

VILLAGE OF WESLEY CHAPEL PARKS & REC MINUTES
February 21, 2011-7:00 PM
Wesley Chapel Town Hall
4107 New Town Road, Wesley Chapel, NC 28173

Committee Members Present: Bill Bennett, Julie Brown, Marnie Holland, John Lepke and Elaine Rossof

Committee Members Absent: Pat Utley and Regina Hilbert

Non-Committee Members Present: Council Member Sondra Bradford, Kim Bayha, Frank Jennings and Carol Mullis

Marnie Holland called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.

1. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, AND / OR ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Agenda was approved with 7 additions to 11. Other Business.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

3. APPROVE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 15 2010 and JANUARY 17 2011.

Marnie Holland motioned, Julie Brown seconded motion to approve Minutes of Nov 15, 2010 and Jan 17 2011. Minutes were approved by unanimous vote. No meeting was held in December of 2010.

4. FEEDBACK FROM COUNCIL REGARDING P&R PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, SCHEDULE, BUDGET AND ACTION PLAN FOR 2011

Sondra provided feedback that Council is reluctant to move forward with any park programming due to current lack of infrastructure at the site (Parking and Restrooms). This relates primarily to any idea of on-going activities.

Council may be open to 'one-off' event(s) if parking arrangements could be made with Southbrook Church and restrooms facilities made available via 'Porta-Potties'. P&R would need to prepare a proposal to Council that addresses temporary infrastructure needs.

Frank Jennings, a resident that lives adjacent to Dogwood Park, raised a concern about adequate fencing and separation of the Park property and private residences bordering the Park. Most neighboring the park property residents already have some form of fencing in place. Mr. Jennings stated that the fence between his property and the park is inside the park property line. He also stated that Carmen Peters (sp?) property is closest to the intended parking lot location.

Sondra assured that WC ordinances and the CUP process via the Board of Adjustments would ensure appropriate screening; buffer trees, berms etc. would be installed in compliance with Village requirements. She also assured Mr. Jennings that consultation with neighbors would be part of the process. Mr. Jennings expressed satisfaction with this.

Mr. Jennings went on to request that some security measures be taken when the property is vacated. Lepke advised that the current plan is to install a gate to prevent vehicular access, motion sensing security lights and possibly an alarm system on the building. Mr. Jennings expressed satisfaction with this plan and also suggested some no trespassing signs.

5. STATUS OF PARTF GRANT BASED ON NC STATE LEGISLATOR EXPENDITURE CUTS

Sondra confirmed that a bill that affects PARTF funding has been passed to Gov. Perdue for approval. Marnie called for anyone interested to contact Gov. Perdue to voice support for continued PARTF funding. PARTF, in addition to having health and environmental benefits, offers creation of jobs and needed construction work for the State. Additionally since it is a matching fund program, local investment doubles the economic impact.

Sondra reported that Mayor Hovarth has had a discussion with Rep. Tommy Tucker regarding this subject. Exactly what will be cut from PARTF funding is unclear. A complete cut off to only 10% reduction in funding is rumored.

Bill Bennett raised the issue of insurance company 'rejection' of the idea of using volunteers to execute some park projects. Julie and Lepke both commented that other organizations have developed waivers that sufficiently protect from any liability. Lepke suggested that this is likely a legal matter and Sondra is to follow up with legal counsel for clarification.

6. BRAINSTORM WAYS TO GET PARK FUNDING IF PARTF GRANT NOT AVAILABLE

Since the future of PARTF funding is unclear this discussion centered around what can be done near term so that residents can begin using the facility for limited activities.

The two main infrastructure concerns are parking and restrooms. As a temporary measure the restroom need can be satisfied with 'Porta-Potties' as is practiced at other parks and recreation facilities. The cost for this would be, according to Julie Brown, \$65/month/unit. This includes 2 times per week service & cleaning. We would require at least 2 (His n Hers).

Parking – Marnie raised a question regarding temporary parking requirements for the period we do not have an amphitheater. This goes to actions necessary for providing temporary parking adequate for limited uses of the site. Sondra to review with Town Planning and provide response.

Lepke suggested that with removal of the fences around the tennis court this could be used for a limited number of spaces at very low cost. Depending on outcome of parking requirements for limited use, if additional parking is required clearing trees from an area adjacent to the tennis court area and surfacing, on temporary basis with gravel/stone could provide additional temporary parking at low cost. This action would be required for installation of permanent paved parking and would not be a waste of funds.

