

Richmond Recreation Committee Meeting November 15th, 2022

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

Members of the Public Present: Duncan Wardwell (Assistant to the Town Manager),
Amanda Froeschle (Healthy Communities Specialist from the VT Dept of Health)

Public Comments: none

Halloween on the Green:

Duncan reported that he and Josh decided to waive the fee for the use of Volunteer's Green for the event. Fees can be waived for non-profit/community events.

Approve September Minutes:

Kate motioned to approve the minutes, Kirsten seconded. No discussion. All in favor of approving the September minutes, motion passed.

Meeting Schedule:

Discussed if the current schedule of meeting every first Tuesday of the month still works for members. General agreement that this schedule works well. Discussed having hybrid versus all remote meetings this winter. The decision was made to hold our December meeting in a hybrid format. Members agreed to switch to an only virtual meeting format for our January, February, and March meetings due to weather and conflicts with the selectboard using the large meeting room.

Feedback Form:

Discussed what the purpose will be for the feedback form. Sheri also suggested that we may want to table this project for now so that we can focus our efforts on higher priorities, such as acquiring funding for improvements at Volunteer's Green. Kate and Kirsten expressed that they envision the feedback form as just a general form or comment box where community members can express any thoughts, suggestions, or other brief feedback that they have regarding recreation in the community. Mark agreed with this intended purpose. Sheri suggested it could be just a comment box, link to a google form, or even just a contact email, and it could be posted on the Recreation Committee's page on the town website. General member agreement that we should focus our time and energy on larger projects and not spend a lot of time on this. Sheri volunteered to work with Duncan to come up with a google doc form. Kate also offered assistance if needed. Kirsten is working on updating the website and adding information to the Recreation Committee page. Duncan offered to help show us how to do website edits or he said that we could send edits to him and he can update the website for us.

Priorities for Volunteer's Green:

Kate discussed some minor improvements that she has identified for Volunteer's Green. These are maintenance related improvements to keep the facilities safe and in working order until larger improvements can be made. Duncan said that there are town funds available and set aside for maintenance of Volunteer's Green every year, \$3,000 per fiscal year. He told committee members to let him know what needs we identify for Volunteers Green and then he can look into purchasing what is needed for repairs/maintenance. Kate stated that she will email Duncan and Sheri the suggestions for Volunteers Green that she has identified. Members reviewed the committee work plan for Volunteers Green. Our committee's focus now is to update and replace the playground structures and other facilities that were identified in VOREC grant. Kirsten suggested that we could share the list of things needed at Volunteer's Green, such as a google doc, so that Duncan doesn't get the same suggestions from multiple members. Sheri volunteered to create a google sheet that we can use to compile ideas of needs and then we will publicly review the list during our regular meetings.

ARPA Funds for Volunteers Green:

Kate gave an update regarding the ARPA committee and seeking ARPA funds for Volunteer's Green. At the last public ARPA meeting, Kate attended virtually and talked to the committee about the Recreation Committee's work to secure funds to improve Volunteer's Green and the importance of this community resource. A member of the ARPA committee asked Kate to provide more details regarding what improvements the Recreation Committee is looking to make at Volunteer's Green and the anticipated cost. Kate emailed the ARPA committee and included the VOREC grant application that the Recreation Committee submitted in the fall of 2021. This included a breakdown of estimated costs for the identified improvements needed at Volunteer's Green. Kate did not receive any response to this email.

Members briefly discussed what else we can do to present to the ARPA committee what we want for Volunteer's Green. Kate mentioned that the ARPA committee does not decide how the funds are used, they are tasked with compiling the various suggestions from the public and presenting that data to the selectboard. Kate said that the ARPA committee has the general information from us of what we would like for Volunteer's Green with estimated costs, so she doesn't know what else we could do to help improve our chances of receiving funding. Kirsten suggested that we could prioritize the different improvements. Sheri mentioned that the challenge in regards to defining exactly what we want is that we will need public engagement in order to figure out what specific structures the public wants and what specific improvements the public would like to see.

