

Yarmouth Parks and Lands
Meeting minutes-
August 5, 2020

Committee members:

Karen Massey (2021)
Mary Webber (2021)
Lisa Small (2022)
Mary Thorp (2022)
Jay Waterman (2021), chair
Richard Brimberg (2020)
Ebrahim Fazeli (2020)- excused

Karyn MacNeill, YCS Director
Tim Shannon, Council Liaison- absent
Erik Donohoe, Parks Specialist

Guest: Nat Tupper

6:05pm – Call to Order, Jay Waterman

Approval/Acceptance of July 1, 2020 Minutes – As amended in the August 4th email sent by Lisa Small. Motion made by Karen Massey, 2nd by Lisa Small. Approved by Lisa Small, Karen Massey, Richard Brimberg, Jay Waterman, and Mary Webber. (Mary Thorp – excused, not at July 1 meeting.).

Water Access discussion

Nat – provided a quick update on the Items coming up in front of Town Council re Madeleine Point: Interest in personal Dinghy Rack (not currently allowable for public uses), Users of docks (to ensure safety of all users).

Jay- talked about ramps and floats and tax-payer funding. Was concerned about jurisdiction.

Karyn- The committee meets on Tuesday nights. Suggested to let committee know that you would be joining them.

Nat suggests possible phone calls to the chair and the harbormaster.

Jay- re Madeleine Pt. and a long ramp to the float. Any thoughts about expanding? And swimming floats vs. boat float?

Nat- there is a permitting process for any new floats. Also, the ramp is on an easement granted by FPL.

Richard- try to separate swimmers and boaters

Jay- will reach out to waterfront committee for ideas. Would like to see compatible use and safe separation.

Karen and Lisa both in agreement with Jay on this issue.

Updates:

Erik:

1. Fieldstone to McKearney trail/path Started 2 weeks ago with RRCT trail work group. A boardwalk of 130 feet to be installed.
2. Village Run Sandpit- need to raise gravel with volunteers and with neighborhood group. Then permitting needs to be done before bridge at storm water retention pond can be built.
3. Riverfront Woods- last of permits from Army Corps should be in next couple of weeks. Then step 1- railroad crossing. There are specific design specs. Dugas will do the beginning. Received a grant for a large boardwalk from the local and regional Rotary Clubs. They have pledged to help with labor also. We are still figuring what can be done within budget.

Jay- Parks and Lands should send a thank you to the Rotary Clubs AND use our brand new logo.

Questions on Village Run- still bike trail activity? Erik: Nothing major

Still eligible for conversion? Karyn: nothing has been done

Mary W.- can the old school be relocated?

Updates, cont.:

Karyn: Stay up on planning board meetings. The next one is 8/26/2020.

Also, E. Coli in Royal River – double the permissible amount for swimming. It has varied quite a bit and is being monitored.

Work Plan Discussion:

Karen: water access is high on land acquisition priority list.

Karyn: Green Marine project on Cousins River- nothing new to report

Nat: While water access is a priority, there is no money in the budget. Not a priority for the Town Council as compared to making our current parks and lands better. Has suggested “development impact fees”. But no real traction.

Jay: Any other money? Nat: not really.

Jay: continues to look at connectivity and the 2017 land acquisition strategy. What about connectivity with easements etc.?

Lisa: it is one of the main goals in the Open Space Plan

Jay emphasizes keeping dialog open on creative ways to acquire land and connectivity.

Nat observations:

1. Open space residential standards need to be tweaked. Ex. density bonuses
2. Pocket parks- though nice, but not in as great a demand as larger areas. Also, sidewalks can create connectivity.
3. Royal River- reminded committee that we should look at “undevelopable lands”; at ecosystems, natural beauty, and fragile environments. Not everything has to be about increased public access.

Jay concurs on the importance of sidewalks and talks of meeting with the Bike/Ped committee. Has been approached by townspeople about sidewalks on East Maine St. to the Community Garden and the Frank Knight Forest.

Capital Improvement Plan:

Karyn: refer to CIP request ex. tennis courts- no money ex. trails for Riverfront Woods

This year’s budget is much smaller than anticipated. Also, there has been increased usage of parks and lands since Covid.

Jay: \$120,000- req. from parks and playground funds

Karyn: need to also request to use the funds

Jay: what about “wish list”? PLC could really use a lot more funding. How do we advocate in budget process for PLC?

Nat: Explains Capital Improvement Plan process. Nat needs to know NOW what projects each dept. anticipates in the next 3 to 5 years. Itemizing your equipment, expected life of item, replacement cost... Also, maintenance of facilities

ex. bridges built by volunteers are great, but not funded when they need replacement. Town Engineer needs to conduct assessments of all crossings. Nothing really goes beyond scheduled replacement and maintenance. None of this funds aspirations.

This is vetted by Planning Board, then goes to the Town Council. *Then* can put in appropriation requests.

Nat shares gloomy forecast of FY22 budgeting cloud. 5.5million shortfall which could mean 17% increase in property tax. There has been much discussion with dept. heads.

3 parts of plan:

1. contribution to capital reserve funds- *dedicated*
2. debt schedules and debt burden
3. identify requested capital projects and expenditures whether or not fully realized or funded- YET.

Nat has pooled ALL equipment from each dept.

Talked of the increased demands on parks and lands and the various demands ex. socioeconomic, age of patrons, children, etc.

Encourages us to get involved EARLY and ask:

1. how can we (as a committee) help everyone get through the next 1 to 2 years?
2. Important to clearly decide Parks and Lands priorities

Karyn thanks Nat for his very helpful insight. Lisa seconds that sentiment.

Jay reflects that we need more involved citizens and volunteers.

Nat compliments Erik on his ability to engage people in our public lands. People need to “buy in” on “ownership”

Mary T. apologizes for being late and Karyn will contribute the early minutes for the meeting.

7:38pm Mary W. motions to adjourn, Karen seconds. Unanimous.