

**Recreation Committee Meeting
March 5th, 2024**

Members in Attendance: Sheri Lynn, Kate Kreider, Kirsten Santor, Mark Fausel

Members of the Public: Jack Lazarowski

Non-agenda Items and Public Comments: Sheri mentioned that Richmond FY 24 budget includes a recreation budget including maintenance and repair along with other recreational needs and likely will continue in the FY25 town budget. Kirsten said the town staff oversee this budget. Jack mentioned at Bolton's town meeting most of the time was spent talking about road conditions. During Richmond's town meeting participants voted to keep Brown's Court as a recreational space and not to pursue housing on that property. Kirsten made an announcement that she and her family are moving to Hinesburg next week, therefore is resigning from this committee at the end of tonight's meeting.

7:06 PM: Approval of minutes from 12/5 and 2/6: The minutes from both months were approved unanimously, no discussion.

7:12 PM: Recent Snowshoe Events: Sheri reported that we canceled Richmond's event due to the frigid temperatures. Sheri reported that two people came to the Huntington event and they had a nice walk to identify trees, which Sheri led. Jack reported in Bolton that no one came in the morning for the snowshoe event but a few people came in the afternoon for a walk that Ethan Tapper led. Jack mentioned that it was a learning experience and stated that the timing during school vacation and the fact that this was our first time doing these events may have contributed to the low turnout. Kate mentioned that the weather and lack of snow was also likely a contributing factor.

7:20 PM: Update regarding the 3 Parks Committee: Sheri summarized the updates regarding what the 3 Parks Committee has been working on. As we already knew, the committee got 3 bids for a new playground. They chose to put on their draft budget the bid that came in at \$191,000. The 3 Parks Committee reviewed all of the recreation items that they would like to purchase and they narrowed down the list but there is more to cut and more information needed to stay within the budget of the ARPA funds available. They decided against having a multicourt and chose to have pickleball courts. Sheri mentioned that they put the full cost for the playground in their estimates in case we don't receive the VOREC grant. Sheri stated that they have had a lot of conversations regarding flooding and the difficulties regarding repairing the bandshell versus taking it down and putting a pavilion in instead. The 3 Parks Committee is still waiting for the survey results of the bandshell area, so it is still unknown if the area is high enough for new structures to be allowed. They are still considering putting a playground up on the bandshell plateau. During their next meeting on March 14th they will discuss this more and identify questions that they still have.

Sheri feels that regardless of whether or not the playground can be moved up by the bandshell, it's still worth having a playground at Volunteers Green. Sheri mentioned that the 3 Parks

Committee is going to get an official extension from the selectboard to present their budget and will make a request to the selectboard at the next March meeting This will also give more time for public engagement. Sheri believes that they will try to push the presentation to October/ November. Mark stated that at this point in time the 3 Parks Committee plans to put in bocce ball and pickleball courts, and refurbish the softball field at Browns Court. At Volunteers Green, they hope to put in a gravel walking path, a pavilion, a new playground, benches, picnic tables, and refurbish the baseball fields. At the Round Church they plan to add benches.

Kirsten stated that she agrees that a playground on Volunteers Green is still worthwhile even if moving it up near the bandshell is not an option. Kirsten stated that if the playground is moved up, the proximity to the riverbed should be taken into consideration and some sort of barrier for safety would be needed. And if it can't be moved then Kirsten felt that thought should be put into where you place different structure pieces and pieces that are already at ground level but also allow for a lot of water to pass through should be chosen. Kirsten met with all 3 of the playground reps with Jeanne and also has professional knowledge of playground structures.

Mark states that any of the changes planned for Volunteers Green will need public input. From his perspective, he feels that community members will really want to be involved and give input. He has heard from some individuals that they feel that nothing should be put in the floodway at Volunteers Green. He also suggests that we don't remove the current playground until there is a clear plan to replace it or to not replace it. Kate is hesitant to put another playground in the same location, but also feels it would be a big loss for the community not to have it, she feels that it would be worth having a new playground in the same location if it is not possible to move it up higher.