Based on some limited investigation Lepke estimates that clearing an area for parking would be less than \$5,000 and purchase and placement of gravel/stone perhaps again less than \$5,000.

Use of volunteers to create unpaved walking trails was discussed. This will be impacted by the findings regarding waiver of liability. However, Mr. Jennings stated that his neighbor, Doug Vielle (sp?) is a landscaping contractor and has expressed willingness to assist with machinery etc. Mr. Jennings is very familiar with the site and is pleased it is being conserved as a park for its natural beauty. He advised that during April/May when the Dogwoods are in bloom it is a sight to see.

7. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL GRANTS

Lepke asked, Sondra confirmed, that since PARTF issued a waiver regarding the initial \$750,000 purchase the Village has met its matching fund obligations for the \$500,000 grant being requested. Sondra reviewed grant possibilities beyond PARTF.

AAT \$5,000 max, 25% matching funds requirement. Application process has become much more complicated than prior years. Sondra is working on this application.

RTP \$75,000 max, 25% matching funds requirement. This is due on Monday 2/28 and has also become much more complicated than prior years. Sondra is working on this application.

Water Based Recreation Resources Grant \$100,000 max, 100% matching requirement.

Sondra reports that the authority in charge of this program is encouraging the Village to pursue and then pulling back! They seem to be unclear about the future funding for this program. A recommendation to award the grant is sent to DNER and then to the State for approval of the funding. Sondra will remain in contact to seek clarification.

Mr. Jennings provided some of his experiences with grant applications and called on the committee to help Sondra when she needs it. Marnie recognized Sondra's efforts with PARTF and the favorable feedback she heard.

Lepke made a motion, seconded by Marnie, to 'set-aside' the matching funds we would need should these grants be awarded until such time as the outcome is known. That is the balance available for any near term infrastructure, after current expenses and closing on the property purchase, should be reduced to reflect these requirements (see illustration below). The motion passed unanimously.

P&R Capital budget \$1,000,000.00

Current expenditures (\$ 46,818.06) (includes \$25,000 down payment)

Property Purchase (\$ 725,000.00)

AAT 'set aside' (\$ 1,250.00)

RTP 'set-aside' (\$ 18,750.00)

Water recreation 'set aside' (\$ 100,000.00)

Balance that may be considered for near term park development needs = \$108,181.94

8. DISCUSSION OF FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Several fund raising ideas were suggested for consideration: Sponsors purchase a length of trail and be recognized for the donation. Fishing contest where an entrance fee is charged and proceeds shared between P&R and winner of contest. Photo and/or painting contests where entry fee is charged and proceeds shared between P&R and contest winner. Winners of these contests could have their work sold at auction or displayed in park or Town Hall.

Recognition for sponsorship of sections of trail using signs along the trail was considered unsightly and damaging to the natural beauty.

Bill Bennett suggested designing a Park logo and selling tee shirts. He reported that set up cost is \$80 and then each shirt would cost \$8.00 that P&R could sell at a profit. No minimum order is required.

Lepke raised fact P&R had already agreed to a buy-a-brick program and that the details of that program need to be worked out. How will bricks be ordered, how will payment be made? How will sales/profit be accounted for and assigned to P&R. Who will take payments, manage accounts etc.

Bill volunteered to get hold of a sample brick and Marnie volunteered to investigate program details and provide proposal to P&R at the next meeting.

Julie asked if donation of labor, or any other kind, were tax deductible for the person/entity making the donation. Lepke stated that he believed that the entity receiving the donation needed specific IRS tax designation for this to be possible. Sondra to follow up with legal counsel regarding this and provide feedback to P&R.

Julie suggested that a notice board could be constructed from materials recovered from the remains of the Houston House. One side of the notice board could be used to recognize donations and the other side for P&R or Town notices.

9. DISCUSSION OF HOW TO BUILD PARK WITHOUT ADDITIONAL FUNDS

This topic was covered at length in 6 and incorporated therewith.

10. HOUSTON HOUSE UPDATE

Julie provided an update stating the site had been mostly cleared by a small team of volunteers. A lot of charred lumber was recovered that can be cleaned up and reused. Just the chimneys and debris not related to the house remains. Julie will be discussing any remaining activities with the Church and attempt to recover at least the original chimney.

Investigation into the Arson attack is ongoing. Witnesses have reported seeing vehicles near the site on the night of the arson.

Foundation stones were recovered from the site. Many visitors stopped by during the clean up to collect some wood to build bird houses and expressed their dismay at such a historic loss.

