

**Volunteers Green, Browns Court, Round Church Green**  
**3 Parks Improvement Committee (ARPA Funds)**  
**Approved Minutes from meeting on April 3, 2024**

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

**Members Absent:** Mary Lefebvre, Fran Thomas

**Guests in person:** Jim Oliver

**Attending Virtually:** Jon Kart, Velma Plouffe

**Public comment:** None

**Minutes Approved** from last meeting on March 14, 2024

**Next scheduled meetings** Thurs April 18

**Update from last two Select Board meetings with regards to our work**

From the April 1 Selectboard meeting

- 1. The Select Board will be hosting a Round Table discussion/summit regarding the future of recreation at Volunteer's Green.** This meeting will be held on May 13 from 6 to 9 pm

Our committee needs to know what is possible at Volunteer's Green re: zoning and the flood zone. The damage from two major floods in Volunteers Green in the past year has cost the town considerable time and money. After seeing the damage that was done to the playground, this committee questions putting a new playground in at the current space. Before we move on with plans to replace the playground and look into repairing or replacing the bandshell, we need to know if the town wishes to invest money into that area and if so what are our limitations.

The selectboard has invited the Town Manager, Town Planner, Zoning Administrator, the Road Foreman, a FEMA representative and at least one member from various town committees to attend this meeting. Denise, Kendra and Fran (?) will be meeting with David Sander, selectboard chair, to plan the agenda for this meeting.

Pete Gosselin, Town Road foreman and the person who has been maintaining VG and putting it back together after the flood events presented his idea to our committee regarding his thoughts on redesigning the plateau area (the higher area which currently has the bandshell and the memorial garden.) Our committee would like him to present his ideas at this summit. Chris Haggerty completed a survey of elevations and determined that the higher ground is still considered to be in the flood zone. We are hoping that he will present his findings at this meeting.

This is a selectboard meeting, it will be warned and the agenda will be posted. It is a public meeting. Jon Kart encouraged us to be sure neighbors are included in this discussion. Our committee has offered to provide pizza and other refreshments.

- 1) **The selectboard has been looking into how to address the request to declare that Browns Court remain as a park for recreation for the future.**

The SB is looking into a possible 50 or a 100 year easement with the Vermont Land Trust or the Richmond Land Trust as well as other options. Denise volunteered to work with developing a draft for this proposal.

- 2) An explanation of the work being proposed for the intersection of Cochran Rd. Thompson Road, Bridge Street was presented. Our committee was interested in what effect that might have on the Round Church Green such as tree removal and lighting.
- 3) A Porta Potty accessible to all will be installed at both VG and BC
- 4) Mow and Maintain will mow all 3 parks again this year.
- 5) A municipal park designation will be made to include all three of the Richmond parks

From the March 18 Selectboard meeting

**1)Tree work.** The Select Board has approved to go ahead now with tree work including limbing, stump removal, removing dead and dying trees that our research found to be needed for safety reasons as well as aesthetics. The funds for this will not be coming from the \$450,000 of our ARPA funds. Tess, Denise and Fran met with ACER to get another quote. They are the company working behind the library. They will review quotes and recommend a service company.

**2) The original deadline for our committee to present a plan to the Selectboard was moved from March to October 1.** However, many of the items will need to go out to bid. It will be a tight timeframe.

### **Continued discussion and on going work**

We discussed what target deadline we want to give ourselves as ideally we'd like to present the plan, quotes and research to the Select Board sooner than October in order for bids to go out for the bigger projects.

We reviewed the idea of presenting the BC and RC plans to the Selectboard as those plans are close to being finalized. We talked again about not wanting to commit to the entire plan until we know how much funds we want to reserve for improvement at VG and how we could do that. We will ask to be on the agenda in May or early June- possibly June 3, to present our plans for those two parks. After that, our focus will be on VG as we will have a direction by then.

We reviewed the commitment for ARPA funds. The \$450,000 is still dedicated to our work. \$89,00 of the original allocation to the town is still not allocated.

## **Updates from members on their research since the 3/14/24 meeting regarding the ongoing projects/quotes/estimates on any/all of the three parks**

Tess received a preliminary quote for a double bocce court. The design is based on the courts at Oakledge Park. The quote did not include the procurement, cost and installation of the top layer of special stone. She is looking into pricing items needed for regular maintenance such as a lawn roller, metal rakes and hoses.

Tess discussed the noise that some have with regards to pickleball. She said that now that the sport is developing there is more consideration to noise. The United States Pickleball Association is working with companies to create quieter paddles and balls as well as noise reducing screens. One company has created paddles that meet USPA criteria. There are balls and screens on the market but they have not been endorsed by USPA, therefore she is not recommending a screen at this time. Note, we have already planned for a hedge of cedar trees on the east side of the court.

## **Other public outreach discussion**

Jeanne updated **information from the Recreation committee** meeting the night before.

At that meeting, there was a lengthy discussion about the benefits of having a recreation director for 8 to 12 hours per week. This could be a volunteer or a paid position. Either way, a job description should be developed. Mark F. agreed to work on that and will ask for help from Fran. Lisa Miller, attending from the selectboard, thought that a person with some authority to make smaller decisions could only be a help to the Town Manager. Members thought that a director would be a big help in recruiting more members to a recreation committee. Mark is going to ask Josh to put this item on a future agenda for the selectboard.

The rec committee is going to make the formal request for the annual playground inspection from the state. An inspection was done before the July flood then someone looked at the playground after that flood. A formal inspection was not done after the December flooding.

**Meeting was adjourned.**