

**Volunteers Green, Browns Court, Round Church Green  
3 Parks Improvement Committee (ARPA Funds)**

**Minutes from meeting on 12/12/2023** *Approved Dec 28, 2023 Meeting*

Members Attending: Kendra Ziskie, Denise Barnard, Fran Thomas, Megan Andrews, Tess Storrs, Jeanne Agner

Members Absent: Mary Lefebvre

Guests in person - John Linn, Gary Bressor, Josh Arneson,  
Attending Virtually- Tyler Machia, Mark Fausel, Martha Nye

Minutes Approved from last meeting- Nov 27, 2023

Next scheduled meetings

Thursday Dec 28

Tuesday Jan 9

Public comment - None

**Floodplain, Flood Zone, Floodway, FEMA and town restrictions** Discussion weaved throughout our meeting. Here are some key points for the minutes:

Denise talked with a person from the state who felt that some of our floodplain obstacles would be approved by FEMA. However, we then learned more from Tyler Machia about floodplain guidelines. Tyler is the designated Richmond Floodplain Manager. Tyler explained that FEMA basic guidelines are somewhat restrictive, state guidelines are more restrictive and town guidelines the most restrictive with regards to zoning and development in a flood plain, The park is not only in a *flood plain* but in a *flood water way* which is the most restrictive area of a flood plain. Later in the meeting Tyler further explained what type of structures might trigger a site plan review by the DRB. He explained “minor amendments” vs “major amendments” to a current structure. He will need to look closely at any site plans to determine what he can and can’t approve and what would trigger the need for the next step of approval from the Development Review Board.(DRB). Tyler is also going to look a little closer regarding what might encompass a structure with regards to the park. For example, is the entire ball field, including dugouts and bleachers considered a structure in this situation or are each of those pieces a structure?

His explanations were very enlightening and helpful to the committee. The bottom line is, Tyler will need to see preliminary drawings and sketches of any proposal in order to be able to steer us through zoning regs. He is bound as the zoning administrator to interpret the regulations literally. Josh said he does not write the regulations. He has to enforce them.

Mark Fausel also weighed in as a member of the planning commission with regards

to what may or may not be able to be amended by the planning commission.

### **Presentation by John Linn, AIA Licensed Architect**

Presented drawings of each of the three parks

#### Volunteers Green

John was asked to look at accessible ramping for the bandshell. He talked with zoning and was told that we cannot have a structure in a floodplain. It might be more reasonable to use fill around the bandstand to build up an earthen ramp. Need to remove the fill from another area in the park, but it's possible. That would not be changing the actual bandstand and it might be a very cost effective solution to change the grade around the bandstand itself. John will draw up something to present to Tyler to see if that could be approved. The slope from the parking lot is too steep to accommodate a ramp as it would require 10 foot of ramp for every 1' of grade. Such a ramp would cross the entire parking lot. An alternative would be to make a more defined entrance from the sidewalk to the bandstand area along crabapple trees.

We also talked about some type of railing on the edge of the bandstand itself. Something that acts as a barrier to prevent falls. If it is on the concrete portion it may be okay. Someone from our group will have to look into that.

#### Browns Court

John provided sketches of Brown's Court. The court is 3.06 acres. The deeds of the homeowners say the boundaries "abut the ball field". A survey will need to be done for exact property lines. It is suggested to get a topographical survey. One of the sides of the area is banked about 3 ft high with vegetation. 2 other sides have very steep ravines. Perhaps a row of cedars could go along the property line of houses for somewhat of a noise barrier.

The sketch included a softball field that meets middle school regulations. 220 feet from home plate to the fences, four pickleball courts which can accommodate up to 16 players at a time, a bocce court and a gravel parking area that would accommodate up to 20 cars.

Because Brown's Court is not at risk for flooding, zoning rule requirements are less strict. It is the only one of the three parks where structures for these types of activities could be built. Tyler - reading from the code - "Outdoor recreation facility or park requires conditional use approval from DRB" He then explained that If Brown's court is *already* approved as a park, it might just need a zoning permit. Tyler stated " in terms of a regulatory standpoint, it will be a lot easier to do stuff (at BC), because you'd probably be looking at either best case scenario, you'd just be coming to me for a zoning permit. Worst case scenario, you're probably looking at conditional use review through the development Review Board. If the parking lot is already an existing gravel base, the improvements might fall under maintenance, and therefore would not trigger a site review. Will look into that further.

**Motion:** Kendra made a motion that we ask to be on the Select board agenda for the next meeting to present an architectural design from John Linn and to request a survey of Brown's Court. The motion was seconded. All members voted in favor.

John will get the sketches printed for Brown's court so that the 3 parks committee can share this information with the selectboard on Monday night.

### **Brown's Court** updates from our members

Tess presented information on businesses she has contacted for quotes for pickleball courts. She had a quote for a multi use court from one of the playground reps. Tess has contacted several people to get more information on regulation bocce courts. That work is ongoing. Tess did email Brian Godfrey, PE teacher at RES and learned that both pickleball and bocce are part of the pe curriculum.

Denise attended a parking committee meeting to talk with them about parking. They were pleased to be included at this early stage. They recommended 20 parking spots. They also recommended signage as no all night parking and designated spots for handicap parking. Denise will meet with them again.

Fran has some further quotes for tree trimming. Thinking about a possible hedge row, maybe cedars along one side for noise protection for the neighbors.

