenses on the same sheet.
- The revenues reflect the increased Group Use fee structure.
- It includes \$10,000 to supplement the \$40,000 approved by the Council for the Master Plan Addendum.

Discussion of possible ideas for future capital budget items included:

- The bleachers.
- A second picnic shelter.
- Cleaning up and restoring the pond. (At the present time there are funds available to study a solution to the pond rather than actually restore it.)

Bob told us that an RFP for a boundary survey of the Park including existing condition of the buildings, utility locations, pathways, and other data had been sent out and was awarded to the low bidder. The deadline for completion is 6/1/2011. This will be a valuable document for us as well as the Arboretum for the purpose of planning. (Mary Hodgkin from the FWCF reminded that the Arboretum has paths included in their plans so we should work together on this.)

Bob reviewed items in his proposed operating budget including:

- Tennis Court fence repair.
- Stone Wall Repairs to the north side of the old main gate.
- Power House repairs.(Possibly in this proposed budget)

Bob told us we needed to select a consultant to assist us with the study of how to clean up the Pond Bill Nickerson motioned that we move ahead with selecting a consultant to see what is needed to restore the pond. Maureen seconded.

Bill Brownell moved that Bob's Operating and Capital budgets be approved as presented, and Maureen seconded.

Master Plan update:

Mike and Bob met and determined that the FWAC needs to develop a focus for the Master Plan Addendum.

The elements of the Addendum we discussed were:

- Purpose of the document.
- Reaffirming the statement in the 1976 vision for the Park.
- An executive summary.
- Revenue generating sources.
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Natural features of the Park.
- The pond
- A variety of other areas.

Bill Nickerson stated that since we have decided to move ahead with an addendum we need to decide who will assist us.

Suggested resources included:

- Current Consultants we have been using.
- Sending out an RFP for the job.
- Bob would ask Mike for any suggestions or guidance.
- John Mitchell due to his great familiarity with the Park and its improvements and features.

Bob, Bill N, and Mike will discuss this for further refining.

FWCF update:

Alice Rand reported that the Annual Mailing just completed has developed close to \$26,000 in donations.

She also updated us on grant activity:

- \$5,000 received from the Davies Foundation.
- Waiting to hear from the Mimie Foundation.
- Waiting to hear from the Roxanne Quimby Foundation.

Other information she shared included:

- The FWCF enjoys good support from local, state, and federal politicians.
- The Arboretum is planning a Maine Home and Design Garden Tour fundraiser on 7/9/11. (Rain date 7/10/11)
- The Arboretum is having a booth at the Maine Flower Show in March.

Other Business:

Erin updated us on the Arboretum Design RFP. She said there were 11 received, and these would be narrowed down to 3 or 4 finalists.

Park Update:

Bob provided us with the following updates:

- The Council approved the rules for public use that we had developed.
- Bids for the repair work on Battery Blair were scheduled to be opened on 3/10/2011.
- The GSA would like to reserve the shelter for a date in Sept. 2012 for a group of 500 people. We need to figure out how to do this without contradicting the policy of allowing Cape Elizabeth residents priority to reserve the Shelter during the month of December. Bob was going to discuss with Pat Fowler.
- Bob brought up the memo that Jim Walsh had sent to him, and was forwarded to us, regarding events within the Fort.

We discussed this relative to our current approach to events within the Fort, but with the possibility of siting a 2nd picnic shelter within the Fort that might also be used for events.

Also, we need to discuss what an acceptable number of events annually might be.

Bill N said he would discuss our present policy on events with Jim, and get back to us.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

Our next meeting is Thursday March 17th **at 6:30 PM.**