

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

Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2017

Present: Chair, Mark Russell (MR), Chris Straw (CS), Suzanne McGinn (SM), Don Clark (DC), Joe Kozlowski (JK), Jim Walsh (JW) and Jim Kerney (Jim K)

Absent: None

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

Public: Lynn Shaffer (FWPF), Emily Garvin (FWPF), Laura Morris of 53 Bowery Beach Road (CE), Melissa Skinner of 8 Providence Avenue (S.P.), Ann Lessard of 156 Margaret Street (SP) and Heidi Hansen of 313 Fowler Road (CE).

Call to Order: Mark Russell called the meeting to order @ 7:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes

The June 15, 2017 meeting minutes were approved after a slight amendment (adding Jim Kerney's name to those that attended the June meeting). (6 Yes, 0 No, SM abstained)

Citizen Opportunity for Public Comment Not On the Agenda

There was no comment at this time

FWPF Update

The following update was sent to the Committee previously:

Arboretum Highlights from past month

Children's Garden:

- Signs have been installed at the 4 entrances to the stepping stone paths through the frog pond. See attached.
- The bio-filter pond was recently roped off and drained, so that river stones could be reset along the embankment from where they had been thrown into the pond by visitors. We then planted nearly 300 aquatic and marginal plants.
- With the help of a corporate work day by Tom's of Maine, along with several of our ongoing volunteers, planting is nearly complete on the sliding stone hillside and meadow areas. 50 yards of mulch was also spread, and two bird motels installed.
- The sliding stone has been temporarily roped off until the Town insurance agent can visit the site and advise on appropriate safety measures (meeting scheduled for 7/20). To avoid undue concern, temporary signs advise that the slide is not to be used until the new plants have a chance to set their roots. A permanent sign has already been designed advising proper use of slide. It will be printed and installed after review by the insurance agent. Draft is attached.

Cliff Walk Landscape:

- Presentation of the Cliff Walk Landscape project to the Town Council has again been postponed. It will now be presented for approval at the Town Council meeting on August 14. Postponement was because James has been too busy to prepare the presentation.

Crossroads and Tree Succession:

- Invasive plants within these small Arboretum sites were recently cut back or dug out. Mulching disturbed soil will soon follow, pending availability of donated arborist woodchips.

Parkwide:

- Litter patrol was conducted by several volunteers from Tom's of Maine, with primary focus along the Cliff Walk, Battery Keyes, and Battery Blair.
- Several volunteers from Tom's of Maine recently painted the first floor porch of office building #326, the tennis court shed, the fencing around the Porta-Potties near the lighthouse, and the curbing around Captain Strout Circle.

Garden Tour

This year's Garden Tour held Saturday, July 15, was a huge success with attendance increasing by over 20% and profits increasing by over 30%.

Annual Meeting

Thank you to those of you who were able to attend our Annual Meeting.

- Lynn Shaffer also reported that she attended a meeting on July 20th with MR, RM, James McCain (FWPF) and Lance Lemieux of the Maine Municipal Association Risk Pool. A discussion was held about safety recommendations that were made by Mr. Lemieux following an inspection he performed on July 5, 2017. Mr. Lemieux offered some suggestions for remediation and will amend his report to reflect the discussion. She reported that the slide is cordoned off at the present time.

JW asked how the base of the slide area was being maintained and suggested that a log of maintenance be maintained to document what is done. MR said the FWPF has made some significant improvements around the slide in the last two weeks. He stated that safety is the primary concern of the Town, given that they are responsible in the end.

CS asked about the "bouldering" path on the east side of the slide and if that is intended for users to get back up to the top of the slide.

JW asked who should be the spokesperson for the Town related to a recent article in the PPH about the Children's Garden. MR stated the matter would be discussed at a later time.

Committee Member Updates & Correspondence

MR reported that an article in the PPH was forwarded to the Committee at JW's request. The article discussed the increase in attendance at Acadia National since 2006.

RM reported that he asked Mr. Lemieux of the MMA Risk Pool to inspect the slide at the Children's Garden because it was a new feature and he thought it would be prudent to have him do so. He stated that the Town needs to be responsive to any Action Plan that is developed after an inspection of a building or structure on Town property.

RM circulated an email earlier in the day from Tree Warden Todd Robbins regarding implementation of the Officers Row Preserve Sustainability & Planting Plan. SM asked about the selection of trees that would be planted. The Tree Warden will be making those selections, which RM will share with the Committee once they are confirmed.

RM reported on a recent request from the DMSE organization to move the B2B Volunteer and VIP Clambake to "The Meadow", or the field on the left as you enter the Park. RM denied the request since it was not approved as part of the original request considered by both the Committee and the Town Council. He also said that the "Meadow" has not been approved for any organized events due to the limited amount topsoil there. He also stated he was sensitive to recent concerns about noise from the adjacent neighborhood.

Discussion of Dog-Related Issues in the Park; Pertaining to Safety, Enforcement of Leash Laws and the Current Delineation of the “Off-Leash Area”

MR introduced the agenda item and stated that the intent was to be a general discussion about dog-related issues in the Park that have been discussed at previous meetings.

At the request of CS, RM reported on an incident that happened on Family Fun Day where a dog had bitten 3 people. The dog was leashed, but got away from its owner.

DC stated the area delineated in the ordinance is inconsistent with the map prepared by the Planning Office dated 10/13/99 that was handed out at the meeting.

