

TOWN OF CAPE ELIZABETH
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD

March 20, 2012

7:00 p.m. Town Hall

Present: Elaine Falender, Chair
Josef Chalot
Peter Curry
Carol Ann Jordan
Henry Steinberg
Victoria Volent

Absent: Liza Quinn

Also present was Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner.

Ms. Falender called the meeting to order. The minutes of the February 7, 2012 meeting were approved as presented, 5-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Fort Williams Park Master Plan - The Cape Elizabeth Town Council has referred to the Planning Board the review of the update to the Fort Williams Master Plan, Sec. 19-6-8, Public Hearing.

Bill Nickerson, Chairman of the Fort Williams Advisory Commission spoke about the process of updating the Master Plan. He said the Town Comprehensive Plan recommends that it be reviewed every seven years. The Master Plan was last updated in 2003. They have met with various groups that use the park on a regular basis, such as, Little League, dog walkers, the arboretum group, the Battery Blair group and other park users in order to get input. They had a survey on the Town website which elicited 385 responses.

As a result the Advisory Commission has come up with a plan which focuses on safety, preservation of buildings, traffic circulation and pedestrian circulation. There are approximately 90 recommendations in the update. Many of the recommendations are small, and some are complex and costly. There are 10 in the priority list of major projects. He notes that this is a fluid document and future Commissions may have different proposals.

Bob Metcalf of Mitchell and Associates then addressed the Board. He read the purpose of the Master Plan and talked about the goals of the 2003 plan. The 2003 plan had 5 goals, and they have added a 6th goal to that list: to establish a sustainable plan to maintain the quality enjoyment of the park.

Mr. Metcalf also referenced the policy statement of the Town Council of 1976.

He said the 2003 Master Plan divided the park into 10 distinct areas.

1. The Meadow and Chapel Road, Powers Road.
2. Goddard Mansion and Battery Keyes- Possible access improvement and creating a nice lawn and potential function area
3. Battery Knoll
4. Cliff Walk area
5. Portland Head Light and parking area
6. The Green and Battery Garth
7. Pond, Tennis Courts, Ball field and Parade Grounds- Possible improvement of the parking at the entrance and pedestrian access.
8. Officers Row, Picnic Area and Kitty's Point- Possible handicap access to Kitty's Point, expand the functional use of the existing picnic structure, and parking.
9. Battery Blair and the central parking area- Possible visitor's center location with a potential for a cafe.
10. Southwest Preserve

The recommendations were then broken down by categories, and then by priority. The top 10 priorities are:

1. Expand Ship Cove parking , adding a turnaround and 23 parking spaces. Improve the pedestrian access to Goddard Mansion.
2. Upgrade the Ship Cove picnic area by replacing the existing slab and installing a railing.
3. Area 7-Add a group gathering area near the overflow parking area. No physical structural improvements are proposed.
4. Safety improvements to the Cliff Walk area. Add guard rail or fence along the areas where the public goes close to the cliffs.
5. Area 7-Reconfiguration of the accessway to the overflow parking area. Make the turn from Ocean Road at a 90 degree angle for greater accessibility.
6. Area 1- Clear the roof of the power station of invading vegetation.
7. Ship Cove- Improve the entrance to the parking area so it enters Powers Road at a 90 degree angle, and improve pedestrian access and safety.

8. Southwest Preserve- Parking and circulation improvements. Formalize the parking, keeping it away from the playground. Would create 81 spaces for parking.

9. Area 6- Create a new picnic shelter near Battery Blair.

10. Parking for existing picnic area- Improve and define the existing spaces.

Further consideration is given to the option of creating a visitor's center in the area of Battery Blair and the feasibility of adding public restrooms. The update also makes vendors a permitted use.

Ms. Falender opened the public hearing. No one was present in the audience, so the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Chalot wanted to know how many new parking spaces are being proposed. He also cited the 2003 plan which stated they didn't want new parking added.

Mr. Metcalf replied that for Ship Cove it was to create a better way of turning and the logical outcome was to add parking in the turnaround. Parking at the existing picnic area needed to be improved and by defining the spaces they gained both a few more spaces and some green area. At the maintenance area, people just park anywhere now, and they will just make it a more organized space. Overall a net gain of about 114 parking spaces will be added.

Ms. Volent had some corrections to the cross referencing.

Mr. Metcalf will make the corrections.

Mr. Steinberg asked about the fact that they are adding spaces, but there is no way to tell people that all the parking spaces are full.

Bob Malley, the Public Works Director, replied that on weekends they open the overflow parking area above the bleachers. He said that other than when they have had a large event, he does not think there has ever been a time when there was no parking available in the park.

Ms. Falender asked about the timing of any of the projects.

Mr. Malley said that they are being proposed for the fiscal 2013 budget. When the budget is approved they will be back after July 1 for site plan review.

Ms. Jordan made the following motion:

BE IT ORDERED that, based on the Fort Williams Master Plan Amendment submitted and the facts presented, in accordance with Sec. 19-6-8(D), Master Plan Amendments, the Cape Elizabeth Planning Board recommends the 2012 Fort Williams Master Plan Amendments to the Town Council for consideration.

Ms. Volent seconded the motion and it was passed, 6-0.

The board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Hiroshi Dolliver
Minutes Secretary