Duncan suggested that the Recreation Committee could find a smaller project to request funding for, instead of asking for the full amount for all of the improvements at Volunteer's Green that we would like to make. Sheri suggested that we could ask for the whole thing but we should specify that it is contingent on public comment, or we could ask for only part of the funding we would like and find funding to cover the rest of the improvements. Mark mentioned that the winter months are probably the best time to get more community engagement regarding the playground. He suggested that maybe we could do some community outreach this winter about what the public wants to see for the playground and Volunteer's Green. Sheri agreed and

stated that it would help refine what we want to ask for in terms of funds. Duncan suggested that we could look at the ARPA data too regarding what the public wants ARPA funds used for. Duncan said that the ARPA committee is not finished with compiling the data yet, but maybe we can review the data at our next meeting.

Possible Request for Conservation Reserve Funds:

Kate is a member of the Conservation Commission and suggested the possibility of requesting conservation reserve funds for some of the smaller improvements at Volunteer's Green. Recreation does meet the criteria for use of conservation reserve funds. She stated that asking for the full amount for all of the improvements at Volunteer's Green would most likely be more than the Conservation Commission would be willing to fund, but we could request funding for some of the smaller improvements, for example such as new benches and picnic tables. Brief discussion followed and committee members agreed that when the shared google sheet is created for suggested improvements at Volunteer's Green, then the committee can discuss what items may be appropriate for seeking conservation reserve funds.

Further Discussion of Funding for Volunteer's Green:

Duncan mentioned that finding funds for improvements at Volunteer's Green was also discussed during the recent selectboard budget meeting. He stated that there was a discussion regarding whether or not the town should start a capital fund for Volunteer's Green, where a certain amount of money is set aside every year to save funds for improvements at the park. Sheri asked if the Recreation Committee could request a certain amount every year to be put into a capital fund for Volunteer's Green, and Duncan replied yes. Duncan stated that the selectboard has discussed this and that they would like input from the Recreation Committee.

Sheri suggested that after we create and review the google sheet of what needs to be done at Volunteers Green then we can figure out our work plan and look at our funding options. She stated that when we look at our needs we will need to think about the three possible sources of funding and what funding would be most appropriate to use for what item. Committee members agreed and the committee will work on this over the next few months.

Duncan mentioned that we can spend a couple months to get more detail to ARPA in terms of what we want and if we can give the ARPA committee more specifics by sometime in January that would be good.

Recruitment of Committee Members and Volunteers:

We reviewed our outreach and education goals from the committee work plan. Discussed how we may be able to recruit more members. Sheri mentioned that we need a Bolton representative and more Richmond members. Kirsten suggested that we could do a community clean up day at Volunteer's Green in the spring and maybe recruit more members or volunteers that way. She said that by focusing on Volunteer's Green we may be able to get more people interested in the committee. Duncan offered his support to our committee and stated that he is happy to help with whatever we need.

Mark asked if it would be appropriate to send info to schools and the senior center directly. Sheri mentioned that Jack has said that he would be happy to put something in the senior center newsletter. Kate mentioned that the parents of school aged kids are already inundated with a lot of information from the schools and that the principals generally don't like to send out any additional community information in their communications to parents. Kate also said that RES is currently fundraising to replace their playground at the school. Sheri mentioned that we have done Front Porch Forum posts in the past seeking new members and volunteers. Kate stated that she did the FPF write-up for recruitment of members that we used in the past and she will find that write-up and send it to Sheri.

Other Information:

Amanda shared a youth risk behavior survey, which is conducted every 3 years. She stated that she can help support us by connecting us to data which can give us a direction to go or provide support for what we want to get done. Sheri asked if she has any community engagement resources. Amanda stated that she does not have any specific community engagement resources but she mentioned the All Together Now group in our area which some great community members are involved in. Amanda said that she has lots of health related data that she can provide and may be able to help connect us with community networks and groups. Members of the Recreation Committee thanked Amanda for taking the time to join us and offer her support.

Motion to Adjourn: Mark motioned to adjourn, Sheri seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm