

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

Minutes from meeting on February 13, 2024 Approved Feb 28, 2024

Members Attending: Kendra Ziskie, Fran Thomas, Tess Storrs, Jeanne Agner

Members Absent: Mary Lefebvre, Denise Barnard, Megan Andrews

Recreation committee members attending virtually: Mark Fausel

Guests in person: Jim Oliver,

Attending Virtually: John Linn, Mary Claire Carrol, Lisa Miller

Minutes Approved from last meeting on Tuesday Jan 30 with one name correction

Next scheduled meetings Weds. Feb 28, 2024

Public comment: None

Browns Court

o Chris Haggerty Survey – any updates None

o Revised Site plan from John Linn

John Linn reviewed the revised site plan that he had prepared. This plan included a slight relocation of the ball field with the current fencing and the softball storage shed, bleachers, pickleball court, bocce court, 20 space parking lot with balusters and a row of cedar hedges for noise abatement. This updated plan also included amenities such as a storage shed for pickleball/bocce, 4 benches, a water fountain and a porta potty.

The manhole cover located on the property is part of a sewer line that was missed on the initial survey. The town water and sewer employees came down and marked it with bright green paint. The sewage flows from the school to Burnett road then underneath Browns Court road and then goes down to Tilton avenue. The pipe is five to six feet underground. It appears that it would not be directly under any of the construction. Even if a pickle ball court were constructed near there would be no excavation that deep. However, we should be aware of that line as we position things.

There was some discussion about the small triangular area of land that juts into the area close to the ball field. When the town discusses the property lines with the landowners, perhaps something with that small triangle of land could be worked out so that the border of Brown's Court is somewhat straighter. After the Town Meeting, Josh Arneson will talk about this with Chris Haggerty.

We are still awaiting the cost from Pettinelli for a bike rack. Justin thought it would be around \$500, which is lower than some of the other racks we have seen. John will add that and the ADA picnic table to the site plan.

o Summary of action items to move ahead with planning for this park

- Get a price for cement bases for the four benches and picnic table. (Jeanne/Fran)
- Get other quotes for excavation for the parking lot. Clarify work for the entrance.(Denise?)
- Final plans and quotes for bocce court (Tess)

-Overall costing discussion/review for this park

Kendra has compiled a spreadsheet that includes the specific improvements we have discussed at our meetings. The price for each item is included. Where able, she has included information regarding maintenance information and estimates.

We looked carefully at the information gathered thus far for Brown's Court improvements. The plans and itemized prices for that park are very close to being finalized.

We plan to present the suggested improvements for all three parks as one proposal to the Selectboard. We are very aware that there will be some items that we will need to cut in order to meet the \$450,000 budget we were given. We'll continue to work with this framework as we determine the costs for the other two parks. We also are noting maintenance costs and notes in this proposal.

Volunteers Green:

o Chris Haggerty Survey of the bandshell area. There is no update at this time.

o Continued discussion around overall park layout Until we know more about the plateau and zoning, we are at somewhat of a standstill.

Playground update - Jeanne met last week with the recreation committee to review the playground proposal from the 3 reps. We talked about the time crunch the 3 parks committee will be in as soon as we learn about where a playground might be built. It was agreed that Justin Mansfield from Miracle Playground/Pettinelli seemed to be the best fit for our needs. Jeanne presented that information and more rationale as to why she recommends Justin for the playground build. He knows our unique needs having walked the area with Pete Gosselin. Justin has assisted Pete and the crew to maintain the current playground throughout the years. The proposal he presented was within our price point. We liked the design and know that the design will change as we learn the space we have to build. Jeremy Rector, RES principal and the Christ the King principal both highly recommend his work. Pettinelli is a local company based out of Burlington. Landshapes is based out of New Hampshire and Kompan is

from Boston. While there were parts of each design that we liked, the Pettinelli proposal and that company rose to the top. Justin was also the only one of the three reps that expressed an interest in working with volunteers on any portion of the build. Jeanne made a motion that we continue to work with Justin Mansfield from Miracle/Pettinelli as we further develop the plan for the playground. The motion passed. Jeanne will contact Justin as well as the other two candidates.