### **Presentation by Gary Bressor**

#### Bandshell Work

Gary has been trying to line up engineering bids to look at the scope of work needed to repair/replace the cross beams and supports. Gary contacted six engineering firms but no one was interested as they are buried with current work. Gary then went to smaller firms. He got a quote from Treyball for \$5000 for the basic engineering and \$1500 for construction oversight. It may be a bit more to also have them look at replacing the concrete floor. We need a structural engineer to look at the scissors truss and supports. Gary checked with Tyler Goodwin, who is a good engineer but is not a structural engineer. Miles Jenness could probably do the work but he would need a structural engineering study. Miles would want the engineer to look at putting a piece of steel from that cross portion up to where all those timbers come together and that big steel piece, or from the peak.

**Motion** - Kendra made a motion to ask the selectboard to authorize release of ARPA funds in the amount of \$6,000 to hire a structural engineer to come up with a remedy for the bandshell issues. Motion was seconded and all voted in favor. Committee members will take this motion to the selectboard on Monday. Kendra will provide the selectboard with drawings, sketches and photos of the bandshell issues before the meeting.

\*\*\* Tyler added more to the conversation regarding improvements to the bandshell w/in a flood plain. His comments (with some editing for clarification): So we've spent a lot of back and forth about what we can and can't do in the bandshell. Looking a little bit more closely, I think what we might be able to do is make substantial improvements to structures that are inside of the floodway. Substantial improvement is any reconstruction, rehabilitation or addition, or other improvement of a structure after the effective date of adoption, the cost of which cumulatively exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure before the start of construction or which results and expansion of greater than 25% of the existing gross floor area, whichever is less. So why does that

matter? Basically, depending on what that is, if it's considered a substantial improvement, it's gonna require conditional use and site plan review. But that being said, it looks like because it does say the expansion of it, so you may be able to actually expand the bandstand a little bit, which may help make it easier to make it handicap accessible and some of the other things that you guys are interested in doing.

### Fence at Round Church Green

Gary is also looking into the cost for replacement of a historic fence at the Round Church Green. The committee had looked at photos of the original fence at a previous meeting. Gary is working from some sketches done by Terrence Boyle years ago that included a granite fence around the green. The project would require 80 to 92 posts. Gary presented two different finishes to granite posts which would range from \$24,000 to \$36,000. The posts could stand alone as a fence or could have wood rails or a chain rail. Wood would require regular maintenance. Chain would require less maintenance and would hold up to shifts in the posts.

### Discussion re proritizing projects

There was a brief discussion of how we would present the entire 3 parks project to the selectboard to be within the \$450,000 ARPA allocation. We could also present a list of the many projects we would suggest for the future, some of which could possibly be privately funded. Current town committees or future committees could build on our work.

We would provide all of the information we gathered for projects large and small for others to use.

### **Josh Arneson presentation**

#### Baseball fields

Note: In addition to being the Richmond Town Manager, Josh is very active in Richmond Little League. Josh has been looking into improvements and restoration of baseball fields #s 1,2, 3. This includes

Field restoration - Top priority. This could be in the range of \$30,000 to \$40,000 per field. Clay, topsoil, grass. Josh talked with Chris Spence re general estimates. He will also talk w Todd Treyball.

Fencing - repair and partial replacement of chain link fence (backstop, 2nd fence, baseline fencing). Middlebury fencing gave a quote of \$18,000 per field. Josh is looking for more quotes. Might be possible to use some of the posts which will make a difference in pricing.

Dugouts - Upgrades now especially re drainage. Hold water after rain. Should be replaced at some point. (see Hinesburg dugouts)

Water - he did not look into that.

Josh will send Kendra the spreadsheets has developed with information and quotes

Note- Little League does not have any town reserve funds. Little League has traditionally provided a load of clay for upkeep. We don't know if/what FEMA will provide.

Committee has questions about where we stand with the restrooms and FEMA funds. Paint, handicap accessible bathrooms - stalls and heavy exterior doors, lighting etc.

### **Playground update - Jeanne**

Vermont Outdoor Recreation VOREC grant. The recreation committee was able to build on a previous grant application and submit to the selectboard for their signature. The grant has to be submitted from the town. The application is for \$110,000 towards an estimated \$200,000 playground. \$10,000 would be towards a clerk of the works for the project. The grant includes language for community engagement. We received letters of support from The Farmers Market, The Community Senior Center and Andrew's Childcare program. There will also be letters of support from the towns of Huntington and Bolton. The application was due Dec 15. We hope to hear in mid February of the awards.

Playground quotes The first of 3 playground company designs and quotes is expected tomorrow. The other 2 should be here within a week or two. A few members of the 3 parks committee and the recreational committee will review the initial proposals. We will plan on dedicating more time to playground information at a future meeting, perhaps as a joint committee meeting towards the end of January.

We are asking for pricing from the demolition of the old playground, prepping the base for new construction, installation and freight and preparation of the base to be ready for a grand opening. We have asked each contractor to note where volunteer contractors or local workers could fit into the project.

Jeanne reported on information from the last Recreation Committee meeting. A member of the town Trails Committee attended the rec committee mtg to update each other on their work. She offered trail committee assistance for developing the path and suggested that they have chainsaws etc and could possibly help with some of the tree work. That committee would be very interested in working together with us. After all, they will probably be the committee to be responsible for some of the maintenance of a paved path.

Rec committee is planning a snowshoe event in all three towns over February school break.

Other - Annie Lajoie did not get back to us regarding soccer. Maybe we should suggest that the recreation committee get with her to see what the needs are there. There seems to be a dedicated soccer fund. Jeanne will mention to rec committee.

Meeting adjourned.