

Recreation Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes
March 9th, 2023

Members Present: Sheri Lynn, Kate Kreider, Kirsten Santor, Kathy Costello, Mark Fausel

Community Members Present: Jack Lazarowski (Senior center member), Duncan Wardwell (Assistant to the town manager), Gina Prader (Richmond resident)

Minutes Taker: Kate Kreider

Meeting began at 7 PM

Public Comment and non-agenda items: Sheri reminded everyone that there is a speaker panel on Wednesday March 15 that the Conservation Commission has organized to educate the public about balancing recreation with conservation and to facilitate discussion around this topic. Gina Prader introduced herself and stated that she is attending to hear more about what our committee is working on.

7:06 PM: Approval of Minutes from February 2nd: Kate motioned to approve the minutes, Kirsten seconded. No discussion. Minutes approved unanimously.

7:07 PM: Inspection of Volunteer's Green Playground. Duncan stated that he reached out to VLCT (VT League of Cities and Towns) about having an inspection done and he received confirmation that it will happen sometime this spring. Kirsten mentioned it may also be beneficial to have a CPSI (Certified Playground Safety Inspector) to inspect the playground as well. The CPSI inspectors provide a different type of inspection than the insurance inspector from VLCT, which focuses on the town's liability. Kate suggested that this additional inspection may give us more information regarding the realistic longevity of the playground so that we can get an idea of how long the playground would continue to be safe to use. This would give the committee more of a timeline as to how quickly the playground needs to be replaced. Gina suggested that the local schools may have names for CPSI inspectors that they use for the playgrounds. Sheri agreed that it would be a good idea to look into additional inspectors in hopes of gathering additional data regarding the playground's actual current state and how long it may last. Kate volunteered to ask the RES (Richmond Elementary School's) principal regarding who they use for playground inspectors. Kirsten also volunteered to reach out to her contacts if Kate is unable to get any additional inspector information from the school.

7:15 PM: Review of Calendar of Park Use Events: Duncan briefly reviewed the scheduled events for Volunteers Green. Kate suggested reaching out to Annie Lajoie and asking her not to bring in sand like she did last year for her 'beginning of summer carnival' event. Duncan stated that he will follow up with her. Briefly discussed that it may be good to provide more communication to all users of the park and reinforce that the area needs to be left as they found it when hosting an event. Gina mentioned that she really appreciates having a sandbox at Volunteers Green. Kate mentioned that she has thought about making the sandbox bigger to

accommodate the extra sand pile that was left next to the current box last summer, but most likely the extra sand will just be removed at some point.

7:24 PM: Committee Website Page Discussion: Kirsten briefly reviewed what she has done so far with the committee's town website page and asked for feedback regarding how the page should be laid out and what information the committee wants to include. Sheri commented that it is important to make it clear on the website that the Recreation Committee is a three town committee (Huntington, Bolton, Richmond). Sheri mentioned that when Kathy was appointed to our committee recently, one of the selectboard asked why we are a three town committee and if the other towns are contributing financially to the committee's work. We are close knit communities who share recreation resources and we should be welcoming and neighborly to surrounding towns. Kathy suggested that it may be beneficial to have more clarity regarding what we are working on that is benefitting towns other than Richmond.

Committee members discussed how to organize the links on the website page and what information to include. The current headlines/links on the website page are Community Programs, Youth Sports, and River Access. Some suggestions, such as the senior center and trails, have their own website page. The recreation page could include a link to the other pages. There was a suggestion to post adult sports/pick-up games if there are any. Kathy suggested adding specific river access points in the three towns. Kirsten recommended for everyone to brainstorm activities that are available in the three towns and then we can figure out how to organize all of those activities on the website. Committee members agreed to brainstorm recreation activities and to send them to Sheri. At our next meeting we will discuss how to organize them on the recreation website page.

Mark raised the question of whether or not we should include for-profit businesses on the website page and if we do include them then should we define/separate them from the non-profit businesses. Kate mentioned that when we asked Josh about this, he responded that generally we don't put for-profit businesses on town websites but we could put links to the businesses' websites on our website page. Discussion followed regarding what the purpose of our recreation page will be and who we are looking to reach with it. The question was raised of whether we are aiming for people who are already in our community and who are not aware of all of the recreation resources or if we are aiming for people from outside our communities who are looking for recreation information. Discussion leaned towards both aiming for people within and outside of our communities.

Kathy cautioned that there are consequences to bringing more people to our area and we should be thoughtful about what we put out there. Jack shared a good example of this challenge in his experience with the Senior Center activities. Jack stated that they are getting more and more participants from outside of Bolton, Richmond, and Huntington. This is starting to create a challenge with activities that can only accommodate a certain number of participants. Jack also mentioned there have been some instances of ageism during pickleball. Younger participants are signing up for times at the pickleball courts. Jack agrees that the committee's discussion is raising important questions and that it is worth considering all of this when designing the website

page so that the committee can be thoughtful in how recreation activities in our communities are promoted.

