

**Richmond Recreation Committee Meeting**  
**August 9th, 2023, 7PM**

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Sheri Lynn, Kate Kreider, Kathy Costello, Kirsten Santor, Mark Fausel.

**Community Members:** Jessie Lawrence

**Minutes Taker:** Kate Kreider

**Meeting started at 7:04 PM**

**Public Comment and Non-agenda Items:** Sheri shared that Huntington has been selected for a grant that community members applied for through the Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation. The grant is for improving trail access. A parking lot will be built for the new town forest in Huntington to improve access. There will also be a trail created that is more accessible for users of all abilities.

**7:08 PM Approval of Minutes from June 8th:** Cathy makes a motion to approve, Kirsten seconds, no discussion. All in favor. Minutes are passed unanimously.

**7:10 PM Park Use Events:** Sheri reviewed the upcoming park use events. No concerns were raised regarding the scheduled events.

**7:12 PM: Clarification of Recreation Line in Richmond Town Budget:** Sheri updated committee members regarding the committee's vote to use our \$500 budget to purchase recreation equipment for the Richmond Free Library. Kate chose the items and then contacted Duncan about purchasing the items. Kate was then notified by Duncan and Josh that there is no budget for the Recreation Committee. Josh gave approval for the items to be purchased using funds from the town's recreation equipment budget. The library has received the items.

Sheri also reviewed the town's two budget lines related to recreation: \$3,000 for park maintenance and \$3,000 for recreation equipment. The Recreation Committee doesn't have any control over these budgets, but we can make recommendations regarding how the funds are spent. The committee discussed that we would like to learn more about these budgets to better understand what these budgets are used for and how they are used.

**7:23 PM: Volunteer's Green Flood Impact:** Reviewed an email received from Josh with an update regarding the playground. Josh believes that the playground equipment was not damaged but the water dug out the rock base around the playground. The plan is to replace the sub base with larger rock which will be more stable when the park floods again. Then a layer of smaller rocks will be added which will then be topped with mulch. The work being done right

now is to just restore the playground to the condition it was in before the flooding. Any discussion of moving the playground or adding to it, is a larger conversation that is not part of the emergency response work.

Discussed having an inspection done on the playground prior to it being reopened to the public. Cathy suggested that having an inspection done before the base is fixed would allow the inspector to see and inspect the foundation of the structures as well. Kirsten stated that it is best practice to have the playground inspected again in order to ensure the health and safety of community members before it is reopened. The inspection may also identify additional small damages/issues that need to be addressed, even if the structure overall is still safe. This will help inform the committee's future recommendation to the town regarding repairs to the playground as well. Discussed that we feel that the playground should be inspected by VLCT before it is reopened. Consensus among committee members is that we strongly feel that the playground should be inspected before it is reopened. Kate volunteered to draft an email to Duncan and Josh with this recommendation.

**Continued Discussion Regarding the Playground, Flooding, and Funding:** Kate mentioned receiving an email from a community member stating that the ARPA committee may feel that they need more information regarding our proposal before they can make a decision of whether or not to recommend it to the Selectboard. Sheri offered to email the ARPA committee members, Jay and Jeff, to follow up regarding our proposal, reach out to see if they need any additional information from us, and ask for more information regarding their decision-making timeline regarding our proposal.

Discussed other possible locations for a playground in Richmond that are not in flood-prone areas. No other good locations identified. Brown's Court is very close to the school and it is not that close to the town center area. Also discussed if other types of playground structures, such as more natural structures, would be better for flood-prone areas. Uncertain at this point, more research would need to be done regarding different types of structures and how they would handle flooding. Community member, Jessie, stated that last time Volunteers Green flooded the playground wasn't gutted like it was this time. She observed that last time the area flooded, the parking lot was not paved. She does not know if the paved parking lot contributed to the increased damage to the playground, but it may have and it may be worth exploring what could be done to improve drainage and prevent flooding damage in the playground area in the future.

