

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

**Minutes from the meeting on Weds. February 28, 2024**

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

**Members Absent:** Mary Lefebvre

**Guests in person:** Jim Oliver

**Attending Virtually:** Melissa Wolaver, Martha Nye, Velma Plouffe, Sheri Lynn (recreation), Mark Fausel (planning and recreation), Lisa Miller (Selectboard)

**Public comment:** Melissa Wolaver wanted us to be aware of the current users of Browns Court and to be considerate of how any plans might impact their use. It was also noted that Corey McKenzie in Front Porch Forum post listed the many uses of Browns Court, even renting it for a day for family reunions. Martha Nye also commented about how much the park is used by neighbors, senior center group activities and more. She mentioned that dogs off the leash can be intimidating. It was noted that there is a sign at the park reminding users of the Richmond leash law.

**Minutes Approved** from last meeting on Feb. 13

**Next scheduled meeting** Thursday March 14, 2024

Reminder to each other about being compliant with the rules and regulations of **Open Meeting Law**. Also clarified what has to be warned if other committees meet with us during our meeting.

## Outreach

Fran Thomas submitted an article to Front Porch Forum and to the TimesInk! on our behalf explaining this volunteer committee and some of the research that we have been doing with regards to improvements for all three parks. We shared feedback that we received. Overall the comments were positive and suggestions were well thought out.

Michael Lawler, from the Richmond Community Band, submitted a letter regarding the bandshell. We hope to have Michael attend a future meeting to discuss options for the bandstand/ pavilion. Perhaps that same meeting could have a representative from the Farmers' Market, Arabesque Dance and any other folks who use the bandstand. We may have to put this off for another meeting or two (see VG discussion later on).

Laurel Waters, a local artist, suggests adding art to the park plans. Someone from our committee will contact her to talk about her ideas.

## Request for SelectBoard agenda items

Denise will ask to have the following two items included in the next Select Board meeting agenda.

1. **We will ask the Selectboard for a formal extension to the deadline of March 31 to present the proposal for all 3 parks.** We know that the money has to be allocated by Dec 2024. Projects must be completed by Dec. 2026.
2. We discovered numerous dead trees, limbs, hanging branches, snags and many areas of bare grass at all 3 parks. We feel that the Tree Removal and Landscaping is something that should be addressed immediately as it is a safety issue as well as something that should be done this spring, not a year from now. **We will ask that the tree removal, tree trimming and grass reseeding be addressed by the town now. We hope that this overdue maintenance does not come out of the ARPA parks improvement allocation.**

## **Volunteers Green**

Chris Haggerty was hired to measure the elevations of the plateau in Volunteer's Green. His survey shows that the platform is not high enough to be considered out of the flood plain.

We know the current bandstand has some major issues. We have had some general estimates, however, we are holding off on hiring a structural engineer to assess what it would take to replace the steel beams, leaning walls and floors in the current bandstand. The cost of an assessment is in the one thousand dollar range. We know the repairs and bringing the bandshell up to ADA compliance will be expensive. At an earlier meeting, we had a presentation from Pete Gosslin where we discussed replacing the bandstand with a pavilion that has accessible restrooms and moving the playground to this higher ground. We have not researched this option in any detail as we were awaiting the results of the land survey.

We acknowledge that before we can move on with estimates and quotes for the work in this area of the green, we need guidance from planning and zoning . The town's regulations are stricter than FEMA.

We discussed having some type of a larger round table meeting with town officers to help determine what can and can't be considered for building in that area. We would like to get feedback from various town committees regarding the design of the plateau once we learn if changes can be made. The Recreation committee meets next week and Sheri will review these talking points for feedback. The Planning commission also meets next week and Mark will do the same at that meeting. The consensus of this committee is that we need to have more input from the town and community about what this area should look like if changes can be made.

The recreation committee has not yet heard about the VOREC matching grant for the playground. The announcement should be made soon. Sheri will check in with the grant next week to see if they have released a date for

announcing the rewards. Sheri reminded us that public engagement is also one of the requirements of that grant.

### **Browns Court**

Still need additional quotes for the parking lot.

Note - John Linn is not charging us for the drawings he did for Browns Court. We owe him a big thank you!

### **Budget - overall costing review and prioritizing items**

Kendra has developed a spreadsheet that includes all of the estimates and quotes that we have thus far. Even without some of the bigger ticket items, our dreams have far exceeded our budget. We began to review the budget items line by line. This will be a process that will cover many meetings, especially as we get more quotes for some of our top priorities and as the plans for Volunteers Green evolve.

Some key items we discussed this meeting include

BC - Propose one pickleball court rather than a multi use court

RC - Will not include monies for a historical fence

BC and VG - determined amount to allocate for softball and baseball field improvements.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 pm.