Kathy stated that she is leaning toward focusing on community members and people who are new to the area. She cautioned that if there is too much advertisement of our recreation opportunities then community members may lose out on what we are trying to create for them (access to local recreation opportunities). Jack mentioned that due to rising popularity and realistic limits on certain activities, the senior center will have to make some decisions regarding if they are going to limit or exclude residents from other towns or give preferential attendance to local community members. Sheri suggested for committee members to also brainstorm what they want to accomplish with the web page and who they want to reach. Sheri also suggested revisiting our committee vision statement for direction. Mark suggested that on our web page we could include links to the recreation web pages for Bolton and Huntington, if they have web pages.

7:59 PM Volunteers Green Spring Clean Up Day: Discussed doing a spring clean up day at Volunteers Green and reaching out to the community to recruit volunteers to help. Sheri suggested that we could do it on Green Up Day, which is the first Saturday in May. This year it will fall on May 6th. Kate mentioned that this may be a great opportunity for parents with kids to come help who may otherwise not participate in Green Up Day due to the danger of being on a roadside with young children. Gina suggested reaching out to the local daycare to see if they want to be involved and bring kids over on a weekday to help clean up. Sheri suggested that we can do our own signup for people who want to clean up Volunteers Green, so it would be separate from the town's Green Up Day sign up. Time suggested was 10AM-noon. Discussed some general clean-up that could be done, such as: adding more wood chips to the playground, cleaning up brush from the trail, moving the excess sand that is next to the sandbox, scrubbing/cleaning the picnic tables and benches. Sheri mentioned bringing out the bin of games that we purchased for people to check out and use during the clean-up and to keep out for the warmer months. We discussed how we would get brush/debris and the sand removed from Volunteers Green. Duncan stated that brush/debris could be removed by the town, but he's not sure about the sand. Mark offered his assistance and his truck to take away the excess sand for his property. Duncan said the town can't use the sand. Since the sand was left behind from the event last year, we will put some of it into the existing sandbox and remove the rest. Sheri asked Duncan how early we will need to ask the town about ordering mulch/wood chips for the playground. Duncan responded that he will check into the process for that and follow up with the committee. Sheri volunteered to write up a draft promotional blurb for the clean up day at Volunteers Green for members to review. Kate will talk with the other Conservation Commission members who organize Green Up Day and let them know the Recreation Committee's plans. To summarize, the current plan is to have a Volunteers Green clean up day on Green Up Day, May 6th, from 10AM-noon and the committee will reach out to the public to recruit volunteers.

8:17 PM: Budget Discussion. Briefly reviewed the town's budgets for Volunteer's Green, \$3,000 for maintenance and \$3,000 for equipment. The committee does not have control over the funds but we can request the town to use the funds for needs that we identify.

8:20 PM: ARPA Request Update: Sheri reviewed our request for ARPA funds. The items on the request were also supported by the ARPA committee's data that they collected from the community. After our February meeting, Sheri reached out to Jay Furr and Josh Arnesan to find out if we could add any additional requests to our original request. She received communication that the ARPA committee would be making a decision regarding what projects to recommend to the select board in the near future. This would not allow the Recreation Committee enough time to conduct public engagement regarding possible additional structures before submitting additional requests, so the decision was made to stick with the original request.

Sheri and Kate received some concerned feedback regarding the possibility of additional structures at Volunteers Green and the restrictions at Volunteers Green due to floodplain regulations. This feedback was in response to a FPF post from a concerned citizen. Sheri and Kate responded to the concerns. Sheri and Kate are planning to meet with Tyler Machia, Richmond's Zoning Administrative Officer, to learn more about the floodplain regulations at Volunteers Green.

Kate stated that the few concerns she received from residents make it clear that there needs to be a lot of public engagement regarding Volunteers Green before the committee seeks any funding for additional structures. Kate suggested that if in the future it is deemed appropriate to seek funding for additional structures, then the committee could look into other funding sources, such as a Capital Plan. Kate also added that as planned, once the committee secures funding for a new playground we will also engage the public regarding various design and material options for playground equipment. Sheri agrees and states the committee's focus has and still is on replacing the playground and repairing structures that are currently at Volunteers Green. Sheri stated that if the ARPA committee chooses to go another direction or include additional items then that is their choice, and ultimately it is really the select board's decision.

Mark mentioned that he was on the Planning Commission when they first put in the flood plain zoning regulations and that the biggest issue is obstruction of flow. If a structure doesn't obstruct flow then it would probably be allowed at Volunteers Green. Mark also suggested that although it may be too late for ARPA funds, he feels that the additional structures we discussed should still be on our radar as a committee. Mark offered to join the meeting with Tyler about the floodplain regulations. Sheri and Kate are happy to have him join.

Sheri reminded members to please send her their recreation ideas for the website, thoughts on what we want to accomplish with the website page, and ideas of tasks that need to be done during the spring clean-up at Volunteers Green.

Motion to adjourn. Sheri motions, Kirsten seconds, meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.