Jeanne shared some outreach she did with students from the Mansfield Coop. This school uses the playground on a daily basis. The children were very interested in sharing suggestions and very thoughtful while reviewing the designs that we have. While there was a lengthy discussion about the playground and flood zones, one of the things that several of the students were most passionate about was the quality of the bathrooms. An up-to-date bathroom facility closer to the playground with non gender specific stalls was at the top of their list.

Other info from Recreation committee

Presented by Jeanne and Mark F. At the recreation committee meeting on Feb 6, the committee discussed the suggestions for the role the rec committee could play in ensuring the parks are regularly maintained. The committee thought one of their roles could be noting maintenance needs for the clubs or for the town- not doing the actual maintenance. They talked about the role the rec committee could play in ensuring that the storage shed for pickleball and bocce at Brown's Court be looked after - perhaps keeping track of who has the code to the padlock, etc. and assuring that there was good signage explaining usage rules and contact numbers.

They reiterated that a multi use course (sharing pickleball and tennis) would be very difficult to manage. It was noted that parks/towns that have multi use courts are those that typically have a paid recreation director to manage the shared usage, set up and take down, scheduling, etc. As a tennis court can accommodate 2 to 4 players at a time and a similar sized space for pickleball court has 4 courts and can accommodate up to 16 players at one time, a pickleball court would accommodate more community members. Therefore a pickleball court seems to them to be the best option at this time.

Upcoming Event: The recreation committee is sponsoring a ***Snowshoe Ramble*** in each of the 3 towns over the last weekend of February to tie in with the school break. Each event is from 10 to 12. The snowshoes that the committee procured with a grant and are kept at the Richmond Free Library will be at the following events for anyone to try. Feb 24 - Volunteers Green. Family events with cookies provided by the Community Senior Center. Feb 25 - Meet at BPS for a walk/snowshoe at Huntington Community Forest. Feb 26- Meet at Smilie School. Following the morning event, Ethan Tapper will lead a group on a winter forest walk from 1 to 3.

Community feedback and outreach

Discussion followed regarding any feedback from our post on the Front Porch Forum. At this point there were only a few responses. Those were in regards to a potential path at Volunteers Green. Several members got individual responses, mostly thanking us for the work we are putting into this. There has not been much time since the posts, therefore it is early to expect much feedback. Denise also posted as an individual re housing on Browns Court. It was also too early to have feedback from that post. Fran has submitted the same article to the Time's Ink in order to reach others in the community. A suggestion was to post in the Community Senior Newsletter as that reaches a large audience.

On another point, members have been soliciting town people regarding their views on replacing the Bandstand with a new structure. At this time, no one has heard any negative feedback. The overall opinion seems to be that the current bandshell does not function very well.

There was discussion about how we might go about getting public feedback regarding some of the suggestions we are researching. We feel that a survey is not the best way to gather information - there is usually minimal participation. We have input from the original ARPA survey. We hope to make a community wide presentation(s) when our plans are more finalized. There will be some mechanism for feedback. We discussed having a weekend presentation vs other times such as having one of our meetings be for the presentation. The playground grant stipulates that we gather feedback regarding that design. We are hoping to hear about that grant soon. We will be planning the playground presentation in conjunction with the recreation committee.

We acknowledged that plans regarding Browns Court took much longer than we thought when we learned that there were not clear property line boundaries. We had to await a survey as to what the town owns or how much of that park was buildable. Further planning for Volunteers Green is on hold as we await the survey regarding floodway, flood zone and the elevations of the plateau. Learning about zoning in a floodway has been an education for all of us. We are also waiting to know what FEMA will be covering with regards to the ball fields and the restroom/ concession stand. We hope to be able to soon move ahead with designs, estimates and quotes . We also have to finalize suggestions for the Round Church Green.

We know that our proposals already total more money than allocated to us. We want to get feedback from the community as to what items in the proposal are priorities, what could be shelved for future committees, what may not be desirable. Our committee will be talking more about this as we continue our research and gather estimates and quotes.

It was reiterated that our work is to look at a variety of suggestions, determine the feasibility and costs of some of these suggestions and then make a proposal to the Selectboard. We will have to decide if we want to eliminate some things before our presentation and/or give options about items. The Selectboard has the final say. We are presenting our research.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

The next meeting will be on Weds. Feb 28.