11 OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Carolina Thread Trail

Marnie provided a brief update. 15 counties to be connected by bike trails. Proposed routes through Union County have been established and published. On-line survey for resident feedback at www.carolinathreadtrail.org.

Marnie emphasized the tragic loss of the Houston House as it sat on a long line of Andrew Jackson related historic sites throughout Union and Lancaster Counties.

11.2 Beavers and other destructive animals.

Bill Bennet reviewed his discussions with NC Wildlife representatives and reported the negative consequences of Beavers and Muskrats residing on a property. NC wildlife representatives have visited Dogwood and recommended the removal of the Beavers and Muskrats.

Frank Jennings reported his experiences of the destructive nature of Beavers. He also reported that trees downed by Beavers present a hazard of impalement if fallen upon.

Sondra reviewed her discussions with a 'save-the-beaver' organization that suggested removal would be followed by subsequent re-population.

The idea of allowing a 'managed population' to remain was discussed. Prolific breeding and an ongoing need to monitor/manage population and resultant damage suggested that this isn't a practical suggestion. Lepke repeated discoveries he presented at the last P&R meeting and suggested that a decision be made quickly. Based on the negative cost, health and safety consequences of allowing destructive animals to remain he motioned for removal of beavers from the site. Julie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

As with Beavers, the removal of the Muskrats and risk of expensive damage to the dam outweighed the benefit of allowing them to remain. Julie made a motion to also remove the Muskrats, seconded by Elaine. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill reviewed the options as trapping the beavers or allowing a local huntsman to attempt to shoot them. This would require Village permission to discharge a firearm on Village property.

NC State recommends trapping which can be contracted for \$1500, plus retention of pelts/meat. P&R agreed unanimously to recommend the Village engage the services of the State recommended Beaver trapper for \$1500.00.

Similar situation with respect to Muskrats. A trapping service for the Muskrats can be procured for \$500. P&R agreed unanimously to recommend the Village engage the services of the State recommended Muskrat trapper for \$500.00.

11.3 P&R Minute Process

Marnie proposed that we return to alphabetical list for designation of responsibility for writing minutes of P&R meetings. All agreed.

Marnie then proposed the process to ensure that minutes reach the village clerk in a timely manner. The following was agreed. Person responsible for the minutes will circulate a draft no later than the Friday that precedes the next P&R meeting (3rd Monday of each month). Committee members will come to meeting prepared to offer suggestions for amendments or approval of minutes. Should any amendments be agreed a hard copy of the draft containing hand written notation of the changes would be left for the Village Clerk on the day of the P&R when the minutes (with changes) were approved. The author will make any changes and forward e-copy of the corrected minutes to the Clerk by the close of business on the Friday following the meeting.

11.4 New P& R members

P&R has a vacancy for one full member and one alternate. Elaine Rosoff has opted to remain an alternate. Two applicants have formally expressed interest in joining the P&R committee; Kim Bayha and

Janet Brower. Kim has already attended P&R meetings and is a neighbor of Dogwood Park. Lepke suggested that having a committee member that is a resident of the neighboring community to act as liaison to those most affected would be useful. Lepke made a motion to recommend Kim for the member and Janet as the alternate. Julie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

11.5 Indian Trail Arts & Historic Committee.

Julie Brown provided a report regarding attendance at this committee meeting. She reported that Indian Trail is burying a time capsule to be opened 100 years from now.

11.6 Waxhaw Library

Elaine Rosoff reported on her investigations regarding local Library activities. Waxhaw library was started by a group of ladies and is now part of the Union County Library System. As such it is required to have periodicals, Internet access etc. and incur expenses that UC will not pay for. She also visited JAARS and received information that would assist Wesley Chapel with establishing a volunteer library.

11.7 Water Fowl Sanctuary

Sondra reported that NC Wildlife was not in favor of a Water Fowl Sanctuary in Dogwood where fishing will take place. Lepke also reported that the water fowl organization was not interested in a sanctuary where fishing takes place because of the danger to the birds from hooks and fishing line entanglement.

11.8 Naming of the park

At the previous P&R meeting a need to establish a process involving the citizens in the naming process for our park was identified. Elaine motioned that we advertise an opportunity to suggest a name for the park in the next village newsletter and then P&R would vote for the favorite suggestion and make recommendation to Council. Seconded by Lepke. Motion accepted unanimously.

Elaine suggested the name 'Dogwood Park at Wesley Chapel.'

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:57