

**Volunteers Green, Browns Court, Round Church Green
3 Parks Improvement Committee (ARPA Funds)**

Approved Minutes from meeting on Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Members Attending: Denise Barnard, Kendra Ziskie, Fran Thomas, Tess Storrs, Megan Andrews, Jeanne Agner

Members Absent: Mary Lefebvre

Guests in person:

Attending Virtually: Melissa Wolaver, Andrew Bessette.

Public comment: Melissa asked about if there would be an area left for walkers around the perimeter of Brown's Court. Zoning states that there has to be a 5' setback from the property line for any building. That should allow for a clear perimeter. Melissa also wanted us to know that parents from the Richmond Elementary School use that lot for picking up the kids at the end of the school day and that it's a busy spot at that time

Minutes Approved from last meeting on April 3

Next scheduled meetings

- **May 2** - 6:30 at the Round Church. Public hearing for the trees that will be cut with Caitlin Littlefield with the town tree warden. Must have a public hearing if the tree is on public property. Fran and others will attend this meeting.
- **May 2** - 7 pm - We meet following the tree hearing. Topics for us include 1) Review of the agenda for the Volunteers Green Selectboard summit. 2) Finalizing suggested plans for BC.
- **May 13** - 6 pm Selectboard Meeting - Summit regarding the future of Volunteers Green to discuss what improvements can be made in the flood zone. Those decisions will affect this committee's work.
- **May 23** - Follow up to Volunteer Green summit and begin planning for VG. Finalize plans for Selectboard presentation for Browns Court and Round Church Green improvements.
- **June 3** - Present to the Selectboard our recommendations for improvements for Brown's Court Park and Round Church Green.

Agenda:

Update from the April 15 Selectboard meeting . These items might have an impact on our committee work. Denise shared the following information.

- The verbage for the May 13 meeting will be changed from Recreation Summit to Volunteer's Green Summit. The purpose of this meeting is to determine the future of Volunteers Green due to the impact of flooding.
- The Selectboard learned that they can allocate ARPA funds for a specific purpose even if the bids are not in by the deadline,
- The Town did not not receive the VOREC grant for the playground. The Selectboard had \$100,000 reserved as a match for the grant. That money is now included in our budget for the 3 parks,
- Conservation easement - Board members have met with the town attorney to draft an easement for Brown's Court. The Richmond Land Trust would hold the easement. They are working on a plan to ensure that the park is designated as a space for recreation for the next 50 or 100 years - or in perpetuity.
- The Board approved the Richmond Conservation Commission request for planting an additional 150 trees to help with stabilizing the bank. They will be planting an additional 50 trees between the rip rap. Volunteers Green Habitat Restoration group will be doing the planting and will be assisted by students from CHMS
- The town municipal park ordinance which includes Overrockers Park, VG, BC and will add RC Green is being updated. The ordinance states how these municipal parks can and cannot be used. For example, the parks cannot be used for overnight parking, etc. There will be signage at each park explaining the regulations.

Discussion of Volunteers Green Summit to be hosted by the Selectboard

Denise, Kendra and Fran will meet with Josh Arneson, town manager and David Sanders, Selectboard chair to plan the agenda for that meeting. The board is hoping to hold the meeting in the larger room of the library. Our committee will arrive at 5:30 to help with the setup.

Overall costing discussion/review continued

Looking at the plans **for Browns' Court and the Round Church Green**, firming up prices and discussion of how to determine what to eliminate. We want to present the entire plan to the Selectboard but want to be sure to have enough funds reserved to plan for Volunteers Green improvements, when we know what can be done there. We want to highlight for the board what our priorities are for these 2 parks and what might be done in the future, if we are over budget when we determine the cost needed for improvements at Volunteers Green. We will point out what items could go out to bid now and what could wait for a decision when we have the total financial picture for all 3

parks. We then talked about the actual presentation. Kendra will put together the visual presentation - photos of the items will be interspersed with the numbers. Each of us will present a portion.

We talked about what our role would be after we presented our plans. Fran read a previous response from Josh “ Once we present our ideas to the selectboard, and the plan or any part of the plans are accepted, the selectboard would hire a project manager”. Do we have to include that cost into our plan? **Who was going to research this?**

Parking lot at Brown’s Court. Denise talked with Pete Gosslin this week about the parking lot. Pete is behind with many of the town projects due to all of the work he had to do after the flooding. For this reason, he would not be available to have the town crew put in the parking lot. We are getting three quotes from outside companies. If Pete is able to do this, his labor and the materials should still come out of these funds.

The **softball field** is in bad shape. As that was the original purpose of this park, we want to be sure that the ball field is a priority. It needs clay and grass work. Possibly some fencing. We prioritized benches for the players over bleachers for the spectators. Megan will check on prices. Dugouts were briefly mentioned. That may have to be a fundraising priority for the teams or leagues.

Tess will get updated items, repositioned items and measurements for John Linn to include in the architectural drawing.

Discussions include how we could display a diagram at Browns Court and/or possibly paint some lines on the grass to demonstrate where structures would be. This could help the public visualize what the plans look like. Perhaps we could even offer some times where a few of us could be at the park to review the plans with any one from the public who is interested. Perhaps the drawings could be posted at the library and town center for review by the public.

Updates from members on their research since the 4/3/24 meet

Fran updated us on the tree work that ACER will be doing in all three parks. (See above tree warden hearing)

Tess let us know that the Oakledge **bocce** group is having a cleanup day and working on the courts. Tess will be going. She is researching the various types of bocce balls and pricing items needed for regular court maintenance. Tess got a return call from a company from Stowe today - they were calling from Browns Court. They will be putting

together a quote for bocce court. All of the quotes collected have not included the cost of the specialized stone for the top layer of the court. The price for that material and trucking will need to be included in our plans.

Jeanne got in touch with Erin Farr from the Garden Committee. They are aware of the tree work that is being planned and other areas that we have been discussing that might impact their role in the future.

Tess attended the Open Meeting workshop. She would like 5 minutes to share some of that information with us. We were reminded of protocol for email communication.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.