Sheri suggested that if the committee receives funding for a new playground, it would be good to also think about if there are recommendations for preventing flood damage that could be integrated into the playground area. It would most likely require an engineering assessment of the area. Kirsten mentioned that there are a lot of things that can be done to help protect wetland/ low lying areas and prevent flooding. There may be quite a few measures that can be implemented to help protect all of Volunteers Green from flooding and create buffers and/or diversions. There may be FEMA funds available for a project such as this. Discussed that this would be a larger undertaking than this Committee could reasonably handle and it would need to be a town-wide discussion that involves the selectboard, town employees, and the

community. Kate offered to email Duncan and Josh to let them know about this discussion and suggest that it may be a topic worth exploring further given the increasing frequency of flooding at Volunteers Green.

Discussed that this committee would like to be more updated and kept in the loop regarding what is happening with Volunteers Green and the playground, specifically related to the repairs after the recent flood damage. Kate suggested that it would also be helpful to continue to receive updates from the town in the future regarding any important recreation related updates or changes. Cathy suggested that we could put updates regarding the repair of Volunteers Green and the playground on our committee webpage to provide timely information to community members. Kate offered to email Duncan and Josh to request that they keep this committee updated regarding repairs at Volunteers Green and any other recreation related changes or updates that arise in the future.

Kirsten provided an update regarding the donated playground mats that the town has in storage and are a possible option for use when a new playground is installed. Kirsten stated that the mats are interlocking and won't float in standing water. However, with major flooding that undermines the base underneath the mats, they would most likely be damaged and/or float away. Given the increased frequency of extreme flooding, the mats would not be a better option than wood chips. Jessie commented that she feels that community members want to have a say about what materials are used in the playground as well. Committee members agree that input from community members regarding materials used for the playground is important. Kirsten discussed some flood prevention efforts and resources she found. Kirsten will email Sheri with this list of resources for future discussions:

1. Rubber mat info:

<https://www.roosterrubber.com/post/playground-surface-options#:~:text=Rubber%20mat%20and%20tiles%20are,areas%2C%20both%20indoor%20and%20outdoor> "rubber mats and tiles are installed using an interlocking system. Once installed, they will not float, freeze, and are resistant to extreme weather conditions."

2. Playground cleaning after flood:

<https://info.mayrecreation.com/blog/inspecting-your-playground-after-a-flood>

3. Playground cleaning after flood:

<https://www.gametime.com/news/inspecting-a-playground-after-a-flood>

4. Playground designed to absorb water:

<https://richpoorplay.journalism.cuny.edu/2013/12/10/green-playgrounds/>

5. Designing parks to flood: <https://nrcsolutions.org/waterfront-parks/>

6. NYC Planning parks for flooding:

<https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/planning/resiliency-plans/flood-resiliency>

Sheri discussed next steps regarding our continued efforts to seek funding for a new playground structure. Sheri will reach out to the ARPA Committee to see what their timeline looks like and where things stand regarding our proposal. We have discussed going to the Selectboard to

present a request for a capital reserve fund to be started for playground replacement and other improvements at Volunteers Green. Sheri asked if members want to further discuss the possibility of the capital reserve fund and try to determine how much funding we would request. Sheri reviewed the ARPA proposal and discussed how much money we would need to ask for with a capital reserve fund, considering that prices continue to increase. Discussed asking for at least \$250,000, possibly more. Kathy suggested that a portion of the funds could be obtained through fundraising so that all of the money doesn't have to come from the town/taxpayers. Kirsten also mentioned that town residents just had their taxes raised due to reappraisal of properties, so this may affect taxpayers' willingness to take on more taxes. Kathy suggested that it may be helpful to go to the selectboard to discuss how we can best move ahead and solve this community challenge/problem with the help and input of the selectboard and community members. Kirsten suggested that we can also seek volunteers to help with installing a new playground and doing other repair work that does not require a professional in order to help lower the cost. Many people are willing to volunteer their time to help out. Sheri stated that by our September meeting we should have more information regarding whether or not our ARPA proposal will be funded and then, if needed, we can further discuss working with the selectboard to create a plan to attain funds for the replacement of the playground.

**8:30 PM:** Discussed date of next meeting. Will keep it as scheduled on September 5th 2023.

**8:33 PM:** Mark motioned to adjourn. Sheri seconds. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.