CS stated the dogs should not be allowed on the Multi-Purpose Field (MPF). Both JK and SM agreed. It was also suggested that the “off-leash” area could be proposed to be added to, if in fact the MPF ends up being restricted.

CS stated the Park has changed since the “off-leash” area was created in 1990. The MPF had not been built then and there weren't as many visitors to the Park at that time.

CS thought the issues should be identified. The consensus of the group was the following:

- The ordinance language is inconsistent with the map prepared by the Planning Office.
- The MPF is in the designated “off-leash” area.
- The Park attendance has increased.
- There are more dog-walkers in the Park, since there have been changes at Willard Beach and at Robinson's Wharf.
- There is a lack of enforcement of the dog-related regulations in both the “off-leash” and leashed-required areas. MR added that there is no obvious enforcement from his perspective.

SM noted that the Double A Field adjacent to the rental buildings is also in the “off-leash” area.

There was a general discussion about the process for making recommendations to the Town Council and getting input from the dog-walkers as stakeholders (JW).

Melissa Skinner (S.P.) commented that most of “The Green” is not used by the dog-walkers but did wonder if more of it could be made accessible to them. She also asked how outreach is planned to the dog-walker community. She has a dog walking service and uses the Park. CS asked her if she would be willing to pay a fee to use the Park.

Heidi Hansen (CE) commented that a group of the dog-walkers have a Facebook page that they use to communicate with each other.

Laura Morris (CE) commented that she agrees with comments that were made by the others. She would prefer that the “off-leash” area line be moved north to line up with the faucet location. She did say there are a few irresponsible dog-walkers and that better signage is needed.

CS stated the existing “doggie-bag” dispensers (and receptacles) are not allowed by the current ordinance. SM wondered if a fenced-in area just for dogs should be considered.

There was a general discussion about next steps and the Ordinance Committee process was explained by JW. CS & SM asked if the dog-related issue should be included as part of the Town's current Comprehensive Planning process.

RM suggested creating an agenda item that identifies a specific set of recommendations for the next meeting of the Committee.

Update from Chairman Russell on meeting with Town Council Chair Garvin and Town Manager, Matt Sturgis

MR read some notes (see below) prepared by Matt Sturgis that reflected the context of the discussion at the meeting, which was held on June 20th with RM also in attendance.

Attendees: Jamie Garvin, Mark Russell, Bob Malley, Matt Sturgis
General Concepts Discussed:

Need for Park Manager

Need to protect the Park from its own success.

Need for coordination of efforts from Council, Committee, Foundation, and others
Operations and management, maintenance, and finances are all long range concerns- sustainability

A rapidly increasing concern and issue is dogs at the Fort, and what is the best for all
There is a need for goal alignment between the Council, FWP Committee, Foundation, and stakeholders.

A new master plan is needed. Not a landscaping master plan but a long range plan of operations, facilities, and total picture.

Concerns about athletic fields and dogs. Presently there is \$25,000 in budget to surround multi-purpose field.

High degree of concern regarding winter moths and their impact on the landscape of Fort Williams.

Impact of children's garden, parking issues on upper area of park, unplanned use of garden and park by schools.

Traffic, parking, management of both.

Concept of a Fort Williams comprehensive planning committee.

May want to review the structural operations models of other successful parks, ie. Central Park and other notable public spaces. Consult the various models of operation.

We need to collaborate with Portland on impact of cruises locally.

Issues facing the park are comparable to the issues faced by the transfer station.

Look to have a workshop with Council, FWP Committee, and general public post Labor Day.

SM asked if the Goddard Mansion was discussed at the meeting. MR replied it was not and commented that the constituency for that structure may be waning. RM stated the Town Council would be setting a date for the workshop in August.

Park & Project Update – Bob Malley

- FY 2017 Year End Financial Report: Revenues \$188,747.25 (\$195,560.00) or 96.5% of forecasted.

Expenses \$85,710.45 (\$568,600.00 of which \$440,000 was programmed for the amphitheater project.

Estimated Fund Balance @ 6/30/17: \$459,000

- FY 2018 Budget Update:
 - Approximate Project Budget: \$264,000.00

- Perimeter Fencing Project completed north of main entrance. Cost \$29,700.00 (Budget \$35,000)

- Cliff Walk Railing Bid results. Bid \$20,250 (Budget \$25,000). Work to be completed before Sept. 6th.

- Working on specifications for basketball court reconstruction.

- Signed a proposal with a firm (Becker Structural) to design Battery Blair Retaining Wall. Work programmed for Spring 2018.

- Picnic Shelter Ped. Improv. – No action taken yet, but programmed for Spring 2018

- ADA Parking Spaces @ Overflow Parking Area – No action taken yet, but programmed for Fall 2017

- GPCOG Traffic Study – Still waiting for proposal from GPCOG to update the study.

There was a brief discussion about the Food Concession Program. The two current permits will expire at the end of this season. RM suggested that the Committee will need to decide if they want to increase the square footage allowed to accommodate food trucks and/or raising the minimum bid for the permits. DC asked if our current fees are limiting our options for smaller “hot dog” style carts. CS commented that a by-product of the current concession program is more trash along the Cliff Walk.

Other Business No on the Agenda

There was a consensus to not meet in August, so the next meeting of the Committee will be **Thursday, September 21, 2017.**

Citizen Opportunity for Discussion of Items on the Agenda

Though it was not on the agenda, Heidi Hansen (CE) suggested that bus fees should be increased. MR responded that the Town Council reduced the bus fee recommended by the Committee the last time it was considered and voted on.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Robert C. Malley