

Dear Melissa,.

I have read your letter addressed to the 3 Parks Committee about our application for Conservation Funds. The letter was forwarded to me by Judy Rosovsky, of the Conservation Commission as part of the agenda and materials for the next Conservation Commission meeting. The Members of the 3 Parks Committee never received this letter. I am not speaking for the 3 Parks Committee, but for myself as we will not be meeting again until the 21st of August, I will attempt to address your concerns. As expressed in your letter.

Updating the description of the types of uses occurring at Browns Court can be done., That would serve to strengthen the need for the amenities that we are asking for funds to install.

. You are somewhat misinformed or lacking current information regarding the improvements to Browns Court Park. The plans for the pickle ball court were approved by the Developmental Review Board Their first decision mistakenly said 99 trees. This was their error and not ours. We went back to the DRB with a correct site plan that showed correctly the 60 trees that are to be planted around the court whenever we secure funding. The Emerald Green Arborvitae trees that have been approved are expected to grow to 3-4 feet wide at maturity. The projected growth will in not hinder a path around the park.

Here is more information about the Emerald Green Arborvitae.

The Emerald Green Arborvitae is a popular evergreen tree known for its vibrant, emerald-green foliage and dense, narrow form. Growing 10-15 feet tall and 3-4 feet wide at maturity, this Arborvitae is ideal for creating a natural privacy screen, windbreak, or garden hedge. Its compact, upright growth habit makes it perfect for smaller spaces or tight areas where vertical growth is needed. Hardy in USDA Zones 2-7, the Emerald Green Arborvitae thrives in a variety of climates, including colder regions, and maintains its lush green color year-round, adding lasting beauty and structure to any landscape.

Based on my experience having lived in Richmond for over 50 years, it is prudent to attach benches and picnic tables to solid objects such as concrete pads. We once had to get a diver to rescue 3 newly placed benches from the river, thrown in by some local youth. The tables at Volunteers Green are not bolted down so that they can be easily moved out of the way during flood events and goings on at Volunteers Green. We do not expect any floods up at Browns Court and the planned placement of these amenities will not interfere with any walkers, etc. The concrete pads help to extend the life of the table and benches and make it easier for individuals in wheel chairs to use

them. The pads will not get muddy during rainy periods as will grass or the lack of grass due to scouring by feet while using them. They are also easier for the park maintenance crew. A lawnmower can easily mow over ground level pads. If there are not pads, each bench would require separate weed wacking. If you look around Town at the town center and on the Round Church Green, most of the benches are anchored into a concrete pad or concrete pavers.

The layout for Browns Court was made public many months ago and has not been modified since it was initially drafted and then proposed to the Selectboard for their approval to move forward and then to the DRB on 2 different occasions, each resulting in approval. You had voiced concern at one of our meetings about a walking perimeter. We listened to your concerns! We made sure there was an adequate area for walking between the court and the tree line.

As to the width of the walking path, I have found these specifications published by reputable sites:

Primary walkways should be a minimum of 48" (1.25m) wide. This width is to accommodate two walking side by side. This width would accommodate wheelchairs as well. This does not mean all front walkways need to be this wide on every design. A 7 1/2-foot-wide track will allow a runner to comfortably pass them. Anything narrower is a compromise; anything wider is an extravagance. Consider the two inside lanes at 2 1/2 feet each to be walking lanes and the single outside lane to be the jogging lane. A width of 8 feet after the trees reach maturity around the pickle ball courts seems more than sufficient.

As mentioned previously, the 3 Parks Committee will not be meeting until the 21st of August, but members will be at the Conservation Committee meeting for what we hope is a second positive vote to recommend our application for funds to the Selectboard.

Please let me know if I can answer any more questions or address other concerns you may have regarding our application before that meeting.

Sincerely,
Fran Thomas