Sheri stated that there should probably be a spring inspection of the playground since it wasn't inspected after the December flooding and repairs. Kirsten mentioned concrete barriers (Jersey Barriers) to help protect the playground from flooding on the parking lot side may be an option. Mark stated that during the Planning Commission meeting on 2/21, he and Jeanne updated the commission regarding what the 3 Parks Committee and this committee is working on. Mark stated that the Planning Commission is very busy right now and he does not know if they would be willing to undertake changing the flood zoning regulations at Volunteers Green. However, with the timeline now being pushed out, that may put the Planning Commission in a better position to review the regulations and possible changes. Sheri asked if there is any waiver process for the flood regulations. Mark stated no, and that he tried to get a waiver put in place for town owned property back when the regulations were last changed, but it didn't happen. Mark hopes that the Planning Commission can have some discussions about possibly changing some regulations to allow some structures at Volunteers Green.

7:51 PM: VOREC Grant Update: Sheri reported that we received a response and our application was not selected for the VOREC grant. Kirsten mentioned that she thought that there may be more unallocated ARPA funds available in addition to what has already been earmarked to the 3 Parks Committee. Sheri stated that our committee or the 3 Parks Committee could ask the selectboard about that. Mark talked about the next VOREC grant application and

Sheri mentioned that next fall she will no longer be on the Rec Committee and will not be available to help with another submission of the VOREC grant. She also mentioned that our project may not be that competitive compared to a lot of the other applications. But Sheri will be available for new recreation committee members to reach out to for the next grant application should they proceed with another grant application. Sheri suggested focusing on asking the town to help with funding for the playground when the budget discussions happen in the fall.

7:57 PM: Recruiting: Sheri stated that she will not be reapplying to the committee when her term is up this spring. She plans to focus on volunteering her time to work on recreation activities in her hometown of Huntington. Kate stated that she is also not reapplying for the committee this spring and will be stepping down as well. Sheri stated that she can reach out to the Huntington Rec Committee to see if someone would be interested in joining this committee and she could post an announcement on FPF to recruit new members. Kirsten stated that she could ask a prior member, Kate Anderson, if she has any interest in rejoining the committee. Sheri asked Jack if he would be interested in joining the committee or if he knows anyone from Bolton who may be interested. Jack stated he can do some outreach in Bolton to try to get a new member.

Kirsten suggested that since all members are stepping down except one, that it may be a good time to have a discussion about the membership of the committee and whether or not we continue to have a 3 town committee. Kate suggested the possibility of having a discussion with the selectboard regarding the committee's membership, role, and possibly ask for a budget. Sheri mentioned that Lisa is very helpful as a liaison and we could reach out to her. Mark suggested having a meeting with Josh to figure out who is going to manage the maintenance of recreation equipment in the town and who will have control of the recreation funds. Right now this committee doesn't have control of any budgets and we don't have a thorough understanding of the different recreation budgets and how they are used.

Jack suggested the possibility of the Rec Committee combining with the 3 Parks Committee. Sheri stated that is a good idea, but the members of the 3 Parks Committee may not be interested in staying on a committee long-term. The 3 Parks Committee was created as a short-term committee with a specific goal. Sheri suggests notifying the selectboard of our dwindling membership. It's a good opportunity to discuss the future of the Recreation Committee with the selectboard. Sheri volunteered to write up an email to send to Lisa and then Lisa can have a discussion with the other selectboard members during one of their meetings. Sheri will write up the draft and let committee members review it and give feedback individually before it is sent to Lisa. Sheri also stated that we should let the 3 parks Committee know about our lack of membership and the uncertainty regarding the future of our committee. Mark suggested that it may make more sense to end the Rec Committee for now because it's unlikely that we'll get much interest and new members. If interest in having a Rec Committee surfaces in the future, another committee could always be started. Committee members agreed that we will hold off on trying to recruit new members at this time until we hear back from the selectboard and know the plan for the committee moving forward.

8:25 PM: Mark suggested members to attend the next 3 Parks Committee if we are able.

8:26 PM: Our next meeting is April 2nd. Meeting Adjourned unanimously.