

**Town of Cape Elizabeth
Fort Williams Park Committee**

Meeting Minutes
August 18, 2016

Present: Chair, Mar Russell (MR), Charles “Chuck” Wilson (CW), Suzanne McGinn (SM), Don Clark (DC) and Steve Lyons (SL)

Absent: Chris Straw (CS)

Staff: Robert Malley, Director of Public Works (RM)

Public: Lynn Shaffer – FWPF, Mary Hodgkin – FWPF and John Mitchell – Mitchell & Associates

Call to Order: Mark Russell called the meeting to order @ 7:02 PM.

Meeting Minutes

The July 21, 2016 meeting minutes were approved (6 Yes, 0 No)

Citizen Opportunity for Public Comment Not On the Agenda

There was no public comment

Committee Member Updates & Correspondence

MR asked if everyone has been receiving the emails from RM related to the Amphitheater proposal, which all members replied in the affirmative. MR reported that DC had reached out to some staff at the school about their potential interest in utilizing the proposed Amphitheater.

FWPF Update: Lynn Shaffer

Lynn reported that the dry conditions have made planting a challenge at the Children’s Garden site. A water service will be extended from the water main in the Park to the southerly side of the site in the coming days. SM inquired of Lynn if the Foundation was prepared for the potential damage by winter moths. There was a brief discussion about the potential damage both in the Park and in the town as a whole. She also asked Lynn about a comment raised at the August 17th forum regarding the Arboretum sites, and if they are drawing more visitors to the Park. Additional report information will be forwarded via email.

FWPF Request – Formal Consideration of Granite Slide Request for Children’s Garden

Lynn gave an overview of the proposal. She stated that the Granite Slide or “Sliding Rock” as it is now referred to, was shown on preliminary concept drawings presented to the then “FWAC”, but it was not, however, shown on the final plans of the Children’s Garden approved by both the FWAC and the Town Council. After a general discussion about the size and configuration of the “Slide”, the proposal was approved by the Committee by a vote of 6 to 0. RM stated that the proposal may need approval by the Town Council, which he will review with Town Manager Mike McGovern.

Boards & Commission Ordinance Revisions

RM reviewed the ordinance changes applicable to the Committee. As reported at the July 21st meeting, the name of the Committee has been changed to the “Fort Williams Park Committee” and staff (RM) will now be taking the meeting minutes from now on. In addition, the ordinance requires that all standing committee’s will be required to submit goals, a budget and a year-end report to the Town Council each year.

Park Update:

RM reported that the dry conditions have taken their toll on the grounds of the Park. Bids are out on repairing the Garden Pond Stone Wall. They are due September 1st. Lower tennis courts have been re-coated and the line color for Pickelball has been changed to a light blue. A water service has been partially extended to the Children's Garden by L.P. Murray, which was paid for by the Arboretum Committee. SM inquired if the Town has considered allowing business advertising signage (for a fee) in the Park as way of generating additional revenue. RM stated the concept has not been discussed.

Follow-Up Discussion on Amphitheater Forum

MR gave a brief overview of the Amphitheater forum from his perspective. He then asked the members present to share their reaction to the feedback received from the audience (approximately 30), which included former members of the committee who spoke in opposition to the project.

SL thought it went well and acknowledged some of the positive comments about the proposal.

DC felt that negative comments at the forum came through stronger than those of the proponents. He expressed concerns about taking the proposal to the Town Council without a demonstrated public support.

MR gave a brief history of the proposal for the benefit of all members present. This included a history of the proposals considered and the votes taken at past meetings. He also discussed the challenges the Committee has faced in the last couple of years related to turnover in membership and the workload of the Committee, i.e., developing priorities and the annual budget proposal.

JK is getting positive feedback on the proposal, but is getting some concerns about the cost of the project.

SM praised comments made by Chris Straw about the potential use, but felt the Committee needs to do a better job of explaining the vision of the proposal.

CW stated that the Committee needs to be prepared to give better information to the public (and the Town Council) and suggested a consultant may be needed to assist the Committee, from his past experience with large endeavors like this.

RM advised that the Committee needs to better justify the need and explain the intended utilization to gain the public support needed for the project.

Amphitheater Proposal Next Steps

The discussion moved on to the next steps that should be taken by the Committee. A general discussion followed about the timeline for the project and potentially putting the project on "Hold" for the time being. This was followed by a suggestion by RM that he and MR meet with Mike McGovern to get some guidance on how to best proceed based on the feedback received at the forum. RM will contact Mike in the next few days to set up a meeting.

Other Business Not on the Agenda**Citizen Opportunity for Public Comment of Items Not on the Agenda:**

There were no citizens present.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Robert C. Malley